



DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD OF NIAGARA
Achieving Success Together

**THE MINUTES OF THE
INAUGURAL MEETING OF THE
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD OF NIAGARA**

BOARD ROOM – EDUCATION CENTRE

December 14, 2010

6:45 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. (Private Session)

7:30 – 10:00 p.m. (Public Session)

ATTENDANCE:

Board: Kevin Maves (Chair), Sue Barnett, Alex Bradnam, Lora Campbell, Dalton Clark, Jonathan Fast, Ed Fulford, Barbara Ness, Dale Robinson, Dave Schaubel, Cheryl Scott

Student

Trustees: James Gillespie, Clive Velkers

Officials:

Warren Hoshizaki (Director of Education), John Dickson, Carol Germyn, Sue Greer, Cam Hathaway, Marilyn Hyatt, Sue Mark, Jim Morgan, Jane Roth, John Stainsby, Brenda Stokes Verworn, Peter Doan, Kim Yielding, Marian Lamb, Karen Bellamy

Recording

Secretary: Irene Foster

Technical

Support: Linda Gonschior, Ezeldin Ebadalla

A. COMMENCEMENT OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD

1. Call to Order and Noting of Members Absent

Chair Kevin Maves called the Inaugural Meeting of the Board to order at 7:30 p.m. Chair Maves introduced the Board of Trustees for the 2010-2014 term and he also introduced and welcomed guests who were present in the gallery.

2. Declarations of Conflict of Interest

There were no conflicts of interest declared.

B. COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (PRIVATE SESSION)

Moved by Dalton Clark
Seconded by Barbara Ness

“That the Board do now enter Committee of the Whole (Private Session).”

CARRIED

Moved by Sue Barnett

“That the Board do now return to open meeting.”

CARRIED

C. SINGING OF “O CANADA”

The Board stood as students from Forestview Public School’s “Guys Sing” choir sang “O Canada.” The students also performed “Wavin Flag” under the direction of teacher, Keith Tait.

Superintendent Cam Hathaway explained that the choir originated as an extension of a program to engage reluctant learners and to facilitate literacy outside the classroom. The students also perform at a variety of community venues. Superintendent Hathaway commended the members of the choir for being an inspiration and role model for other students. The choir was presented with a certification in recognition of their achievement.

D. OPENING PRAYER OR REFLECTIVE READING

Student Trustees James Gillespie and Clive Velkers opened the meeting with a reflective reading.

E. BUSINESS OF THE BOARD**1. Adoption of the Agenda**

Moved by Barbara Ness
Seconded by Jonathan Fast

“That the Agenda be adopted.”

CARRIED

BUSINESS OF THE BOARD – continued:**2. Approval of Board Minutes**

Moved by Dave Schaubel
Seconded by Ed Fulford

“That the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the District School Board of Niagara dated November 23, 2010, be confirmed as submitted.”

and

“That the Minutes of the Organization Meeting of the District School Board of Niagara dated December 7, 2010, be confirmed as submitted.”

CARRIED

3. Business Arising from the Minutes

There was no business arising from the minutes.

4. Ratification of Business Conducted in Committee of the Whole (Private Session)

Moved by Dale Robinson
Seconded by Sue Barnett

“That the business conducted in Committee of the Whole (Private Session) be now ratified by the Board.”

CARRIED

F. EDUCATIONAL SHOWCASING OR PRESENTATIONS**1. Eden High School Volleyball Team**

Superintendent John Stainsby introduced the showcase and congratulated the students on their sportsmanship and accomplishments. Superintendent Stainsby acknowledged the teacher/coaches as a great example of how DSBN staff contribute to students. Principal Hernder acknowledged the Eden coaching staff and students for their contributions and dedication. Principal Hernder introduced members of Eden High School's Senior Boys' Volleyball Team and recognized the team as the 2010 Ontario Federation of School Athletic Associations (OFSSA) Champions. This is the fifth consecutive Gold Medal OFSAA win for Eden High School's Volleyball Team. Teacher/Coach Mr. Pereira shared highlights of the team's season.

