



## **BOARD PUBLIC MINUTES**

**Tuesday, May 28, 2024, 8:15 pm**  
**Board Room**  
**Administration Building**  
**133 Greenbank Road**  
**Ottawa, Ontario**

Trustees: Alysha Aziz (electronic communication), Justine Bell, Donna Blackburn, Donna Dickson (electronic communication), Lyra Evans, Jennifer Jennekens, Nili Kaplan-Myrth (electronic communication), Matthew Lee, Cathryne Milburn, Suzanne Nash, Amanda Presley, Lynn Scott

Staff: Emma Hong (Student Trustee), Pino Buffone (Director of Education), Brett Reynolds (Associate Director of Education), Randy Gerrior (Associate Director, Business Operations), Michele Giroux (Executive Officer, Corporate Services), James Proulx (Executive Officer, Information Technology and Digital Transformation), Marva Major (Superintendent of Instruction), Richard Sinclair (General Counsel), Sandy Owens (General Manager, Business & Learning Technologies), Diane Pernari (General Manager of Communications & Information Services), Nicole Guthrie (General Manager, Board Services), Michael Guilbault (Content Creator, Digital Multimedia Technician), Kathy Mak (Board/Committee Coordinator)

1. Call to Order - Chair of the Board

Chair Scott called the public meeting to order at 8:16 p.m.

2. Acknowledgement of Territorial Lands

Chair Scott 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. Report from In Camera Session

Trustee Kaplan-Myrth noted that she was excluded from the conversation with regard to an in Camera discussion on financial matters.

Trustee Presley called a point of order and noted that Trustee Kaplan-Myrth was present for this conversation. Chair Scott confirmed that Trustee Kaplan-Myrth was present.

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

**Moved by** Alysha Aziz

**Seconded by** Cathryne Milburn

**THAT staff proceed as directed in Board in Camera with respect to a financial matter.**

For (11): Alysha Aziz, Justine Bell, Donna Blackburn, Donna Dickson, Lyra Evans, Jennifer Jennekens, Matthew Lee, Cathryne Milburn, Suzanne Nash, Amanda Presley, and Lynn Scott

Abstain (1): Nili Kaplan-Myrth

**Carried (11 to 0)**

**Moved by** Alysha Aziz

**Seconded by** Cathryne Milburn

**THAT staff proceed as directed in Board in Camera with respect to a financial matter.**

For (11): Alysha Aziz, Justine Bell, Donna Blackburn, Donna Dickson, Lyra Evans, Jennifer Jennekens, Matthew Lee, Cathryne Milburn, Suzanne Nash, Amanda Presley, and Lynn Scott

Abstain (1): Nili Kaplan-Myrth

**Carried (11 to 0)**

**Moved by** Alysha Aziz

**Seconded by** Cathryne Milburn

**THAT staff proceed as directed in Board in Camera with respect to a financial matter.**

For (11): Alysha Aziz, Justine Bell, Donna Blackburn, Donna Dickson, Lyra Evans, Jennifer Jennekens, Matthew Lee, Cathryne Milburn, Suzanne Nash, Amanda Presley, and Lynn Scott

Abstain (1): Nili Kaplan-Myrth

**Carried (11 to 0)**

5. Approval of the Agenda

**Moved by Trustee Jennekens, seconded by Trustee Lee,**

**THAT the agenda be approved.**

**Carried**

6. Briefing from the Chair of the Board

During the briefing from Chair Scott, the following information was provided:

- A reception was held to celebrate Community Recognition Award winners on 28 May 2024 to recognize individuals and organizations that have been nominated for the positive impact that was made on classrooms and beyond; and
- Public in-person meetings were held on 29 May 2024 at Longfields-Davidson Heights Secondary School, Sawmill Creek Elementary School and Avalon Public School to discuss the Elementary Program Review. A virtual session is planned for 30 May 2024 and additional feedback can be shared on Engage OCDSB which will remain open until 28 June 2024.

7. Briefing from the Director

During the briefing from Director Buffone, the following information was provided:

- During the month of June 2024, the Pride flag will be flown outside of all schools and administration buildings to mark Pride Month; and
- The Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (OCDSB) will be hosting a virtual Speaker Series event with Rideauwood Addiction and Family Services to provide families with the most current information regarding youth and substance use.

