



COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE, BUDGET REPORT

Tuesday, February 20, 2024

7:00 pm

Board Room

Administration Building

133 Greenbank Road

Ottawa, Ontario

- Trustees Present: Alysha Aziz, Justine Bell (electronic communication), Donna Blackburn, Donna Dickson, Lyra Evans, Jennifer Jennekens, Dr. Nili Kaplan-Myrth (electronic communication), Matthew Lee, Cathryne Milburn, Suzanne Nash, Amanda Presley, Lynn Scott, Emma Hong (Student Trustee)
- 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), Pamela LeMaistre (General Manager, Culture and Leadership), Peter Symmonds (Superintendent of Learning Support Services), Marva Major (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 (Acting Committee Coordinator)
- Non-Voting Representatives Present: Terry Warner (SEAC Member), Anthony Wong (SEAC Alternate), Jean Fulton-Hale (OCSSAN Alternate), Stephanie Kirkey (OSSTF-TBU), Nina Stanton (IEC), Jennifer Capitani (OCEOC), Natasha Baines (OSSTF-SSP), Susan Gardner (OCETF), Jamieson Dyer (OCEOTA), Philip Battison (OSSTF-PSSU), Melodie Gondek (OSSTF-ESP), Susan Rab (OSSTF-OTs)

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 their stewardship of these lands since time immemorial.

3. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were filed.

4. Approval of Agenda

Moved by Trustee Aziz,

THAT the agenda be approved.

Carried

5. Delegations

There were no delegations.

6. Discussion Items

6.1 Report 24-039, Budget Process (R. Gerrior)

Your Committee had before it Report 24-039 providing information on the 2024-2025 budget cycle timelines and processes as well as the anticipated challenges impacting the development of the budget.

Associate Director Gerrior provided an overview of the report including the requirement to comply with the budget requirements set out in the *Education Act*, the proposed budget schedule, budget development considerations, and next steps.

1. Supplemental Information - Advocacy Briefing Notes

The advocacy briefing notes for Capital Funding, Cybersecurity, Mental Health and Wellness, Replacement Worker Costs, Transportation, and Special Education were provided for information.

2. Needs Analysis - Transportation (Oral)

Referring to the Transportation advocacy brief and the needs analysis, Associate Director Gerrior highlighted the following:

- The Ministry funding for transportation in 2023-2024 is \$48.8 million, including transitional funding, which is \$3.0 million less than the budget of \$51.8 million. With 100% service, the shortfall is \$7.0 million. The projected shortfall in 2024-2025 is \$6.0 million;

- Inflation will continue to put financial pressure on the service;
- Vendor stability is a critical component for safe, reliable transportation; and
- Opportunities for efficiencies may be found in a bell time review, changes to eligibility standards, program reviews, a shift from vans to small yellow school buses, and the forthcoming report from the Deloitte.

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

- The focus this year has been on stabilizing school bus transportation. It may not be possible to make significant changes to the transportation model for next year;
- The Deloitte report has not yet been finalized, and it is not known whether it would be made public;
- Transportation distance eligibility standards have been agreed to by the Ottawa Student Transportation Authority (OSTA) and the Ottawa Catholic School Board (OCSB);
- It is not yet known if there will be any funding available to advance initiatives in the Strategic Plan. Not all initiatives (i.e., advancing equity) would require additional funding or human resources;
- The OCDSB is under financial supervision due to having less than 2% of its budget in accumulated surplus as well as having run a deficit budget for two consecutive years. While under supervision, the District has additional reporting requirements to the Ministry;
- It is unknown if there are other school districts under financial supervision;
- OC Transpo has expressed support for the District by prioritizing routes for service to secondary schools;
- OSTA contracts with a third party for route simulations using technology and Artificial Intelligence (AI); and
- The Ontario Association of School Business Officials (OASBO) has a transportation sub-committee to share information on efficiencies.

3. Needs Analysis - Replacement Worker Costs

Referring to the Replacement Worker Costs advocacy brief and the needs analysis presentation, Associate Director Gerrior highlighted the following:

- The Ministry funding for replacement worker costs is \$15.6 million, which is \$17.1 million less than the budget of \$32.7 million. The projected shortfall in 2024-2025 is \$20.0 million;
- Wage growth will increase these costs indirectly;
- There is a need for increased release time for professional development to support strategic initiatives;
- Wellness programs aid in reducing some of these replacement costs; and
- Professional development also reduces risk of injury and burnout.

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

- \$400,000 was included in the 2023-2024 budget for Behaviour Management Systems (BMS) training in the hope that it would help to reduce injuries and replacement worker costs;
- A reduction in the number of short term sick days has been observed this year compared to last year;
- The District works with the Ontario School Boards Insurance Exchange (OSBIE) to analyze sick leave and injuries; and

Trustee Nash assumed the Chair.

- Additional professional development (PD) opportunities that would not require an additional budget allocation may be offered through podcasts or web-based applications;

Trustee Lyra Evans resumed the Chair.

6.2 Report 24-018, Academic Staffing 2024-2025 (P. Hall)

Your committee had before it Report 24-018 providing information on the recommended plan for academic staffing for the 2024-2025 school year.