Director Hoshizaki presented the team with a plaque in recognition of their accomplishment. Trustee Fast congratulated the students on their skills and success.

EDUCATIONAL SHOWCASING OR PRESENTATIONS – continued:**2. Fort Erie Secondary School**

Superintendent John Stainsby introduced the showcase. Vice-Principal Norbert Kuebeck highlighted the Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM) Hospitality and Tourism program and commended Teacher Afshin Keyvani for his work, vision, and dedication in moving the program forward, particularly for establishing the school's successful Pomegranate Restaurant. Vice-Principal Kuebeck noted that the students recently provided catering service for the Town of Fort Erie's Council Inauguration. The Board viewed a video which highlighted the students' preparation for the recent Honour Roll Banquet. Under the guidance of Teacher Keyvani, students from the program presented and served the Board members with cake to commemorate the start of their new term of office. Vice-Principal Kuebeck thanked Media Studies Teacher Chuck Stone for producing the video, which demonstrates collaboration amongst a variety of programs. Vice-Principal Kuebeck also thanked the Board for supporting the program which provides students with opportunities for future success.

Director Hoshizaki presented the students with a certificate in recognition of their achievements. Trustee Dalton Clark commended staff at both Eden High School and Fort Erie Secondary School for their dedication to students.

G. STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT REPORTS

There was no report.

H. DELEGATIONS

There were no Delegations.

I. BOARD RECESS

There was no Board Recess.

J. OLD BUSINESS**1. REPORT OF THE STUDENT TRUSTEE SENATE**

**Moved by James Gillespie
Seconded by Clive Velkers**

“That the report of the Student Trustee Senate dated November 24, 2010, be received.”

CARRIED

OLD BUSINESS – continued:**REPORT OF THE STUDENT TRUSTEE SENATE**

Student Trustees James Gillespie and Clive Velkers summarized the report of the Student Trustee Senate which included discussion on a variety of potential fundraising initiatives.

2. REPORT OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

**Moved by Dalton Clark
Seconded by Barbara Ness**

“That the report of the Finance Committee dated December 8, 2010, be received and the following recommendations adopted.”

Accumulated Surplus

“That the Schedule of Accumulated Surplus for the year ended August 31, 2010, be approved.”

Audit Committee

“That Michael Pychel and Christopher Mason be appointed as the external members of the Audit Committee for a three year term effective January 31, 2011.”

CARRIED

Trustee Dalton Clark summarized the report of the Finance Committee which included a review of the Schedule of Accumulated Surplus (previously known as Schedule of “Reserves”), and membership on the provincially mandated Audit Committee.

Trustee Dalton Clark clarified for Trustee Barnett that membership on the Audit Committee is legislatively mandated for a three year term.

K. QUESTIONS ASKED OF AND BY BOARD MEMBERS

No questions were asked.

L. NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business.

M. INFORMATION AND PROPOSALS**1. Staff Reports****(a) Director's Report**

Director Hoshizaki reported on the following:

- Teacher Learning and Leadership Program (TLLP) – Primary teachers from several Welland elementary schools were successful in their application for funding which enabled them to create common formative assessment tools to assess reading for meaning in the primary grades, and which enabled them to develop strategies to enhance student achievement and success.
- Cougar Connection at Connaught Public School – a community involvement program which brought families and the community together at the school for social interaction and discussion on issues such as parenting.
- January 2011 Secondary School Open Houses have been scheduled across the region.

Director Hoshizaki commended staff at Grapeview and Fort Erie for effectively managing situations following recent watermain breaks at the schools. Director Hoshizaki also commended staff at Heximer for accommodating students from a neighbouring Catholic school following a recent electrical problem at their school.

2. Trustee Information Session

There was no Information Session.

3. Correspondence and Correspondence

- (a) Copy of letter sent to the Minister of Education regarding Special Education Funding.

