

BOARD PUBLIC MINUTES

Tuesday, February 28, 2023, 7:45 pm
Board Room
Administration Building
133 Greenbank Road
Ottawa, Ontario

Trustees: Alysha Aziz, Justine Bell, Donna Dickson, Lyra Evans, Jennifer Jennekens, Nili Kaplan-Myrth, Matthew Lee, Cathryne Milburn, Suzanne Nash, Lynn Scott, Antong Hou (Student Trustee)

Staff: Michele Giroux (Director of Education), Randy Gerrior (Associate Director, Business Operations), Janice McCoy (Executive Officer, Corporate Services), James Proulx (Executive Officer, Information Technology and Digital Transformation), Prince Duah (Superintendent of Instruction), Mary Jane Farrish (Superintendent of Instruction), Paula Hall (Superintendent of People, Culture and Leadership), Richard Sinclair (General Counsel, Superintendent of Labour Relations, Risk Management and Privacy), Peter Symmonds (Superintendent of Learning Support Services), Carolyn Tanner (Human Rights and Equity Advisor), Daniel Bradley (Manager, School Facilities Services), Julie Cyr (Manager, Early Learning), Pamela LeMaistre (Manager, Human Resources), Sandy Owens (Manager, Business & Learning Technologies), Diane Pernari (Manager of Communications & Information Services), Laura Scott (Labour Relations Officer), Andrea Rahim (Strategic Business Analyst), Nicole Guthrie (Manager, Board Services), Michael Guilbault (Central Audio/Visual Technical Specialist), Marco Paladino (Training & Support Specialist), James Baker (Board/Committee Coordinator)

1. Call to Order -- Chair of the Board

Chair Lyra Evans called the public meeting to order at 8:08 p.m.

2. Acknowledgement of Territorial Lands

Chair Lyra Evans acknowledged that the meeting is taking place on unceded Algonquin Homelands and thanked the Algonquin Nations for hosting the meeting on their land.

3. Approval of the Agenda

**Moved by Trustee Milburn, seconded by Trustee Jennekens,
THAT the agenda be approved.**

Carried

4. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were filed.

5. Delegations

5.1 Alek Golijanin, re Introduction to Healthtech Tool

Mr. Golijanin discussed the issue of health inequalities and how the Board could address any disparities. He demonstrated through a PowerPoint presentation, an online tool he developed to assist students with access to healthcare. Mr. Golijanin recommended the use of this tool by educators and guidance counselors to assist students with their healthcare needs.

In response to a query, Mr. Golijanin advised that he had presented his tool to Ottawa Public Health (OPH). He added that he was advised by provincial government officials to present his tool to local school boards.

5.2 Tuleine Alshaer, re Anti-Palestinian Racism

Ms. Alshaer identified as a 17 year old student at A.Y. Jackson Secondary School who is of Palestinian descent. She spoke about a class exercise in elementary school that caused her to feel unwelcome and disrespected. She advised that her identity should not be about politics and teachers should not silence her due to her Palestinian heritage.

5.3 Aleyna Kilic, re Anti-Palestinian Racism

Ms. Kilic identified as a grade 12 student at A.Y. Jackson Secondary School and that she was not Palestinian. She stated that she envisioned being in a diverse community and expressed concern that her grade 9 teacher would not acknowledge Palestine. She asked that the Board commit to combating anti-Palestinian racism and to include it into the curriculum.

5.4 Jabir Ghadie, re Anti-Palestinian Racism

Mr. Ghadie identified as a first year university student and a former Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (OCDSB) student. He discussed the constant feeling of anti-Palestinian sentiment and concern regarding the use of antisemitism as a means to silence Palestinian students. Mr. Ghadie expressed a desire for students to feel safe when discussing their

heritage and recommended the creation of a pro-Palestinian equity position.

