



REPORT

CORRESPONDENCE

- Correspondence from Peel District School Board, sent to the Minister of Education requesting the ministry to consider excluding non-participating (absent and excluded) students from its EQAO reporting to ensure a true and accurate reflection of student achievement.

- Correspondence from Bluewater District School Board, sent to the Minister of Education requesting a report on progress made to address a previous request to continue to update relevant school curricula to adequately and meaningfully reflect the true history of Canada's Indigenous Peoples. The Bluewater District School Board also requests that this written report be available for all School Boards at the time of the Public Education Symposium in January 2017.

- Correspondence from Peel District School Board, sent to the Minister of Education with respect to the discontinuation of Ministry of Education top-up funding that has resulted in the closure of "empty" classrooms.

- Correspondence from Mitzie Hunter, Minister of Education, asking school boards to encourage their schools to support Treaties Recognition Week the first week in November.



September 27, 2016

The Honourable Mitzie Hunter
Minister of Education
Mowat Block, Queen's Park
Toronto, ON M7A 1L2

Dear Minister Hunter:

On behalf of the Board of Trustees of the Peel District School Board, I am writing to share concerns we have with respect to newcomer students from Syria and beyond and other excluded/"non-participating" students being included in Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) assessment method one reports. In June 2016, the Peel board wrote to EQAO Chief Executive Officer Bruce Rodrigues to express these concerns and to ask that EQAO reconsider this practice as we believe it to be unfair and demoralizing to students and staff.

Since December 2015, the Peel board has welcomed more than 500 refugees from Syria and beyond. As you know, some of these students arrived in Canada with little or no English language skills, are traumatized by what they experienced and have never had formal schooling. Given their circumstances, these students have been exempted from writing the assessments. Their exemption is appreciated. What is not acceptable to the board, however, is that their "not participating" identification is included in school reports, thus negatively impacting the overall scores of the schools they attend and increasing the likelihood that community members will blame newcomer/refugee students for lowering school scores.

We understand that EQAO reports scores in two ways—one that includes the scores of all students, including those who are identified as "not participating," and a second method that excludes non-participating students. Unfortunately, although the second method is a more accurate reflection of student performance at a particular school, it is clear to us that this method is not shared publicly or widely, not by EQAO or the media. As such, the reports that are more broadly distributed (method one) can and do dishearten and discourage staff, students and parents of a school community, and negatively impacts the perception of student achievement.

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Trustees

Janet McDougald, Chair
Suzanne Nurse, Vice-Chair
Carrie Andrews
Stan Cameron
Robert Crocker
Nokha Dakroub

David Green
Sue Lawton
Brad MacDonald
Kathy McDonald
Harkirat Singh
Rick Williams

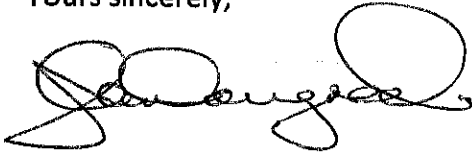
Director of Education and Secretary
Tony Pontes

**Associate Director,
Instructional Support Services**
Scott Moreash

**Associate Director,
Operational Support Services**
Jaspai Gill

In a recent conversation between Bruce Rodrigues and the Peel board's Director of Education Tony Pontes, we understand that the Government of Ontario, through the Ministry of Education, provides the mandate to EQAO on its reporting of student achievement. As such, we ask that the ministry consider excluding non-participating (absent and excluded) students from its EQAO reporting so that what is most widely shared is a true and accurate reflection of student achievement. We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Janet McDougald', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

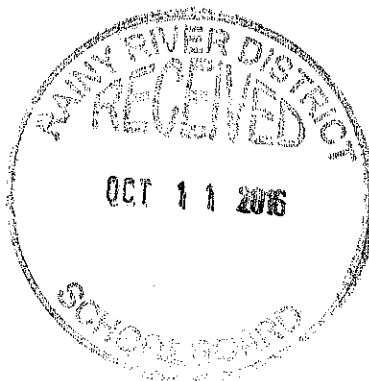
Janet McDougald
Chair

c. OPSBA
Ontario School Board Chairs
Peel MPPs

Encl. - Copies of letters sent to Bruce Rodrigues, CEO, EQAO, from the Peel board

October 4, 2016

The Honourable Mitzie Hunter
Minister of Education
22nd Floor, Mowat Block, 900 Bay Street
Toronto, ON
M7A 1L2



Dear Minister Hunter:

On behalf of the Board of Trustees of Bluewater District School Board, we are sending this letter to bring to your attention the following motion that was passed at our Regular Meeting of the Board on September 20, 2016:

Moved by M. Gaviller, Seconded by J. Thomson

Whereas it has now been a year since our first request to the Ministry to continue to update relevant school curricula to include the true history of the colonization of Canada's Indigenous Peoples, and the legacy of residential schools as per the Truth and Reconciliation Report's Calls to Action;

Whereas many Boards have made similar requests;

Whereas the Ministry has already made some progress in addressing these requests; and

Whereas the "60's Scoop" Hearings have just begun, bringing further attention to the wrongs perpetrated on Indigenous Peoples, be it resolved,

That BWDSB write to Minister of Education, Mitzie Hunter requesting a full report on progress made to address our original request, as well as proposed next steps, and that this written report be available for all Ontario School Boards at the time of the Public Education Symposium in January 2017; and

That this letter when written be sent to Premier Wynne; OPSBA President, Laurie French; First Nations Director, Peter Garrow; local MPPs and all school board chairs in Ontario.