4. Trustee Communications and School Liaison

- (a) Trustee Dalton Clark reported that he recently visited an event at the St. Catharines Collegiate where Grades 7 and 8 students heard presentations from various non-profit groups from across Niagara which highlighted how they support the community. As a follow-up, students will be provided with the opportunity to volunteer at organizations of their choice with the support of students from Brock University and Niagara

INFORMATION AND PROPOSALS – continued:**Trustee Communications and School Liaison**

College. Trustee Clark commended the staff for providing the students with the opportunity to develop an awareness of the needs in the community.

- (b) Trustee Barbara Ness reported that she attended the recent Santa Claus parade in Niagara Falls and noted that Santa's sleigh was built by students from Stamford Collegiate.
- (c) Trustee Barbara Ness reported that students from James Morden Public School recently participated in an initiative, "Vow of Silence," to raise awareness of children's rights that are not being upheld around the world.
- (d) Trustee Barbara Ness reported that she recently attended the Choralis Camerata production of "Amahl and the Night Visitors" and she noted that the Welland Centennial Secondary School Arts Department was recognized for their hard work in building the stage set.

5. Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA) Report

There was no report.

6. Future Meetings

Trustees will be provided with a schedule of meetings for January 2011.

N. ADDRESS TO THE BOARD

Kevin Maves, Chair of the District School Board of Niagara, delivered his Inaugural Address to the Board.

Good evening ladies and gentlemen, invited guests, senior staff and fellow Board members. It is a privilege and an honour to be addressing you this evening at the Inaugural meeting of the District School Board of Niagara. The start of any new term is filled with anticipation and great expectations as we start the important tasks required of the Board. In the case of a Public School Board we are charged with overseeing a vital component of any society, the education of our children. How we answer that challenge will have a profound impact on the future success and prosperity of all citizens in the Niagara Region. We are fortunate to live in a great country like Canada, where the importance of public education is entrenched as a bedrock of our society.

The importance of education is never more apparent than it is today in a rapidly changing 21st century where the magnitude of change is staggering. Advances in technology have made the world a much different place than it was even ten years ago. Careers and occupations of previous years have been replaced with jobs unheard of ten

ADDRESS TO THE BOARD – continued:

years ago. If educational experts are correct, we are training our children for jobs in the future that don't even exist at the present time. As a consequence of these technological advancements, the delivery of education has had to adapt to keep pace with these changes.

If one were to visit an average classroom in the DSBN today, evidence of these changes would be readily evident. Teachers are incorporating the use of computers, Smart Boards and hand held devices like I-pods in their lessons. Students are embracing the new technologies and the delivery of lessons in this new interactive style of learning. The introduction of technology begins early at the DSBN as each Early Learning classroom in our Full Day Early Learning Kindergarten Program is equipped with a Netbook and LCD projector. Most of these sites are also in the process of setting up I pads in the classroom also a first for School Boards in Ontario.

The importance of the early learning initiative and the impact it has on the future success of students has been definitively demonstrated by Dr. Charles Pascal in his report prepared for the Ontario government. In year one of the Full Day Early Learning Program the DSBN has 27 classes across the Region benefitting our four and five year old students. By September of 2012 approximately 49% of DSBN elementary schools will have the Early Learning Programs, with full implementation in all schools expected by September of 2014. An added benefit of the introduction of these Early Learning Programs is the associated daycare programs that are a part of the program. All daycare staff within our schools have been trained and are using the learning outcomes provided by the Ministry of Education's Early Learning Extended Day Program.

In keeping with priorities identified by the Ministry of Education the DSBN has maintained a heavy emphasis on Literacy and Numeracy Initiatives. In 2005 a DSBN coaching program was developed for the elementary panel, providing teachers with the support of a teaching coach. This strategy is a powerful way of increasing teachers' knowledge and a means of improving teaching practices by having teachers work collaboratively with the support of a teaching coach. This DSBN coaching model was also introduced to the Secondary panel in 2008. Currently there are 63 Literacy Coaches and 34 Literacy Leads in our elementary schools and 16 instructional coaches in our Secondary schools.