8. Delegations

8.1 Ilana Gombos, re Jewish Antisemitism

Ilana Gombos expressed concern regarding the lack of safety in schools and the promotion of hate and Antisemitism. Jewish students hide their identity for fear of bullying. She urged the OCDSB to reach out to mainstream Jewish organizations to provide mandatory comprehensive

training to all school administrators, equity leaders and staff about Judaism and Jewish identity as part of the District's Diversity Equity Inclusion (DEI) plans before 13 September 2024.

In response to a query from Trustee Kaplan-Myrth, Ms. Gombos noted that an Arabic Jihadi song was played over the school announcement system and students who did not understand the language seemed uncomfortable. In addition, students were taught that three cities in an undisputed area of Israel were claimed by Palestine. Although receptive to her concerns, school administrators were not equipped to understand what is considered safe to the Jewish community.

## 8.2 David Handelman, re Jewish Antisemitism

David Handelman urged the OCDSB to prioritize the safety of all OCDSB students including Jewish students. He noted that there is evidence and testimonials from the Jewish Parents of Ottawa Student Association indicating a toxic environment for Jewish students resulting in marginalization and exclusion. Mr. Handelman recommended that the OCDSB acknowledge Antisemitism, adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of Antisemitism, and educate educators and administrators with mandatory training and enhance education for all students.

Trustee Scott requested that Mr. Handelman share the evidence and testimonials from the Jewish Parents of Ottawa Student Association in writing or email.

In response to a query from Trustee Kaplan-Myrth, Mr. Handelman noted that the Jewish Parents of Ottawa Student Association met with Director Buffone and Superintendent Farrish at the end of March 2024 to discuss survey results and testimonials. He submitted that OCDSB initiatives did not address the current urgent need for change and suggested a "Do No Harm" approach.

## 8.3 Naomi Hirshberg, re Jewish Antisemitism

Naomi Hirshberg expressed concern with hostility and prejudice against Jewish students. Since the 7 October 2023 event, there has been an increase in antisemitic incidents and Jewish students were being unfairly blamed for geopolitical conflicts. She urged the OCDSB to create an environment that is safe for all students regardless of background and free from discrimination by enforcing the OCDSB Code of Conduct, track incidents, and adopt the IHRA definition of Antisemitism.

In a response to a query from Trustee Kaplan-Myrth, Ms. Hirshberg noted that swastikas were thrown at them and Israeli flags were flown inside the schools. The flags were briefly taken down when families took action, and

relocated elsewhere inside the school. Students are asked to choose sides and were bullied afterwards.

#### 8.4 Michelle Jacob, re Antisemitism and Geo-Political Classrooms

Michelle Jacob noted that global politics and indoctrination of students in schools have threatened the diversity of the population and urged the OCDSB to respect the mandate of a positive school-wide climate and to prohibit all political activities in schools.

Trustee Bell called a point of order and requested the delegation confine her remarks to Antisemitism instead of geopolitical conflicts. Chair Scott ruled that the delegation is in order as the agenda clearly indicates Ms. Jacobs intended speaking points. Ms. Jacob stressed the importance of keeping politics out of school and to prioritize academic achievement. A political activist was invited to speak about the Middle East and no action was taken when families objected. The speaker's narrative lacked historical context and integrity and perpetuated Jewish stereotypes. She submitted that OCDSB educators are not equipped to teach students about complex political issues and should not be sharing their own personal and political ideologies.

In response to a query from Trustee Kaplan-Myrth, Ms. Jacob submitted that geopolitical discussions should be restricted to specific classes dedicated to the topic and the educator must have in depth training on how to present issues in a mediated and considerate way.

#### 8.5 Leah Freedhoff, re Jewish Antisemitism

Leah Freedhoff shared her high school experience and recounted incidents where Jewish students faced racism and antisemitic actions. She expressed the view that the OCDSB has adopted an outdated and limited definition of Antisemitism and urged the OCDSB to adopt the IHRA definition of Antisemitism that is globally recognized, comprehensive, and creates a safe school environment for Jewish students.

#### 8.6 Ilana Albert-Novick, re Jewish Antisemitism

Ilana Albert-Novick spoke about the tense school atmosphere and the inability for Jewish students to express their identity without the fear of discrimination and intolerance. Swastikas are carved into tables, educators make disparaging remarks, and restrict the kinds of books students can study due to ethnicity or religion. Many Jewish students do not feel safe among their peers and educators. She urged the OCDSB to enforce anti-hate, anti-bullying and safe school policies, adopt the IHRA definition of Antisemitism, and create an inclusive environment where diversity can be celebrated.