Superintendent Hall and General Manager LeMaistre provided an overview of the report and highlighted the following areas:

- The academic staffing levels must be approved by the end of March 2024, in advance of the regular budgetary cycle, in order to meet the staffing timelines established in collective agreements;

- Required academic staffing is formulae-driven and is based on student enrolment and collective agreement requirements that cannot be changed;
- Discretionary staffing includes principals and vice-principals, English As a Second Language (ESL), special education, and central instructional coaching positions;
- The total proposed budget for academic staffing is \$621 million which provides for 5,025.66 full-time equivalent (FTE) teacher positions and includes increases related to modest enrolment growth and the addition of 16.06 discretionary staff positions; and

Associate Director Reynolds provided an overview of principal and vice-principal allocations:

- Changes in principal and vice-principal positions are related to the opening of new schools and the reduction of 0.05 FTE central system principal positions for a total increase of 3.58 principals and vice-principals.

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

- There may be a requirement to reallocate some vice-principals depending on funding received from the Ministry;
- When allocating principals to schools, staff considers available funding, projected school enrolment, number of classes, number students with individual education plans (IEPs), the school's position on the Resource Allocation Index based on Socioeconomics (RAISE), and feedback from superintendents of instruction;
- Evidence has demonstrated that some students residing in low-income neighbourhoods may require additional support due to socioeconomic or demographic barriers to learning;

Trustee Nash assumed the Chair.

- Ministry funding will be provided for principals of new schools. Funding for vice-principals in new schools will depend on projected student enrolment at the school.

Trustee Lyra Evans resumed the Chair.

Superintendent Symmonds and General Manager Kay provided an overview of the recommended changes to special education staffing:

- Agenda item 6.2.1 Report 24-041 Specialized Class Referral Information 2023-2024 and Planning for Special Education

Supports and Services 2024-2025 provides information regarding the specialized program class (SPC) referral and placement process;

- Three (3) Itinerant Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Developmental Disabilities (DD) teachers are added to accommodate the growth in ASD numbers;
- Two (2) additional ASD/DD classes have been added;
- Two (2) Inclusion Teachers have been added to assist students to integrate into a regular classroom and experience success;
- One (1) elementary and one (1) secondary General Learning Program (GLP) classes will close. These closures will not affect current students;
- Two (2) secondary GLP classes have been added.

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

- ASD classes have been located in schools that have room to accommodate them. This model is no longer sustainable due to the rapidly increasing number of students with ASD, the desire for inclusion and equity at community schools, and the high cost of transporting students out of their community in small vehicles;
- With respect to the addition of two inclusion teachers, the program evaluation team in Learning Support Services (LSS) and the Research, Evaluation, & Analytics Division (READ) are collecting data and developing the model. They are also exploring a possible partnership with Queen's University to understand the growth and effect of the model. Further information about the implementation of the model will be provided in the next school year;
- Students attending the Crystal Bay Centre for Special Education and Clifford Bowey Public School are placed in specialized program classes for students with Developmental Disabilities. Any possible staffing changes that may be recommended in an upcoming report are not addressed in the current academic staffing plan;
- The location of the additional ASD/DD and General Learning Program (GLP) classes has not yet been determined;
- No new funding is expected to cover the addition of three itinerant teachers. They will be funded as part of the overall budget;

- Administrators at the new Stittsville High School are working with feeder schools to identify students in specialized program classes and who reside in their catchment area. Their parents/caregivers will have the option of having their child continue in a GLP class or be placed in a regular classroom with support including an inclusion teacher;
- A group of teachers from across the District has received training on the inclusion teacher model and will provide imbedded learning and professional development to the staff in the new Stittsville High School; and

Trustee Nash assumed the Chair.

- There has been no indication to date that the Ministry will remove the Priorities and Partnerships Funding (PPF) that has funded approximately 5.0 FTE of the 9.0 FTE additional special education positions.

Executive Officer Proulx and General Manager Owens provided an overview of recommended changes to elementary discretionary staffing:

- Staff is recommending the addition of three (3) Business & Learning Technology (B<) coaches to support the use of technology in the classroom in safe and pedagogically sound ways and taking cyberbullying, artificial Intelligence (AI), and online addictions into consideration;
- The increase in staffing is cost neutral and will help to ensure equitable access to technology; and

Trustee Nash assumed the Chair.

- The B< coaches are educators who have demonstrated proficiency in using technology in the classroom to address the curriculum. They will also help to identify online content and assess whether it is appropriate for use in the classroom.

Trustee Lyra Evans resumed the Chair.

Trustee Lyra Evans noted that the remaining needs analyses (Capital Funding, Cybersecurity, Mental Health and Wellness, and Special Education) will be brought forward for discussion at subsequent meetings of the Committee of the Whole, Budget.

1. [Report 24-041 Specialized Program Class Referral Information 2023-2024 and Planning for Special Education Support](#)

Your Committee had before it for information Report 24-041 Specialized Program Class Referral Information 2023-2024 and Planning for Special Education Supports and Services 2024-2025.

Refer to Agenda Item 6.2 Report 24-018 Academic Staffing 2024-2025 for the discussion of staff recommended special education staffing changes.

7. New Business - Information and Inquiries

There was no new business.

8. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:42 p.m.

Lyra Evans, Chair