Another effort by the DSBN to improve student achievement was to provide support for our most vulnerable students. A Priority Schools Committee was established to assess the need for providing differentiated support for schools affected by high incidences of students living in poverty. Once the schools were identified, based on a clear set of defined criteria, additional supports and staffing were provided in an effort to close the gap in student learning. This strategy has led to the implementation of a summer learning program called H.E.A.T. which stands for "Helping Everyone Achieve Together." This is intended to help students retain their achievement level obtained in June to carry over the summer. The program started in 2009 with students from 3 elementary schools participating, and increased to 10 schools participating in 2010. The four week program focuses on literacy, numeracy and experiential learning. Two other similar programs are the Kindergarten Kick Start Program and the Funshine Kids Program which have helped 153 and 441 students respectively. Many Student Success initiatives throughout our

ADDRESS TO THE BOARD – continued:

Secondary Schools support the District School Board of Niagara's push to attain the Provincial goal of a 85% Graduation Rate.

One of the initiatives to support this is the Re-engagement Initiative which encourages students to complete the high school graduation requirements. Through the hard work of our Secondary School Administrators and In-School Student Success Teams, 207 students who left Secondary School prior to graduating are now back at DSBN schools working toward their Ontario Secondary School Diploma.

Sixteen of our Secondary Schools are currently involved in the DSBN Teacher Learning Projects where a teacher coach works with 7 to 9 colleagues to gain deeper understanding of what they teach, why they teach, and how they can best relate their practices to the various learning styles of our students. These groups co-plan, co-teach, and debrief throughout the school year with their focus on students' learning. It is our hope to expand this project to the remaining secondary schools for the 2011-2012 school year and beyond.

Also in the Secondary panel, our Specialist High Skills Major program is growing by leaps and bounds. This program was started in 2006 with 40 students attending one SHSM program in Construction. Flash forward to 2010 and we are currently offering 37 Specialist High Skills Major programs in areas such as Arts, Business, Horticulture, Information and Communication, Technology, Manufacturing, Construction, Agriculture, Hospitality and Tourism, Energy and Transportation. The number of students participating in these programs has increased to approximately 800 students.

Continuing with technology in our system, DSBN Skills Challenges also continue to flourish. Last year 34 events took place where approximately 3,000 students participated in a wide variety of skills challenges. Many of these students go on to represent the DSBN in regional, provincial, national and international competitions. Our SHSM students have been busy on the construction front building homes in Port Colborne, Welland, Niagara Falls, St. Catharines and Grimsby. We are currently on our ninth local build with Habitat for Humanity in a wonderful partnership that has benefitted both organizations. On the international front, DSBNi has built three homes for Habitat for Humanity in Paraguay, El Salvador, and Vietnam with a fourth build scheduled for Vietnam in 2011. These homes are built in the summer time with DSBN staff and students fundraising and giving of their own time to help families in need of basic housing.

Also on the international front, in September of 2009 the DSBN was involved in the opening of the Canadian International School in Ho Chi Minh City in Vietnam. This represents the first international partnership between the DSBN and an international school. The DSBN serves as advisors to the school through supports and resources for teachers, as well as allowing access to the Ontario Curriculum. The CIS Vietnam pays a fee for services to the DSBN based upon enrolment. In the first year of operation this partnership generated approximately \$200,000 in revenue for the DSBN. This revenue can be used by the DSBN to help offset costs of other innovative programs being developed and delivered by the DSBN.

ADDRESS TO THE BOARD – continued:

While I could talk at length about the wonderful things happening in the DSBN, I would be remiss if I didn't mention some of the challenges we face as a Board. The proverbial elephant in the room, declining enrolment, is the most challenging issue facing most school Boards in Ontario. As student populations decline it leads to both funding decreases and facility under-utilization issues. Our situation is further compounded by having a system with many older buildings requiring millions of dollars in renovations and updates. In the last ten years the DSBN has conducted several Accommodation Reviews in different municipalities throughout our region. I don't have to tell you how difficult and polarizing for the communities involved these reviews can be. When I ran as a Trustee some ten years ago I never imagined voting to close a school let alone several schools over the years. As a former Trustee with our Board once told me, he didn't think there was a harder decision an elected official had to make than to close a school. As difficult as these decisions may be, they must be made as the status quo due to declining enrolment is not an option.