In response to queries, Mr. Ghadie stated that he had expressed his views on social media. He suggested that the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism dehumanizes Palestinians and that a proper definition of anti-Palestinian racism must be adopted.

6. Report from Committee of the Whole (In Camera)

Vice-Chair Bell reported that the Board met in camera earlier this evening and reports and recommends as follows:

Moved by Jennifer Jennekens

Seconded by Justine Bell

THAT staff be authorized to proceed as directed in the Committee of the Whole (in camera) with respect to the appointment of an Executive Search Consultant.

For (10): Alysha Aziz, Justine Bell, Donna Dickson, Lyra Evans, Jennifer Jennekens, Nili Kaplan-Myrth, Matthew Lee, Cathryne Milburn, Suzanne Nash, and Lynn Scott

Carried (10 to 0)

7. Briefing from the Chair of the Board

During the Briefing from Chair Lyra Evans, the following information was provided:

- During the week of 20 February 2023, students and staff across the District marked Pink Shirt Day as an important moment to celebrate kindness and reflect on how we can come together to stop bullying in our community. On 24 February 2023, the OCDSB shared some examples of how schools marked this day and resources were also provided to help deal with bullying.
- Parents and guardians were asked to remind their children that there are actions they can take if they witness bullying. These include:
 - Reporting any concerning incidents to the principal, vice-principal, a teacher, a trusted adult, OCDSB Cares, or anyone who can help;
 - Speaking out: If it's safe to do so, bystanders can speak out against bullying, violence, harassment, hate or discrimination;

- Being kind: Comfort the person who was hurt and make it known that what happened was not fair or deserved. Be a friend. Ask what you can do to help; and
- Stopping the spread of online content, videos or images that cause further harm.
- During the month of February 2023, students and staff celebrated Black History Month through performances, art, special events, school displays, classroom lessons, and more.
- On 25 March 2023, at Brookfield High School, the OCDSB partnered with Parents for Diversity for a parent advocacy conference on supporting Black students; and
- In the wake of growing anti-trans public sentiment, including the murder of prominent trans youth Brianna Ghey in the UK, and the passing of anti-trans legislation in US states such as Tennessee, the Board and the District reaffirmed its commitment to protecting the rights of gender diverse, trans, and all LGBTQ students within the District.

8. Briefing from the Director

During the Briefing from Director Giroux, the following information was provided:

- It has been more than one year since the war in Ukraine began. The efforts of staff in supporting new students who have joined us in the past year was acknowledged. Since the start of this conflict, the OCDSB has welcomed approximately 450 Ukrainian students to its schools; and
- In March 2023, principals shared with families a school climate survey. The voluntary and anonymous survey provides feedback to each school about the extent to which parents feel their school supports learning and positive behaviour, and promotes a safe and inclusive environment. This information will guide and inform the actions that schools take to address issues such as bullying, safety, engagement and well-being. The survey was available in 12 languages and will run until 24 March 2023.

In response to a query regarding a staffing issue at the OCDSB Family Reception Centre, Director Giroux advised that she would follow up and report at the 28 March 2023 Board meeting.

9. Confirmation of Board Minutes

9.1 31 January 2023

Moved by Trustee Aziz, seconded by Trustee Dickson,

THAT the Board meeting report, dated 31 January 2023, be confirmed.

Carried

10. Business Arising from Board Minutes

In response to a query from Trustee Scott regarding the cancellation of exams in January 2023 and how they would be managed in June 2023, Director Giroux noted that exams had been cancelled for grades 9 and 10. There had been a variance in practice with respect to how these days were used and that staff are continuing to gain a better understanding of how to better use this time. She noted that many students have utilized the time for credit recovery. Director Giroux noted that 450 credits had been recovered during the exam period in January 2023. Director Giroux advised that messaging would be forthcoming with respect to how days will be used by students.

Trustee Scott noted that students who did not require credit recovery were not receiving instruction and were at home.

Director Giroux advised that she would seek clarification on the issue.