In response to a query from Trustee Kaplan-Myrth, Ms. Albert-Novick noted that the restriction of books occurred during an English class summative during which the educator required students to choose an author that was a person of colour. She brought her concern regarding the unsafe environment to the principal's attention but did not receive a satisfactory response.

8.7 Joyce Coldrey, re Jewish Antisemitism

Joyce Coldrey expressed concern for Jewish students in schools as they experience Antisemitism and hide their identity for fear of being targeted. She noted that the OCDSB had been made aware of the personal attacks, social media threats, and misinformation through school-associated media channels. She urged the District to adopt the IHRA definition for Antisemitism and deliver mandatory training in the Fall of 2024, in collaboration with the Jewish Federation of Ottawa.

In response to a query from Trustee Kaplan-Myrth, Ms. Coldrey noted that there has been no response to requests from the community to address Antisemitism within schools. She urged the Board to collaborate with staff, principals, and educators to create a safe school environment for students.

Director Buffone acknowledged with regret the lived experiences of students, staff and families. He noted the need to focus on the short term pieces while the longer term journey is being developed, improve tracking mechanisms, and to collaborate with the Jewish Federation of Ottawa and the National Council of Canadian Muslims to continue the development of the Anti-Hate toolkit.

\*\*\*Chair Scott called the meeting into recess at 9:23 p.m.\*\*\*

\*\*\*Chair Scott called the meeting back to order at 9:32 p.m.\*\*\*

9. Confirmation of Board Minutes

9.1 25 April 2024

Moved by Trustee Lee, seconded by Trustee Lyra Evans,

THAT the Board Minutes, dated 25 April 2024, be confirmed.

Trustee Scott requested that her name be recorded as Chair of the Board on the last page of the minutes.

**Moved by Trustee Lee, seconded by Trustee Lyra Evans,**

**THAT the Board Minutes, dated 25 April 2024, be confirmed, as amended.**

**Carried**

10. Business Arising from Board Minutes

There was no business arising from the minutes.

11. Matters for Action

11.1 Receipt of Committee of the Whole Report

11.1.a 7 May 2024

Moved by Trustee Milburn, seconded by Trustee Presley,

THAT the Committee of the Whole report, 7 May 2024, be received, as amended.

Carried

Trustee Scott requested that the address “700 Cope Avenue” in the motion to approve the name of the new Stittsville High School be replaced with “700 Cope Drive”.

**Moved by Trustee Milburn, seconded by Trustee Presley,**

**THAT the Committee of the Whole report, 7 May 2024, be received, as amended.**

**Carried**

11.1.a.a Approval of School Naming-New Stittsville High School

**Moved by** Donna Blackburn

**Seconded by** Cathryne Milburn

**THAT the new secondary school in Stittsville located in Ottawa at 700 Cope Drive be named Maplewood Secondary School, effective September 2024.**

For (11): Alysha Aziz, Justine Bell, Donna Blackburn, Donna Dickson, Lyra Evans, Jennifer Jennekens, Matthew Lee, Cathryne Milburn, Suzanne Nash, Amanda Presley, and Lynn Scott

**Carried (11 to 0)**

11.1.a.b Approval of School Naming-New Findlay Creek School

This was a non-consent item and was dealt with later in the meeting under agenda item 11.3.

Moved by Trustee Kaplan-Myrth, seconded by Trustee Milburn,

THAT the new Findlay Creek elementary school located in Ottawa at 820 Miikana Road in Findlay Creek, be named Mino Miikan Elementary School, effective September 2024.

Superintendent Major noted that staff reached out to Elder Albert with respect to the name and was advised to adjust the spelling to align with the Indigenous community.

An amendment moved by Trustee Jennekens, seconded by Trustee Lyra Evans,

THAT the word "Miikan" be replaced with the word "Mikan"

Carried, friendly

**Moved by** Jennifer Jennekens

**Seconded by** Cathryne Milburn

**THAT the new Findlay Creek elementary school located in Ottawa at 820 Miikana Road in Findlay Creek, be named Mino Mikan Elementary School, effective September 2024.**

For (11): Alysha Aziz, Justine Bell, Donna Blackburn, Donna Dickson, Lyra Evans, Jennifer Jennekens, Matthew Lee, Cathryne Milburn, Suzanne Nash, Amanda Presley, and Lynn Scott

