



EXTRAORDINARY BOARD PUBLIC MINUTES

Wednesday, September 1, 2021

6:00 pm

Zoom Meeting

Trustees Present: Lynn Scott, Keith Penny, Donna Blackburn, Christine Boothby, Rob Campbell, Chris Ellis, Justine Bell, Lyra Evans, Mark Fisher, Wendy Hough, Sandra Schwartz, AmaturRaheem Salam-Alada (Student Trustee), Charles Chen (Student Trustee)

Staff Present: Camille Williams-Taylor (Director of Education), Brett Reynolds (Associate Director), Mike Carson (Chief Financial Officer), Janice McCoy (Superintendent of Human Resources), Michele Giroux (Executive Officer, Corporate Services), Carolyn Tanner (Human Rights and Equity Advisor), Prince Duah (Superintendent of Instruction), Peter Symmonds (Superintendent of Learning Support Services), Nadia Towaij (Superintendent of Program and Learning K-12), Richard Sinclair (Manager of Legal Services and Labour Relations), Sandy Owens (Manager, Business & Learning Technologies), Diane Pernari-Hergert (Manager of Communications & Information Services), Nicole Guthrie (Manager of Board Services), Michael Guilbault (Central AV Technician), Leigh Fenton (Board/Committee Coordinator)

1. Call to Order -- Chair of the Board

Chair Scott called the public meeting to order at 6:01 p.m. She acknowledged that the meeting is taking place on unceded Algonquin Territory and thanked the Algonquin Nations for hosting the meeting on their land.

2. Approval of the Agenda

Chair Scott noted that in an extraordinary board meeting additional items may not be added to the agenda.

Moved by Trustee Schwartz, seconded by Trustee Lyra Evans,

THAT the agenda be approved.

3. Report from Committee of the Whole, 31 August 2021

Chair Scott reported that the Committee of the Whole met on 31 August 2021 and reports as follows:

Moved by Trustee Lyra Evans, seconded by Trustee Penny,

- A. THAT the Staff work collaboratively with Ottawa Public Health (OPH) and Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (OCDSB) employee groups to develop a strategy and protocol to require staff be “fully vaccinated” against COVID-19. This can include a multi-pronged approach that takes into consideration and mitigates as much as possible the operational risks arising from the strategy and protocol, to ensure OCDSB workplaces remain as safe as possible for students and staff;
- B. THAT in developing and implementing the protocol and strategy the OCDSB will comply with its human rights obligations and accommodate employees who are legally entitled to accommodation; and
- C. THAT the finalized COVID-19 mandatory employee vaccination protocol and strategy be implemented by 30 September 2021 with the first shot taking place by 30 September 2021 with the second shot if necessary as soon as medically allowed and available.

In introducing the motion Trustee Lyra Evans stated that it is important that all students are protected by implementing a mandatory vaccination policy for staff.

Trustee Schwartz sought clarification from staff on whether unvaccinated staff will be removed from classrooms before a protocol is drafted using the 30 September 2021 deadline proposed in the motion. Superintendent McCoy responded that at this time all school boards are required by the Ministry of Education to implement the vaccine status reporting regulation. By 15 September 2021, all school boards in Ontario are required to post on their websites non-identifying data indicating the percentage of staff across the school board who have not been fully vaccinated. Completing an attestation is mandatory for employees in accordance with the direction from the Ministry. Staff members who indicate that they are unvaccinated will be subject to frequent rapid antigen testing. Superintendent McCoy commented that unvaccinated staff will not be subject to employment restrictions pending the development of the protocol.

Trustee Schwartz inquired about plans to address employees who choose not to participate in the COVID-19 immunization program. Director Williams-Taylor noted that with the antigen testing protocols in place at the launch of the school year, the active risk of the transmission of COVID-19 is considerably diminished in school buildings. Further operational guidance from the Ministry is expected and an additional memo was released on 1 September 2021 on the details for the re-opening of schools. She noted that unvaccinated staff, due to medical, religious or creed-based reasoning, will be exempt from the requirement to be vaccinated; however those staff members will be required to undergo regular testing for the COVID-19 virus.

Trustee Hough expressed the view that it has been an egregious abdication of responsibility on the part of the provincial government for not making choices on behalf of every student in Ontario. She noted her dissatisfaction that decisions on public health have been deferred to school board trustees.

Trustee Penny assumed the Chair.

Trustee Scott queried the likelihood of implementation for the protocol outlined in parts A and B of the motion by the determined date of 30 September 2021. Superintendent McCoy responded that staff has begun work on the vaccination attestation protocol. She noted that the timeline is reasonable to ensure completion of the protocol. At any time, should more time be required trustees will be advised. Superintendent McCoy added that an indication as to the magnitude of the task will present itself once the District becomes aware of the proportion of staff that is unvaccinated.

Trustee Scott resumed the Chair position.

Moved by Trustee Lyra Evans

Seconded by Trustee Penny

A. THAT the Staff work collaboratively with Ottawa Public Health (OPH) and Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (OCDSB) employee groups to develop a strategy and protocol to require staff be “fully vaccinated” against COVID-19. This can include a multi-pronged approach that takes into consideration and mitigates as much as possible the operational risks arising from the strategy and protocol, to ensure OCDSB workplaces remain as safe as possible for students and staff;

B. THAT in developing and implementing the protocol and strategy the OCDSB will comply with its human rights obligations and accommodate employees who are legally entitled to accommodation.

C. THAT the finalized COVID-19 mandatory employee vaccination protocol and strategy be implemented by 30 September 2021 with the first shot taking place by 30 September 2021 with the second shot if necessary as soon as medically allowed and available.

For (11): Trustee Scott, Trustee Penny, Trustee Blackburn, Trustee Boothby, Trustee Campbell, Trustee Ellis, Trustee Bell, Trustee Lyra Evans, Trustee Fisher, Trustee Hough, and Trustee Schwartz

Carried (11 to 0)

4. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 6:27 p.m.

Lynn Scott, Chair of the Board