We are encouraged to hear about the positive first steps taken and commitment to future investment in initiatives related to reconciliation by the Province of Ontario. Ensuring that our school curricula adequately and meaningfully reflect the true history of Canada's Indigenous Peoples and colonization is a fundamental starting point in our journey toward reconciliation. In reaffirming our original request, we look forward to hearing more about the important work that is being done at the provincial level to assist school boards in further enhancing programs and teachings that pertain to this subject.

As always, our shared commitment remains focused on providing quality education for every student in a safe and caring environment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ron Motz". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Ron" and the last name "Motz" clearly distinguishable.

Ron Motz
Chair

cc: The Honourable Kathleen Wynne, Premier of Ontario
Laurie French, President of OPSBA
Peter Garrow, OPSBA First Nations Director
MPP Bill Walker, Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound
MPP Lisa Thompson, Huron-Bruce
All school board chairs in Ontario

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October 14, 2016



The Honourable Mitzie Hunter
Minister of Education
Mowat Block, Queen's Park
Toronto, ON M7A 1L2

Dear Minister Hunter:

On behalf of the Peel District School Board, I am writing to share concerns we have with respect to the discontinuation of Ministry of Education top-up funding that has resulted in the closure of "empty" classrooms during the 2016-17 school year, and potential future music (vocal) and French classroom closures in elementary schools beginning as early as 2017-18.

Faced with a \$2.8-million cut in funding from the ministry for the cleaning of schools, trustees directed Peel board administration to use in-year savings to prevent the need for music and French classroom closures in elementary schools this school year.

These in-year savings will be used to provide cleaning services in a maximum of two non-funded permanent classrooms (or three in very exceptional circumstances) at schools that are below Ministry Rated Capacity. If in-year savings are not sufficient, administration was directed to use funds from the uncommitted Working Fund Reserve to make up the balance.

Trustees' direction of funds is not a long-term solution. The pause on closures has, however, provided the board with time to explore options to the closures while we look for a permanent solution. For help with that permanent solution, we turn to the ministry.

We expect that, for the 2017-18 school year, we will see further cuts (approximately \$2 million) to facility operations as top-up funding is fully phased out. We need the ministry's help to mitigate these costs next year and in the years ahead by revisiting its definition of a "classroom" and what are considered "empty classrooms" with respect to facility operations funding. We understand the need to close empty rooms in order to deal with financial reductions and we are doing this where the rooms are genuinely "empty". However, I don't think any reasonable person would view any of our music and French classrooms as being empty. I think we need to begin a dialogue around the definition of an empty classroom.

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Trustees

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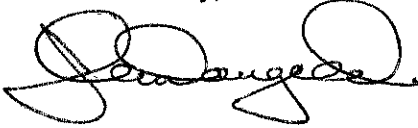
Director of Education and Secretary
Tony Pontes

Associate Director,
Instructional Support Services
Scott Moreash

Associate Director,
Operational Support Services
Jaspal Gill

In addition to highlighting these concerns in writing, we request a meeting with you, along with representatives from Peel Principals' and Vice-Principals' Association, Peel Elementary Teachers' Local, Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation District 19 and the Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 2544, to discuss these issues. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Janet McDougald", written in a cursive style.

Janet McDougald
Chair

- c. Dan Bouchard, President, CUPE 2544
- Mike Bettiol, President, OSSTF District 19
- Steve Dénomée, Peel Elementary Teachers' Local
- Bill MacGregor, Peel Principals' and Vice-Principals' Association
- Junior Elementary Music Makers (JEMMS)
- Canadian Parents for French
- Ontario School Board Chairs
- Peel MPPs

Ministry of Education

Minister

Mowat Block
Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1L2

Ministère de l'Éducation

Ministre

Édifice Mowat
Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1L2



October 18, 2016

Dear Chairs:

In Ontario, we believe all students, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, are enriched by learning about the histories, cultures, contributions and perspectives of First Nation, Métis and Inuit peoples in Canada.

As you may know, the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation (MIRR) announced earlier this year that Ontario has designated the first week of November (November 6 to 12, 2016) as Treaties Recognition Week. The goal of this week is to promote public education and awareness about treaties and treaty relationships.

The Ministry of Education has been working closely with MIRR to raise awareness about Treaties Recognition Week in schools across Ontario. This week will provide a recurring opportunity for teachers to plan curriculum-linked learning activities about treaties during the school year and will help promote awareness of treaties in the broader public.

This year, we are asking boards to encourage their schools to support Treaties Recognition Week by developing programs and activities that can help bring awareness to students and teachers about this important aspect of our province's history.

To help support educators, a number of curriculum-linked resources have been created to encourage dialogue and discussion in Ontario's classrooms. For example, *The First Nations and Treaties Map of Ontario: Information for Educators* is available on [EduGains](#) and [Edusourceontario](#). PDF versions of the map are available at: ontario.ca/treaties. Additional resources are also available on MIRR's website at www.ontario.ca/indigenous.

The Deputy Minister of Education will be communicating in the near future with Directors of Education to highlight the various curriculum-related resources available.

Treaties Recognition Week is one of many steps on Ontario's journey of healing and reconciliation with Indigenous peoples. I thank you for your support and continued commitment to working with our Indigenous partners to create a better future for everyone in our province.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'MH', written in a cursive style.

Mitzie Hunter, MBA
Minister

C: Trustees organizations, CODE