



## **COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE, BUDGET REPORT**

**Monday, December 11, 2023**

**7:00 pm**

**Board Room**

**Administration Building**

**133 Greenbank Road**

**Ottawa, Ontario**

Trustees Present: Alysha Aziz (electronic communication), Justine Bell (electronic communication), Donna Blackburn (electronic communication), Donna Dickson, Lyra Evans, Jennifer Jennekens, Matthew Lee (electronic communication), Cathryne Milburn, Suzanne Nash, Lynn Scott, Emma Hong (Student Trustee, electronic communication)

Staff Present: Pino Buffone (Director of Education), Brett Reynolds (Associate Director of Education), Randy Gerrior (Associate Director of Business Operations), James Proulx (Executive Officer of Information Technology and Digital Transformation), Michèle Giroux (Executive Officer of Corporate Services), Paula Hall (Superintendent of People, Culture and Leadership), Shawn Lehman (Superintendent of Instruction), Teri Adamthwaite (General Manager, Finance), Stacey Kay (General Manager, Learning Support Services), Sandy Owens (General Manager, Business & Learning Technology), Diane Pernari (General Manager, Communications & Public Relations), Nicole Guthrie (General Manager, Board Services), Michael Guilbault (Multimedia Coordinator, Communications), Susan Baker (Committee Coordinator)

Non-Voting Representatives Present: Claudine Santos (PIC), Stephanie Kirkey (OSSTF - District 25), Philip Battison (OSSTF - District 25), Jennifer Capitani (OCSSAN), Tracy Shapiro (OCSSAN), Monique Manatch (IEC), Bronwyn Funicello (SEAC), Corine Lassaline (OSSTF-PECCS/PSSP), Susan Gardner (OCETF), Susan Rab (OSSTF-OT)

1. Call to Order - Chair of Committee of the Whole, Budget

Chair Lyra Evans called the public session to order at 7:00 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 Agenda

**Moved by Trustee Milburn,**

**THAT the agenda be approved.**

**Carried**

4. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were filed.

5. Delegations

There were no delegations.

5.1 Gina Bernard, OCV

Gina Bernard spoke about the importance of the Ottawa-Carleton Virtual Elementary School (OCV Elementary) to its families. A recent survey of OCV families generated 59 responses that included a variety of reasons for choosing virtual learning including, health or learning concerns, excellent teachers, development of computer and technological skills, quiet learning environment, and exposure to a variety of programs. She noted that the temporary nature of OVC Elementary is stressful and impacts decisions that families are making with respect to work and housing. Ms. Bernard asked the Board to give the OCV Elementary a permanent place in the District.

In response to queries, Ms. Benard noted that 85% of the 59 families who responded to the survey indicated they would home school their children or switch to another school board if the District does not continue to offer virtual school. She added that it would be helpful for parents to have a central contact person to advocate for the continuation of OCV Elementary.

5.2 John Deslauriers-Snelgrove, OCV

John Deslauriers-Snelgrove and Cenia Elzanowska spoke about their reasons for attending OCV Elementary including the need to take COVID-19 precautions, accommodations for their physical and learning disabilities, and the ability to easily share written information. They requested that the OVC Elementary continue to be funded and remain as a permanent school.

6. Discussion Items

## 6.1 2024-2025 Budget Process and Overview (oral)

Associate Director Gerrior presented an overview of the 2024-2025 Budget Process and highlighted the following:

- Ministry of Education (MOE) funding includes Grants for Student Needs (GSNs) including the following:
  - Pupil Foundation Grant for classroom staffing and supplies - 2023-2024 estimate is \$446.5 million;
  - School Foundation Grant for principals, vice-principals, school office support staff and supplies estimate for 2023-2024 is \$58 million;
  - Special Purpose Grant for special education, teacher qualification allocation, language allocation, learning opportunities allocation, and Indigenous education allocation - 2023-2024 estimate is \$264 million;
  - Capital Priorities Grant for new schools, renovations, portables and school condition improvement 2023-2024 estimate is \$119.8 million;
  - Special Project Funding allocated for specific programs or projects - 2023-2024 estimate is \$10.8 million;
- Approximately 79.9% of the funding is used for salaries, benefits and staff development;
- Total Average Daily Enrolment (ADE) for 2023-2024 is 78,026 students;
- Board budgeting principles are consistent with the Board's strategic plan, reflects obligations of collective agreements, focuses on improved student learning and well-being, ensures schools are safe, and meets Ministry legislation, regulations, policies, and priorities;
- The Ministry releases its GSN funding formulas between March and May, and the Board-approved budget must be submitted by the end of June;
- Financial planning pressures include occasional teacher (OT) replacement costs, special education programs, transportation, portables, facilities (snow removal, utilities, cleaning), and inflation; and
- Next steps include comprehensive reviews of District programs, transportation, and accommodation.

During discussion, and in response to queries, the following points were noted:

- The program review will commence this year with a focus on elementary programs and will include consultation with staff, trustees and advisory committees. The priorities of equity, student achievement, and well-being for staff and students will be considered throughout the review period;
- The program, transportation, and accommodation reviews will not be completed in 2023-2024;
- With respect to accommodation reviews, the District is not proposing the disposal of any sites at this time. As well, the Ministry of Education has imposed a moratorium on accommodation reviews;
- The accommodation review cannot commence until the program and transportation reviews are completed;
- The budget estimate for teacher salaries is based on their teaching qualifications and projected student enrolment. The revised estimates are based on actual enrolment and completion of the staffing process in the fall;
- Staff will provide a question and answer document (Q&A) during the formal budget process in the spring, after receiving Ministry grant information and the District has an understanding of the impact of cost drivers in the current year;
- Trustee Bell requested that the Q&A reflect questions from the Committee regarding the impact of budget investments or savings on students; and
- There are areas of risk in every budget, for example, the occasional teacher and educational assistant replacement costs, utility cost increases, and snow removal.

1. 2022-2023 Financials Results

Associate Director Gerrior noted that the 2022-2023 financial results were presented to the Audit Committee on 27 November 2023 and approved by the Board on 28 November 2023. He noted that the District has maintained regulatory compliance despite the rising costs in areas beyond the District's control.

2. 2023-2024 Revised Estimates

The Revised Estimates will be submitted to the Ministry of Education by 15 December 2023. Associate Director Gerrior noted

that while the District did not realize the growth in student enrolment that was projected in the budget, overall enrolment did not decline. The District will still need to look for savings of approximately \$500,000 in the current year to avoid a deficit in 2023-2024.

3. Financial Analysis of Priority Areas

During discussion of the financial analysis of priority areas recommended by the Committee of the Whole at its meeting of 5 December 2023, and in response to queries, the following points were noted:

- Associate Director Gerrior noted that Finance staff would work with the Committee of the Whole Budget and the Advocacy Committee to ensure consistent messaging. He noted the difficulty of analysing the District's needs based on current student enrolment rather than future enrolment which is unknown at this time;
- The District was able to cover a projected deficit of approximately \$9 million in the 2023-2024 budget by using its accumulated surplus which is no longer available for 2024-2025. The District is required to rebuild the accumulated surplus and approve a balanced budget for next year;
- Finance has not yet received a list of areas from which trustees would like to see potential reductions;
- When determining the number of classes required for students with special education needs, Learning Support Services considers trends over time when forecasting staffing requirements. The number of classes may be adjusted when enrolment is finalized in the Fall; and
- Staff will present a staff-recommended budget to the Committee of the Whole (COW) Budget in the spring and non-voting representatives may bring their group's concerns to the COW Budget for discussion and possible amendments.

7. New Business - Information and Inquiries

There was no new business.

8. Budget Timeline

The Committee of the Whole Budget meeting dates were provided for information.

9. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

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Lyra Evans, Chair