

OCDSB Special Meeting-July 9th

Delegate Statement: Jessica Haynes

Good evening, thank you for giving me the opportunity to address you.

My name is Jessica Haynes. I have three children who will all be attending Stonecrest Elementary School this fall: in Grades 5, 1 and JK. We did e-learning from March-June and found it challenging due to the social isolation, motivation of children and bandwidth issues at our house.

Looking ahead to the fall, I have some concerns with a model that relies on continued remote learning, for three or potentially more days a week. I understand that this is the direction the Board has received from the Ministry and we all must work within certain constraints. My preference would be for fulltime in-class learning with additional hygiene measures and some physical distancing when possible. I know that may not be achievable, at least not in September. So, looking ahead, I anticipate a scenario where I will be directing learning for my three children, including my daughter who will be in Grade 1 and is on the Autism Spectrum. She needs specialized learning which I am not qualified to provide. Therefore, I worry that the quality of education will be compromised by only attending classes 2 days a week. Our teachers are wonderful but it is not practical to assume they will be able to oversee learning from a distance. This task will fall to parents and particularly to mothers. As that is the case, I am especially concerned to see in your Report, on Page 4, the statement that "Curriculum delivery may be adapted to the delivery model, but the expectation is the achievement of overall expectations across all subjects and grades." I submit that this is an extremely unrealistic expectation which will cause huge stress to parents who will be guiding and be responsible for their children's academic work while they are out of school three days a week. If the Board continues to pursue a part-time schedule, then expectations and curriculum should be modified accordingly. Perhaps the more limited in-class time could prioritize language development and STEM subjects, leaving other work and activities for the home setting. I would underline that parents should not feel pressured to implement and oversee mandatory elements of the curriculum.

Thank you again.