

Appendix E: Transformation Steering Committee - Outreach by Co-facilitators

It was acknowledged by the Transformation Steering Committee (TSC) and outreach subcommittee that early outreach is important and serves dual purpose: to communicate the intent of the transformation, and to gather initial input and hear early from stakeholders, with the caution of not going out prematurely or too early with more broad based outreach as it is important to ensure the consultation is meaningful and stakeholders have a clear understanding of the questions/considerations.

It was agreed that there would be two phases of outreach, over the short term there be outreach with existing groups/organizations by co-facilitators, to secure preliminary feedback regarding transformation and how those groups could support further engagement over the coming months and years.

Phase two, more extensive engagement within the sector and broader community-based engagement and consultation will take place in the fall of 2018 and beyond, with more focussed questions for feedback.

With Phase 1 of this outreach, the co-facilitators met with a number of organizations to ensure there was representation and voice given to broader perspectives – including trades and skills, various equity seeking organizations and representational voices, higher education, research, and child/youth advocacy groups. This is a summary of some of the feedback secured during those consultations.

Process

- Take the time to get it right – reassuring to know it is a -3-5 year process;
- Importance of thoughtful/thorough/systemic approaches, rather than rushing;
- Importance of transformation – it cannot be just about adding on to an overloaded curriculum – this is important – take the time to get it right;
- Importance of consultation throughout the process;
- Consideration and input regarding partners/organizations assisting with outreach;
- Importance of the voice of young people – use and success of listening tours;
- The importance of inter-ministerial work – Ministry of Education with Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development as an example;

Central Curriculum and Outcomes -Flexibility

- Reflects on shift from more central control to seeking input from partners and locals – a positive move;
- The importance to find the right balance – core provincial curriculum expectations and flexibility to address the needs of students and address the strengths and priorities within the school community;

Pathways

- The importance that all pathways are known and honoured.
- Importance of pathways, choices and opportunities for all students – throughout elementary and high school years, not just at the grade 9 level;
- Making the skilled trades a positive option for students – requires student and parent information and outreach;
- Pathways discussion needs to be addressed at level of mindsets among parents and communities – potential stigma related to some pathways;
- The common interest in addressing equity of access and reducing systemic barriers including in relation to equitable access to initial teacher education;
- Implications of over-representation of equity seeking groups in the applied stream - the challenges this poses for greater diversity in initial teacher education programs including Indigenous;
- Parent awareness, engagement in decisions about pathways, with special consideration given to First Nations, Metis and Inuit students moving out of communities to attend high school;
- Importance of engaging educators;
- Importance of using the evidence and research relating to barriers and opportunities.
- Experiential learning is important for all students;

Equity

- Moral imperative to ensure that equity, social justice and anti-oppression are authentically embedded in the transformation processes and the modernized curriculum;
- Ensuring equity lens captures poverty and distinguishes between the unique characteristics of those facing poverty in rural vs urban settings;

- Students need to see themselves reflected in curriculum – resources – teachers and leaders in the system;
- Favourable comments on broadening the focus to include equity, inclusivity, wellbeing, self/identity - development of the whole child;
- Importance to address the spectrum of issues and intersectionality of diversity to avoid stereotypes within dimensions of diversity. First Nations, Metis and Inuit, new comers – immigrants – racialized – issues of poverty – it is about cultural capital for every student;
- Needs are very different across the province and the importance of addressing those needs;

Transferable Skills

- Interest in transferable skills should not eclipse centrality of human development, formation of self and preparation for life;
- Culturally relevant – including anti-oppressive education not just a focus on corporate;

Wellbeing

- Need to keep mental health and well-being (cognitive, emotional, social, physical, spirit/self) at the core of transformation and transitions;
- Wellbeing has to be a focus point for the curriculum, part of identity development, finding ones place in the school and bringing parents into the discourse at how students are doing at home, in the community, at schools;
- Mental health issues are critical – for First Nations, Metis and Inuit students whether in Toronto or northern Ontario, and applies to all students. All students need to be valued – need to see themselves – need to be honoured – bringing parents into the discussion – it is all critical;
- From a wellbeing perspective – same lens applied to teachers and leaders in the system;
- Whether wellbeing – pathways – opportunities -the importance of knowing how to navigate the system – variance in supports, successes and opportunities lies in the parents/students knowing and being comfortable in the system;

Support for and Importance of Ongoing Consultation

- The importance of hearing from a many diverse groups across the province – including all demographics – particularly youth.

- The willingness of many organizations to support future consultations by reaching out to members and using their networks to broaden outreach and engagement opportunities.