**Carried (11 to 0)**

11.1.b 21 May 2024

**Moved by Trustee Milburn, seconded by Trustee Presley,**

**THAT the Committee of the Whole report, dated 21 May 2024, be received.**

**Carried**

11.2 Receipt of Ad Hoc Board and Director Performance Evaluation Process

11.2.a 9 May 2024

**Moved by Trustee Milburn, seconded by Trustee Lee,**

**THAT the Ad Hoc Board and Director Performance Evaluation Process, dated 9 May 2024, be received.**

**Carried**

11.2.a.a Approval of Board Annual Evaluation 2023-2024

**Moved by** Alysha Aziz

**Seconded by** Cathryne Milburn

**THAT the performance plan, attached as Appendix A to Report 24-077, be used for the Director’s performance evaluation for the 2023-2024 school year. (Attached as Appendix A)**

For (11): Alysha Aziz, Justine Bell, Donna Blackburn, Donna Dickson, Lyra Evans, Jennifer Jennekens, Matthew Lee, Cathryne Milburn, Suzanne Nash, Amanda Presley, and Lynn Scott

**Carried (11 to 0)**

11.2.a.b Approval of the 2023-2024 Director of Education Performance Evaluation Process and Update to Policy P.051.GOV Evaluation of Director of Education and Secretary of the Board

**Moved by** Alysha Aziz

**Seconded by** Cathryne Milburn

**A. THAT the Board initiate the 2023-2024 performance evaluation process for the Director of Education and direct staff to enter into an agreement with Boyden Executive Search to facilitate the 2023-2024 Director’s performance evaluation.**

**B. THAT the Board direct staff to update Policy P.051.GOV Evaluation of Director of Education and Secretary of the Board to ensure alignment with Ontario Regulation 83/24- Director of Education Performance Appraisal.**

For (11): Alysha Aziz, Justine Bell, Donna Blackburn, Donna Dickson, Lyra Evans, Jennifer Jennekens, Matthew Lee, Cathryne Milburn, Suzanne Nash, Amanda Presley, and Lynn Scott

**Carried (11 to 0)**

11.2.a.c Approval of Terms of Reference - Director and Board Performance Appraisal Committee

This was a non-consent item and was dealt with later in the meeting under agenda item 12.3.

Moved by Trustee Nash, seconded by Trustee Milburn,

- A. THAT the Terms of Reference for the Director and Board Performance Appraisal Committee attached as Appendix A, be approved;
- B. THAT the existing Ad Hoc Committee for Board Self Evaluation and Director Performance Evaluation Processes be renamed the Director and Board Performance Appraisal Committee with the roles and responsibilities outlined in the Terms of Reference.

In response to a query from Trustee Lyra Evans with regard to the number of committee members, Executive Officer Giroux clarified that the District currently has a robust Director performance evaluation process. The established committee will be repurposed to serve the new functions under the regulation. She further noted that five members on the committee is a workable number, however it is within the purview of the Board to increase the number to seven if there is an interest.

**Moved by** Suzanne Nash

**Seconded by** Cathryne Milburn

- A. **THAT the Terms of Reference for the Director and Board Performance Appraisal Committee attached as Appendix A, be approved (Attached as Appendix B);**
- B. **THAT the existing Ad Hoc Committee for Board Self Evaluation and Director Performance Evaluation Processes be renamed the Director and Board Performance Appraisal Committee with the roles and responsibilities outlined in the Terms of Reference.**

For (11): Alysha Aziz, Justine Bell, Donna Blackburn, Donna Dickson, Lyra Evans, Jennifer Jennekens, Matthew Lee, Cathryne Milburn, Suzanne Nash, Amanda Presley, and Lynn Scott

**Carried (11 to 0)**

11.2.a.d Approval of Director of Education Performance Plan

**Moved by** Alysha Aziz

**Seconded by** Cathryne Milburn

**THAT the performance plan, attached as Appendix A to Report 24-077, be used for the Director's performance evaluation for the 2023-2024 school year. (Attached as Appendix A)**

For (11): Alysha Aziz, Justine Bell, Donna Blackburn, Donna Dickson, Lyra Evans, Jennifer Jennekens, Matthew Lee, Cathryne Milburn, Suzanne Nash, Amanda Presley, and Lynn Scott

**Carried (11 to 0)**

11.3 Non-Consent Items

11.4 Report 24-075, Appointment of OPSBA Representatives 2024-2025 (M. Giroux)

The Board had before it Report 24-075 seeking approval of the appointment of an Ontario Public School Board Association (OPSBA) Representative for 2024-2025.