Some of our critics would say we have some kind of hidden agenda to close certain schools at the expense of others. I would answer that we have a very overt agenda to rationalize facilities in order to reinvest and revitalize areas in need within the system. In recent reviews completed we have approved the construction of much need elementary schools in Niagara-on-the-Lake and Welland and building additions in Niagara on the Lake and Niagara Falls. These reinvestments in these communities would not possible without the consolidation of older, underutilized facilities. There is still a long way to go in this area, as we still have thousands of excess student capacity along with a lengthy list of buildings requiring capital investments. Unfortunately the Accommodation Review process is the only way to make major reinvestments in the system other than routine investments for facility renewals.

As a Board, if we continue to make the difficult but necessary decisions required, we will be able to reinvest in our system for the benefit of all our students. Our students deserve to be educated in well maintained facilities with the most current and innovative technologies we can afford. We are making these investments as fast as we can while considering the funding restraints faced by all School Boards. In the current economy all levels of government have deficit problems so everybody in the Public sector will be asked to do more with less. We are fortunate at the DSBN to have many great partnerships that allow us to provide more for our students. I would like to acknowledge just a few of our valued partners such as the YMCA, Business Education Council, Mountainview Homes, Home Depot, various Fire Departments, Niagara Regional Police, Brock University, Niagara College, General Motors, Education Foundation of Niagara, Shaw Festival, Aerospace, Ontario Welding Association, and the list goes on. I extend our sincere thanks to these and all our wonderful partners.

The next four years at the DSBN will be very exciting and challenging as we endeavour to provide the best education possible for our children. As always, our main priority will be to facilitate student learning and achievement for all students throughout the Board. Aside from our core responsibilities to our students, we will also continue to help our most vulnerable students.

ADDRESS TO THE BOARD – continued:

I mentioned earlier the priority schools and the supports that we will continue to provide. In addition, the DSBN is in the planning stages for a unique and innovative school - the DSBN Academy - which is designed to provide additional supports for students who may not otherwise have these opportunities. This school will be the first of its kind for both the Niagara Region and Canada.

Another unique opportunity to enhance learning opportunities for our students is the potential revitalization of the Woodend Outdoor Education Centre. The “Living Campus” idea is a joint effort between the DSBN, the Education Foundation of Niagara, Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority, and the Niagara Escarpment Commission to transform the current Woodend into a learning centre dedicated to environmental studies. The fundraising for this project will be led by the Education Foundation of Niagara, an arms-length body of the DSBN dedicated to enhancing educational opportunities for students of the DSBN. The renovation of the buildings at Woodend will be carried out by our Specialist High Skills Major students providing them with valuable experience not easily obtained otherwise.

As I have briefly outlined we have many things to be proud of at the DSBN and many new and exciting prospects to look forward to. Success in any environment is achieved if you have the proper people working together for a common purpose.

We are very fortunate to be blessed with outstanding and dedicated employees in all facets of our Board. From teachers to secretaries, custodial staff, administrators and support staff and central staff all contribute to the high quality of education we provide for our students. To oversee and manage our large and diverse organization we are led by our very capable Director Warren Hoshizaki and his excellent senior team. Last but not least I would like to acknowledge my fellow Board members who for the next four years will formulate policy for the DSBN and make some of the, often difficult, decisions required of a Board. I look forward to working with Dale Robinson as Vice-Chair as well as both returning and new Trustees elected to serve. If we remember that our purpose for being here is to provide an excellent education and future opportunities for our children, we can accomplish great things together in the next four years. For those of you still awake. I thank you on behalf of the DSBN for attending our meeting this evening and for the pleasure of serving in such a noble cause. Thank you.

O. ADDRESS TO THE BOARD

Dale Robinson, Vice-Chair of the District School Board of Niagara, delivered her Inaugural Address to the Board.

