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A Broadly Shared Mission, Vision and Goals Founded on the Aspirational Images of the Educated Person

District School Board of Niagara Strategic Plan Renewal 2015–2020

Background:

In the fall of 2015-16, District School Board of Niagara (DSBN) stakeholders came together to develop a five-year Strategic Plan to focus and guide school operations. It ensured all stakeholders were working toward common goals and intended outcomes and results. This was a collaborative process that included a shared vision, mission and values to support all learners. The sessions were facilitated by an outside consultant, Bill Tucker, a former Director of the Thames Valley District School Board. The Board of Trustees approved the Strategic Planning process and created a Board Ad Hoc Committee to oversee the process and have the final approval of the plan. The Strategic Plan was based on a five-year focus on student success and the implementation began in 2016.

DSBN Trustee Advisory Committee:

On December 8, 2015, the Ad Hoc Strategic Plan Advisory Committee met to discuss the 2015– 2020 DSBN Strategic Plan renewal process. The committee included five trustees, two student trustees, three superintendents, the communications manager and the Director of Education.

At the meeting, the following items were approved:

- A retired Director of Education would be chosen to facilitate the process
- Thought exchange would be used to obtain feedback from stakeholders and the community
- Three half-day strategic planning sessions would be held
- A trustee would assume the role of Chair of the Ad Hoc Strategic Plan Advisory Committee

Strategic Working Committee Sessions:

Seventy-nine (79) participants were invited to attend the three half-day Strategic Planning Committee sessions. The committee had representation from: elementary/secondary students (10), principals and vice-principals, teachers, First Nation Métis Inuit, unions/federations, trustees, senior team, staff, school council parents, and the community.

Strategic Renewal Plan Process – Moving Forward 2015 – 2020:

Session 1

The process would be used to review the Strategic Plan update from 2010 and provide:

- Overview of the current Strategic Plan and BIPSA
- Celebration: highlight successes and review our accomplishments
- Analyze the impact of the Mission, Vision and Values (Did we make a difference?)
- Engage and launch Thoughtexchange to gain feedback from the system and beyond
- Ascertain whether we need to refine/amend our plan

Session 2

- Gather feedback in the following areas: student, staff and system growth
- Review input with stakeholders
- Review input from each area and develop a first draft of the revised Strategic Plan
- Finalize Strategic Plan and prepare report to the Board of Trustees

The goal of the sessions was to provide an opportunity for all participants to share their thoughts and ideas on what our priorities should be and how we can continue to best move our system forward in a positive way.

January 14, 2016 Strategic Working Committee Session:

Bill Tucker, retired Director of Education, facilitated this session as well as the following two sessions. During this session, senior vice president of Thoughtexchange, Lea Scherck, presented the online feedback process to the committee and answered questions of clarification.

DSBN Strategic Plan “In Focus” Feedback Link

Directly following the January 14, 2016 session, a link was placed on the DSBN and school websites inviting individuals to provide feedback by completing a brief questionnaire. The “In Focus” link was also shared with all staff, trustees and community partners. Consultations with the community were a critical element of the strategic plan development process. The questionnaire required participants to answer questions and provide their thoughts about the District School Board of Niagara.

The process included three stages:

Share – participants shared answers to open ended questions;

Star – participants considered ideas from others and starred those they felt were most important;

Discover – everyone discovered what was important to participants.

The online feedback/consultation revealed the following results:

- 1,967 unique participants
- 7,995 thoughts were contributed
- 106,102 stars were assigned to help prioritize thoughts

February 22, 2016 Strategic Working Committee Session:

The Strategic Planning Committee met to review and discuss the results of the Share and Star stages of the “In Focus” Thoughtexchange input process.

March 24, 2016 Strategic Working Committee Session:

Bill Tucker reviewed all input as well as the collated suggestions for the renewed strategic plan.

The committee worked on a collaborative process to prepare the DSBN Strategic Plan 2015– 2020 which would be recommended to the Board. Consultation with stakeholders on the strategic plan was an important final step in the planning process. It created a formal opportunity for stakeholders to share their perspectives and rework the key elements of focus to ensure they see themselves in the vision of the District School Board of Niagara.

Participants reviewed all suggestions which came from the “In Focus” electronic input, as well as committee input.

As in past strategic plan renewals, the DSBN Strategic Plan 2015–2020 renewal process included representation from all DSBN stakeholder groups and the broader community to ensure all voices were heard.

Everyone had the opportunity to provide suggestions they thought met the spirit of the changes to the DSBN Strategic Plan under *Values*: Respect, Relationships and Responsibilities and *Strategic Priorities*: Student, Staff and System growth opportunities.

At the end of the session, a draft was shared with all participants by the Director of Education.

Final Approval Process:

In May 2016, the Ad Hoc Strategic Plan Advisory Committee met to review the 2015–2020 DSBN Strategic Plan renewal process.

A draft DSBN Strategic Plan 2015–2020, the Thoughtexchange report and a summary and recommendations was presented and approved by the Board of Trustees.

The DSBN’s “I Matter” strategic plan is referenced in all Board Reports, Budget and shared with all Board Committees.

The official launch of the DSBN Strategic Plan 2015–2020 occurred at the System Welcome Back session in August 2016.

I Matter:

The DSBN Strategic Plan 2015–2020 has become widely shared across the system through the “I Matter” campaign. The campaign was created to recognize the plan’s focus on the role of the individual and individualized supports in education.

The plan notes that everyone associated with the DSBN matters in three ways: as individuals, as learners and as members of the community.

Promoting the plan under the “I Matter” framework has fostered a greater engagement, with many schools developing their own initiatives to incorporate the DSBN Strategic Plan 2015–2020 into the school community.