Executive Officer Giroux noted that there are some changes at OPSBA which affect the Board's election of representatives. The two trustees appointed to be OPSBA representatives to the Board of Directors will be voting members and alternate voting members at the OPSBA conference. In addition, the appointed trustees will also be the appointed delegates for the Eastern Regional Council meetings and voting and alternate delegates for the Annual General Meeting (AGM) for the 2024-2025 school year.

Trustee Nash nominated Trustee Scott and Trustee Jennekens.

Trustees Scott and Jennekens accepted the nomination.

**Moved by Trustee Blackburn, seconded by Trustee Lee,**

**THAT nomination be closed.**

**Carried**

**Moved by** Suzanne Nash

**Seconded by** Lyra Evans

**Trustees Jennekens and Scott be appointed as the two directors to the OPSBA Board of Directors, the voting and alternate delegates for the Eastern Regional Council meetings, and the voting and alternate delegates for the OPSBA Annual General meeting for the 2024-2025 Term of Office.**

For (11): Alysha Aziz, Justine Bell, Donna Blackburn, Donna Dickson, Lyra Evans, Jennifer Jennekens, Matthew Lee, Cathryne Milburn, Suzanne Nash, Amanda Presley, and Lynn Scott

**Carried (11 to 0)**

11.5 Report 24-079, Appointment of Association Alternate to the Special Education Advisory Committee (M. Giroux)

The Board had before it Report 24-079 seeking approval of the Appointment of an Association Alternate to the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC).

Executive Officer Giroux noted that the term for the appointed alternate for SEAC to represent the Association for Bright Children (ABC) will be effective immediately and expire 14 November 2026.

**Moved by** Amanda Presley

**Seconded by** Jennifer Jennekens

**THAT Peter Davidson be appointed as the alternate member representing the Association for Bright Children (ABC) to the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) for the term ending 14 November 2026.**

For (11): Alysha Aziz, Justine Bell, Donna Blackburn, Donna Dickson, Lyra Evans, Jennifer Jennekens, Matthew Lee, Cathryne Milburn, Suzanne Nash, Amanda Presley, and Lynn Scott

**Carried (11 to 0)**

11.6 Report 24-089 Appointment of External Member of the Audit Committee (R. Gerrior)

The Board had before it Report 24-089 seeking approval of the Appointment of External Member of the Audit Committee.

**Moved by** Lyra Evans

**Seconded by** Donna Blackburn

**THAT Chandrasekhar Krishnamurthy be appointed to the Audit Committee as an external member for a three-year term.**

For (11): Alysha Aziz, Justine Bell, Donna Blackburn, Donna Dickson, Lyra Evans, Jennifer Jennekens, Matthew Lee, Cathryne Milburn, Suzanne Nash, Amanda Presley, and Lynn Scott

**Carried (11 to 0)**

12. Matters for Discussion

12.1 Report from OSTA Representatives (if required)

Trustee Lee provided an update from the Ottawa Student Transportation Authority (OSTA) and noted that the Empty Seat Program will be suspended until January 2025 with a re-evaluation in November 2024.

12.2 Report from OPSBA Representatives (if required)

Trustee Scott noted that the Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA) Education Program Work Group will meet with the Policy Development Work Group on 31 May 2024 and it is her intention to raise the topic of professional development for trustees for next year.

Trustee Aziz requested that Trustee Scott share the summary of the meeting and other feedback regarding the Elementary Program Review.

In response to a query from Trustee Lyra Evans regarding the motion to support the formation of a 2SLGBTQIA+ OPSBA caucus, Chair Scott noted that there was no update.

13. Board Work Plan

The Board Work Plan was provided for information.

14. Matters for Information

There were no matters for information.

15. New Business -- Information and Inquiries

Trustee Nash noted that two schools in her zone had large wait lists for their before and after school programs and that it seems to be a trend throughout the District. Director Buffone noted that he will follow up with staff and provide an update.

Trustee Bell noted that she visited a number of schools during the week of 21-24 May 2024 for Take your MPP to School Week. Chair Scott requested that

Trustee Bell share her summary with the advocacy group at OPSBA as a number of trustees were engaged in this initiative.

Trustee Blackburn noted that she joined the Director of Education at Sir Guy Carleton Secondary School on 27 May 2024 to meet with the Minister of Education for Prince Edward Island, Natalie Jameson. She commended Principal Dori-Anne Marcelin for giving the Minister and her entourage an excellent tour.

16. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 10:07 p.m.

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Lynn Scott, Chair of the Board