

## PROGRAM AND PLANNING COMMITTEE

**Tuesday, December 1, 2015  
6:00 p.m.  
Grimsby-Lincoln Room**

1. Call to Order
2. Approval of the Agenda
3. Approval of the Minutes of October 6, 2015
4. Business Arising from the Minutes
5. New Business

### INFORMATION SESSION

- Educational Research Committee.....P. MacKinnon
- Secondary School Program Review for the Current Year 2015-16 .....H. McGregor
- Secondary School Program Review for the Subsequent Year 2016-17.....H. McGregor

6. Other Business
7. Next Meeting – Tuesday, February 2, 2016 at 6:00 p.m. – Grimsby-Lincoln Room
8. Adjournment

## EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH COMMITTEE

### PROPOSAL REPORT AND SUMMARIES PROGRAM AND PLANNING COMMITTEE

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**Date:** Thursday, October 15, 2015  
4:00 pm

**Location:** Education Centre  
Fort Erie Room

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#### **BACKGROUND:**

On Thursday, October 15, 2015 the Educational Research Committee met to review one revision/modification to an ongoing application to conduct research, and two newly proposed research projects.

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#### **REVISION/MODIFICATION #1 Summary**

- a) **Title of Research:** **Learning with Tablets: Fostering 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills in Science and Language Arts** - Principal Investigator: Rochelle Tkach, Graduate Student, Brock University
- b) **Objectives/Rationale/Purpose:** *Learning is becoming less traditional in the digital age and more focused on thinking and communicating skills. This research hopes to provide insight into how digital tools such as tablets can help teachers integrate literacy into other subject areas. A group of students will use tablets to learn language arts and science curriculum and the way they use and interact with the tablets will be tracked.*
- c) **To Commence/Conclude:** February 1-April 20, 2016

**APPROVED**

#### **PROPOSAL #2 Summary**

- a) **Title of Research:** **Visual Literacy and Photography: Visualizing Families (Pilot Study)**  
- Principal Investigators: Diane Collier, Assistant Professor, Department of Teacher Education, Faculty of Education, Brock University, Dr. Jennifer Rowsell, Department of Teacher Education, Brock University, Dr. Peter Vietgen, Department of Teacher Education, Brock University
- b) **Objectives/Rationale/Purpose:** Over the past decade, the rapid evolution of digital technologies has dramatically changed the nature of literacy and literate behaviour. The inclusion of the visual allows one to see the communicative potential of students when visual activities and assessments are used (e.g., Kendrick, McKay, & Moffatt, 2005; Nixon, 2001). Through the visual and through photography, in this project children from diverse families have the opportunity to share their stories in ways that might not be possible through written language.
- c) **Number of Schools:** 2 schools (possible schools, Princess Elizabeth and Lincoln Centennial)
- d) **Age of Student Participants:** primary and junior
- e) **To Commence/Conclude:** October 2015-March 2016
- f) **Time Requirements:** 1-1.5 hours for approximately 5 sessions with each class at each school

We, the Educational Research Committee, recommend this research be APPROVED with the following condition(s):

- revisions to the consent form and letter of invitation,
- pending Brock Ethics approval.

**APPROVED**

### PROPOSAL #3 Summary

- a) **Title of Research:** *Infinite Octopus Lab MS: An Investigation of the Impact of Dynamic Web-Based Instructions and Feedback to Facilitate Lab/Hands-On Learning* - Principal Investigator: Dr. Camille Rutherford, Associate Professor, Faculty of Education, Brock University
- b) **Objectives/Rationale/Purpose:** The researchers are investigating the benefits of using a software program, Infinite Octopus Lab MS, to support students while they conduct hands-on lab experiments in science classrooms. The software gives students step by step instructions, provides feedback and allows them to capture observations and data during experiments. The teachers will be provided with some training and will get the use of the software and computers/tablets if needed during the study. Possible benefits of participation include an improved lab/hands-on learning experience for students.
- c) **Number of Schools:** 8
- d) **Age of Student Participants:** 8 to 17 years of age (Elementary and Secondary)
- e) **To Commence/Conclude:** November 23, 2015-April 29, 2016
- f) **Time Requirements:** 2 units – approximately 4-6 weeks (specific length to be determined by the teacher)

We, the Educational Research Committee, recommend this research be APPROVED with the following condition(s):

- the researchers coordinate the recruitment of potential classes for participation with the Superintendent responsible for research,
- pending Brock Ethics approval.