11. Matters for Action

11.1 Receipt of Committee of the Whole Report

11.1.a 7 February 2023

Moved by Trustee Bell, seconded by Trustee Milburn,

THAT the Committee of the Whole report, dated 7 February 2023, be received.

Carried

11.1.a.a Approval of School Year Calendar: Key Dates

In response to a query from Trustee Scott with respect to the potential need to amend the calendar in the future, Director Giroux advised that the Ministry of Education has a regulation regarding reporting requirements. She added that a memorandum from the Ministry outlined the requirements for Professional Activity (PA) days which may impact how the days are allocated. Director Giroux noted that should the regulation require the calendar to be revised, more time would be available to do so.

Moved by Lynn Scott

Seconded by Justine Bell

THAT the recommended school year calendar as outlined in Report 23-012 be submitted to the Ministry of

Education for approval as the official 2023-2024 school year calendar for the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board's elementary and secondary schools.

For (10): Alysha Aziz, Justine Bell, Donna Dickson, Lyra Evans, Jennifer Jennekens, Nili Kaplan-Myrth, Matthew Lee, Cathryne Milburn, Suzanne Nash, and Lynn Scott

Carried (10 to 0)

11.1.b 28 February 2023 (oral)

11.1.b.a Approval of Facilities Renewal Program and School Condition Improvement 2022-2023 Project Plan

Moved by Lynn Scott

Seconded by Justine Bell

- A. THAT the Facilities Renewal Program and School Condition Improvement Project budget in the amount of \$112,487,365 be approved as detailed in Appendix B of Report 23-015 (Attached as Appendix A);**
- B. THAT staff be authorized to proceed with individual project tenders within the Facilities Renewal Program and School Condition Improvement Project plans;**
- C. THAT as FRP/SCI projects are tendered, based on bid results, or as priorities change, additional projects may be added or removed to suit the availability of the overall budget and these additional projects will be able to proceed without further approval as long as the total overall FRP/SCI budgets are not exceeded; and**
- D. THAT the Chair of the Board and Director of Education are authorized to award contracts above \$500,000 that is within this overall available uncommitted approved budget.**

For (10): Alysha Aziz, Justine Bell, Donna Dickson, Lyra Evans, Jennifer Jennekens, Nili Kaplan-Myrth, Matthew Lee, Cathryne Milburn, Suzanne Nash, and Lynn Scott

Carried (10 to 0)

12. Matters for Discussion

12.1 Report from OPSBA Representatives (if required)

In her report, Trustee Scott provided the following information:

- Time remains to consider a submission for policy resolutions at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) in June 2023;
- The deadline for corporate positions on policy resolutions is 12 April 2023 and would need to be approved at the Board meeting on 28 March 2023;
- A reminder was sent regarding the survey for the provincial strategic plan;
- The meeting of the Board of Directors dated 24 and 25 February 2023 included a presentation by Karen Murray on Black student achievement, and a presentation regarding the background and terminology pertaining to Board equity and misinformation by Ken Jeffers - Associate Director of Equity Diversity and Inclusion; and
- New “B” and “SB” memoranda are available on the Ministry of Education website that provide guidance for use of school space and the need for pupil accommodation review.

13. Matters for Information

There were no matters for information.

14. New Business -- Information and Inquiries

Trustee Bell discussed the ongoing issue of excessive noise at Devonshire Public School, originating from a nearby construction site. She advised that the noise levels could cause hearing damage to students during arrival, recess, and departure from the school.

Superintendent Duah reported that a meeting with a representative from Claridge Homes and parents had been conducted. A list of concerns and requests from the school council had been provided to Claridge. Superintendent Duah noted that a plan for construction had been received and further information would be provided.

The Board resolved to send a letter to Claridge Homes that includes a list of concerns, requests, and the implementation of a site liaison.

15. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:07 p.m.

Lyra Evans, Chair of the Board