Good evening. For the past month or so, as newly elected Trustees, we have been eagerly digesting the tomes of information that have been presented to us, both orally and in writing, by countless organizations, committees, departments and administrators. The information is intended to inform us about the programs, policies and procedures already in place, both at the District School Board of Niagara and at the Ministry of Education, that are designed to ensure that we are providing our students with the best possible educational opportunities. The information is intended to give us a common ground, a basic understanding of the world of education at the Trustee level.

ADDRESS TO THE BOARD – continued:

Yet, we have come together from many different backgrounds, experiences and occupations, representing eleven very different communities. While we share the common bond of caring about our students, their families and communities, and the employees of the Board, how we view this new world may be very different from others here tonight. Is it then possible that we can all have the same goal, that we can all “achieve success together?”

A few years ago I was privileged to do a performance appraisal for an excellent young teacher in her grade one classroom. That morning she first read the children a poem and they then discussed its content. She encouraged the children to create a picture in their minds as they shared their ideas. Then they were asked to go to their seats to draw a picture of the poem. The children worked diligently for quite some time, then reconvened excitedly to share their work. As each child stood to share their creation and explain their thinking, it was clear that something amazing was happening. Every picture was different! Every child was enthralled with the ideas being shared by their classmates. The teacher was obviously delighted with this outcome and proceeded to ask the students why, when they had all listened to the same poem, they had all ended up with very different results. Eager little hands shot into the air! “Because we all have different schema!” announced one small, smiling person as the others nodded in agreement. The principal was, as you can well imagine, in awe!

For those of you, who, like me, did not learn about schema theory in grade one, let me, explain. Schema is the mental structures that provide us with our framework for understanding information about the world around us. Simply put, schema are abstract mental plans that function as structures for interpreting information, as frameworks for solving problems and as guides for action. According to Piaget, who first introduced this learning theory in the 1920’s, we tend to interpret the world based on what we already know and believe. When we come upon new information we can either assimilate it, because it fits what we already know, or accommodate what we know to fit the new information. In the classroom, teachers use learning strategies based on schema theory, such as making connections or instructional conversations, to help their students learn.

I love this story for many reasons, and not just because I couldn’t believe that grade one students understood a concept I didn’t learn about until university! At one level this story is about what our youngest students are capable of learning. At another, it is about what our good teachers are capable of teaching their students; not just content and skills, but how to value each other’s thinking and how to celebrate differences. At another, it is a powerful metaphor for all of us here tonight.

Our goal at the District School Board of Niagara is to “achieve success together.” Yet, if I were to ask each person here to draw your picture of what that means to you, like our grade one students, there would not be two alike. Are our pictures wrong if they are not alike? Is there only one correct vision of success?

Schema theory tells us that each of us brings a unique set of experiences, knowledge, skills and values to our roles as Trustees, teachers, students, support staff, maintenance and custodial staff, business staff and administration. It tells us that each of us will use our schema to interpret the important information, on countless topics yet unimagined,

ADDRESS TO THE BOARD – continued:

that will be presented to us over the next four years. Schema theory tells us that our individual interpretations of this information will, in all likelihood, be very different. Our grade one class tells us that our differences are good and will enhance our understanding of the world of education. Our differences are to be embraced and celebrated.

Our District School Board of Niagara is very much like that classroom of young learners. Because of our differences we have the opportunity to build knowledge and skills and to facilitate learning through authentic discussion. We have the opportunity to explore our differences and celebrate the deepened understanding that arises from different interpretations of the issues ahead. We have the opportunity to assimilate and accommodate new ideas, to solve problems, to take action. In fact, it is only because of our “different schema” that we can, and will, “achieve success together.”

P. ADJOURNMENT

**Moved by Dave Schaubel
Seconded by Ed Fulford**

“That this meeting of the District School Board of Niagara be now adjourned.”

CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

KEVIN MAVES, Chair

WARREN HOSHIZAKI, Director of Education
and Secretary/Treasurer