**APPROVED**

*Recommendation:*

The report of the Educational Research Committee of October 15, 2015 be received.

Submitted by:

Paula MacKinnon

Ann Kennerly, Chair

**Next Meeting:**  
**November 12, 2015**

## EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH COMMITTEE

### PROPOSAL REPORT AND SUMMARIES PROGRAM AND PLANNING COMMITTEE

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**Date:** Thursday, November 12, 2015  
4:00 pm

**Location:** Education Centre  
Fort Erie Room

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**BACKGROUND:**

On Thursday, November 12, 2015 the Educational Research Committee met to review two newly proposed research projects.

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**PROPOSAL #1 Summary**

- a) **Title of Research:** *Student Commuting Patterns and their Effects on Readiness and Achievement* - Principal Investigators: Paul Tayler, BA, BEd, OCT, Graduate Student, Department of Geography, Brock University, Chris Fullerton, Department of Geography, Brock University
- b) **Objectives/Rationale/Purpose:** *This study investigates how students travel to school and how this could impact student readiness and achievement in the morning of their school day.*
- c) **Number of Schools:** 10, in urban area where children may walk to school
- d) **Age of Student Participants:** Grade 6 -- 11 years old
- e) **To Commence/Conclude:** November-December 2015 to April 2016
- f) **Time Requirements:** 10 minute, 3 question, student survey, 30-45 minute teacher interview. Student survey done in a classroom and teachers will be given the option to choose a different venue.

We, the Educational Research Committee, recommend this research be APPROVED with the following conditions:

- a student consent form is required, or a revision to the parental consent to include student consent,
- the teacher interview questions are overarching in theme. Feedback will be given to the researcher regarding making the questions more structured.

**APPROVED**

*Recommendation:*

The report of the Educational Research Committee of November 12, 2015 be received.

Submitted by:

Paula MacKinnon  
Ann Kennerly, Chair

**Next Meeting:**  
**February 18, 2016**

**DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD OF NIAGARA**  
**Secondary School Program for the Current Year 2015-16 Report**  
**Program and Planning Committee**  
**December 1, 2015**

In accordance with Administrative Procedure 4-3, school data has been gathered by the Superintendents of Area 5 Schools working in association with the Student Achievement Leader for Grades 9-12. The following summary has been developed, based on this data, to indicate Board-wide trends in the secondary school course offerings for the 2015-16 school year.

**Introduction and Background**

Since the 1990's declining enrollment has become a common feature of the educational landscape across Ontario. Senior Administration of the DSBN took a proactive stance to deal with this challenge. They were determined to ensure that all secondary school students, whatever their pathway or destination, would have an appropriate range of courses from which to choose. Accordingly, Senior Administration developed a minimum set of course offerings that each school, program area and the system as a whole was to maintain in the interest of their students. This information is contained in the *Guaranteed Minimum Course Offerings at School, Program Area and System Levels* document. Board Administrative Procedure directs that in the fall of each year the DSBN is to conduct two reviews to determine the impact of declining enrollment on the program offerings available to students, with a particular focus on the degree of adherence to the minimum offerings. One Review is to compare the current year's program offerings with those of the previous year. The second Review is to anticipate what changes were likely in the next school year.

**Adherence to the Requirements of the Guaranteed Minimum Offerings at School, Program Area and System Levels**

For the current school year, all 19 secondary schools that were surveyed have demonstrated 100% adherence to the guaranteed minimum course offerings. Four of the five program areas were 100% successful in meeting the minimum requirements for their program area.

**By Program Area**

Area Schools	% Adherence
Fort Erie, Port Colborne, Ridgeway-Crystal Beach	77%
E.L. Crossley, Eastdale, Welland Centennial	100%
Beamsville, Grimsby, South Lincoln	100%
DSBN Academy, Eden, Governor Simcoe, Laura Secord, Sir Winston Churchill, St. Catharines Collegiate, Thorold	100%
A.N. Myer, Stamford Collegiate, Westlane	100%

**By School**

100% of schools are in adherence with the minimum school offerings.

## Breadth of Program in DSBN Secondary Schools

- There is a net decrease of 28 courses running across all 19 secondary schools
- University/University College/Academic destination courses have the largest overall net decrease in courses running
- The largest net decrease in courses running is in Canada and World Studies
- There are minimal or no changes in the net number of courses running in all other subject areas

### Statistics of Courses Running in 2015-16 compared to 2014-15

Grade	# of Cancellations	# of New Courses	Net Difference
9 and 10	8	12	4
11 and 12	66	34	-32
Total	74	46	-28

Course Destination	# of Cancellations	# of New Courses	Net Difference
University/Academic / University-College	41	17	-24
College	8	5	-3
Open	24	19	-5
Applied/Workplace	1	5	4

Subject Area	# of Cancellations	# of New Courses	Net Difference
Arts	9	7	-2
Business	5	2	-3
Canada & World Studies	26	3	-23
English	9	0	-9
Guidance/Career Ed	1	2	+1
Health & Physical Ed	6	9	+3
Interdisciplinary Studies	1	2	+1
Mathematics	0	2	+2
Science	2	2	0
Social Science & Humanities	7	7	0
Technological Studies	3	9	+6
Classical & Inter. Languages	2	0	-2
Native Studies	2	0	-2
French	0	1	+1
Computer Studies	1	0	-1

## Combined Classes

One way of maintaining a broad program and allowing for a range of optional course choices is to combine classes.

- Across the DSBN, there are a total of 94 newly combined courses in schools this year
- The percentage of these newly combined courses in Grades 9 and 10 this year is 45% in comparison to last year's proportion of 18%
- For 2015, Arts (23%) and Technology (20%), have the highest percentages of newly combined classes
- Overall the number of subject areas showing growth in newly combined classes is increasing
- Almost all combined classes consist of students drawn from 2 different grades or 2 different destinations
- Only 2 classes across the DSBN consisted of students drawn from 3 or 4 different grades or destinations

### **Newly Combined Classes for 2015-16**

#### **Classes by Division**

	<b># of Combined</b>	<b>% of Combined</b>
Intermediate (Grade 9 & 10)	42	45%
Intermediate/Senior (Grades 9-12)	7	7%
Senior (Grade 11 & 12)	45	48%
Total	94	

#### **Classes by Subject Area**

	<b># of Combined</b>	<b>% of Combined</b>
Arts	22	23%
Business	8	9%
Canada and World Studies	11	12%
English	0	0%
Guidance/Career Education	0	0%
Health and Physical Education	7	7%
French	1	1%
Mathematics	6	6%
Science	13	14%
Social Science & Humanities	3	3%
Technological Studies	19	20%
Computer Studies	3	3%
Interdisciplinary Studies	0	0%
Classical & International Languages	0	0%
Others	1	1%

### **School Administrators' View of School Program Needs and Concerns**

The review process provides opportunity for Principals to express their needs and concerns relative to

program and staffing for their individual schools. The most common comments submitted by principals include:

- concerns about teachers instructing students within their main areas of qualification
- declining enrollment limits the ability of some schools to maintain course offerings for all destination and subject areas, especially in the Senior Division
- tight staffing and class loads make it difficult to accommodate new students or requests for timetable changes

### **Summary**

The secondary schools of the District School Board of Niagara continue to provide a broad range of courses to their students so that students of all destinations have an adequate breadth of programs, in accordance with the Board's Administrative Procedure on Minimum Course Offerings. This achievement is a testimony to the dedication and collaboration of the superintendents, school administrators and teachers in serving the interests of our students.

### **Recommendation**

"That the Board receive the Secondary School Program Review for the Current Year 2015-16"

Respectfully submitted,  
Helen McGregor  
Superintendent of Education

December 1, 2015



**DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD OF NIAGARA**  
**Secondary School Program Review for 2016-17 Report**  
**Program and Planning Committee**  
**December 1, 2015**

**Introduction**

In accordance with Administrative Procedure 4-3, in the fall of 2015, school data has been gathered by the Superintendents of Area 5 Schools for the District School Board of Niagara working in association with the Student Achievement Leader 9-12. The following summary has been developed, based on this data, to indicate Board-wide trends in the secondary school course offerings for the 2016-17 school year. This Program Review attempts to provide a forecast of the overall program available to students for the next school year across the Board's secondary schools.

**Detailed Summary of Review**

In the fall of every year, our secondary schools make decisions regarding which courses need to be added to / deleted from option sheets for the following school year. Principals are guided by the Board's *Minimum Course Offerings at School, Program Area and System Levels*, changes to Ministry of Education curricula, as well as by the needs of the students in each school.

Key findings:

- majority of the increases and decreases are a direct result of new curriculum
- net course offerings will increase minimally for the 2016-2017 school year by a total of 33 courses for the 19 secondary schools
- the change in number of proposed courses in each subject area shows very little change
- net number of additional proposed course offerings has increased most significantly for University, University/College, Academic courses

**Statistics By Grade: Course Deletions and Additions**

Grade	# of Deletions	# of Additions	Net Difference
9 and 10	5	7	+2
11 and 12	13	44	+31

**Statistics by Course Destinations: Course Deletions and Additions**

Course Destination	# of Deletions	# of Additions	Net Difference
University/Academic/University-College	9	27	+18
College	1	6	+5
Open	5	13	+8
Applied/Workplace	3	4	+1
Other	0	1	+1

**Statistics by Subject Area: Course Deletions and Additions**

Subject Area	# of Deletions	# of Additions	Net Difference
Arts	2	6	+4
Business	0	1	+1
Canadian and World Studies	2	8	+6
English	0	1	+1
French	0	0	0
Guidance	0	0	0
Health and Physical Education	0	9	+9
Mathematics	2	0	-2
Science	2	4	+2
Social Science & Humanities	4	6	+2
Technological Studies	6	5	-1
Computer Studies	0	2	+2
Native Studies	0	6	+6
Interdisciplinary Studies	0	2	+2
Classical and Inter. Lang.	0	1	+1

**Identified Program Developments and Problematic Areas**

The following were the most commonly cited comments by principals in the 19 secondary schools as they look at the year ahead:

- declining enrolment poses a significant problem in maintaining programs in some subject areas and for students pursuing certain destinations
- with declining enrolment, more staff are teaching outside their main area of expertise
- a growing number of combined/split classes pose challenges for both students and staff
- smaller school enrollment results in timetable challenges especially when there are many single sections and classes at maximum sizes

**Adherence to the DSBN Guaranteed Minimum Offerings**

Based on the data submitted under this Review, there is no reason to doubt that the secondary schools and program areas of DSBN will continue to demonstrate strong adherence to the Board's Policy on Guaranteed Minimum Offerings in the 2016-2017 school year. As a result, students of all destinations will have an appropriate range of course offerings to meet their needs as set out in this Policy.

**Summary:**

The proposed 2016-17 course offerings in the secondary schools of the District School Board of Niagara continue to provide a broad range of course offerings for students of all destinations. There has been little change in the total number of proposed course offerings, in the number of proposed courses in each subject area, in the number of proposed courses for each destination and in the number of proposed courses for each of the Intermediate and Senior Divisions. Schools are to be commended for their efforts in maintaining their breadth of program offerings in the face of ongoing declining enrolment

**Recommendation:**

*“That the Board receive the Secondary School Program Review for the Subsequent Year 2016 -17”*

Respectfully submitted

Helen McGregor  
Superintendent of Education

Date: December 1, 2015

For further information, please contact Helen McGregor or the Director of Education