



COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE PUBLIC REPORT

Tuesday, October 8, 2024, 7:00 p.m.
Board Room
Administration Building
133 Greenbank Road
Ottawa, Ontario

- Trustees Present: Justine Bell (electronic communication), Donna Blackburn, Donna Dickson, Lyra Evans, Jennifer Jennekens, Matthew Lee, Cathryne Milburn, Suzanne Nash, Amanda Presley (electronic communication), Lynn Scott, Jeffrey Zhang (Student Trustee), Sharanya Sivasathiyathan (Student Trustee, electronic communication), Ezio De Stefano (Student Trustee)
- Staff Present: Pino Buffone (Director of Education), Jesse Mark (Executive Officer), Brett Reynolds (Associate Director, Academic), Randy Gerior (Associate Director, Business Operations), James Proulx (Executive Officer of Technological Support Services), Shawn Lehman (Superintendent of Employee Services), Richard Sinclair (General Counsel), Nadia Towaj (Superintendent on Special Assignment), Kate Stoudt (Superintendent Learning Support Services), Stacey Kay (General Manager, Learning Support Services), Sandra Owens (General Manager, Business & Learning Technologies), Diane Pernari (General Manager, Communications & Public Relations), Andrea Rahim (General Manager, Research Evaluation & Analytics Division), Kristen Grant (Business and Learning Technology), Michael Guilbault (Multimedia Coordinator), Susan Baker (Office Manager), Kathy Mak (Board/Committee Coordinator)
- Non-Voting Representatives Present: Jean Fulton-Hale (OCSSAN), Justin Shulman (OCEOC), Seema Lamba (ACE), Jamieson Dyer (OCEOTA), Chris Walsh (OSSTF Education Worker), Stephanie Kirkey (OSSTF - District 25), Thomas Holloway (OCASC), Stephen Skoutajan (OCEFTO)

1. Call to Order - Vice-Chair of the Board
Vice-Chair Milburn called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.
2. Acknowledgement of Territorial Lands

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

3. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were filed.

4. Approval of Agenda

Moved by Trustee Dickson,

THAT the agenda be approved.

Trustee Lyra Evans requested that item 9.3, Update on Enrollment Status be added to the agenda.

Moved by Trustee Dickson,

THAT the agenda be approved, as amended.

Carried

5. Briefing from the Chair of the Board

Trustee Scott reported the following:

- The deadline for the 2024-2025 Parent Involvement Committee (PIC) membership applications is 9 October 2024 at 5:00 p.m and details will be available on the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (OCDSB) website;
- *Diplôme d'études en langue française* (DELF) is an internationally recognized French proficiency test offered twice a year for eligible students whose first language is not French. Information for the upcoming fall administration was communicated to eligible secondary students on 1 October 2024;
- A virtual information session regarding the National Capital Region Army Reserve Cooperative Education Program will be held on 24 October 2024 from 6:00 p.m to 7:00 p.m.;
- Yom Kippur, a day of fasting for Jewish families, will commence on 11 October 2024. Chair Scott wished g'mar chatima tova to all who are observing;
- Dussehra is on 12 October 2024 which Hindu families celebrate the victory of good over evil, Chair Scott wished Happy Dussehra to those celebrating; and
- Schools and all OCDSB offices will be closed on 14 October 2024 in celebration of Thanksgiving.

6. Briefing from the Director

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

- The OCDSB Family Conference will be held on 2 November 2024 from 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at Woodroffe High School. This year's theme is Supporting Education Through Change and will feature Sam Demma as the keynote speaker. He noted that there will be multiple-expert led workshops with some offered in multiple languages;
- Post-Secondary Pathways and Career Exploration Day is on 6 November 2024 where secondary school students will have the opportunity to explore post-secondary pathways and career possibilities;
- Grade 9 students are encouraged to participate in Take Our Kids to Work Day and grades 10-12 students are encouraged to participate in Launch 2024 which is a one-day virtual pathways and career exploration conference; and
- 'Initial Learning Updates' for semestered secondary schools will be emailed to families and eligible students on 10 October 2024.

7. Delegations

There were no delegations.

8. Reports from Statutory and Other Committees

8.1 Audit Committee 18 September 2024

Moved by Trustee Lee,

THAT the report from the Audit Committee, dated 18 September 2024, be received.

Carried

a. Approval of Annual Report on RIAT Activities

Moved by Trustee Blackburn,

THAT the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board Audit Committee:

1. **Receives for information the 2024-25 Annual Report on Internal Audit Activities; and**
2. **Approves the 2024-25 Regional Internal Audit Team Charter.**

Carried

b. Approval of 2024-2025 RIAT Internal Audit Plan

Moved by Trustee Blackburn,

THAT the 2024-2025 Regional Internal Audit Plan be approved.

Carried

9. Matters for Discussion:

9.1 Report 24-105, Equity of Access to Technology (J. Proulx)

Your Committee had before it for discussion Report 24-105, Equity of Access to Technology seeking to provide information on the Equitable Access to Technological Plan.

During discussion and in response to queries, the following information was noted:

- Staff clarified that the choice of using Chromebooks in schools is due to safety and security concerns. Staff added that there will be Windows devices in secondary schools and that Office 365 and Windows programs can be implemented through cloud based solutions if needed in the future;
- Infrastructure was a primary factor in deciding the operating system that will be used, as opposed to budget;
- General Manager Owens noted that the OCDSB aims to update and standardized all forms and for Laserfiche to be accessible on smartphones;
- Principals and vice-principals will be able to identify which students require internet hotspots for home use to ensure equitable access;
- The OCDSB collaborates with the learning support services (LSS) team to access student needs and to ensure the appropriate devices are accessible;
- Student voice will be included in the development of the Artificial Intelligence (AI) framework process;

Trustee Jennekens assumed the Chair.

- Concerns were expressed regarding low student Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) test being correlated to students without access to technology;
- Director Buffone noted that there are multiple factors to be considered when transitioning from paper-and-pencil assessments to on-line assessments;
- The OCDSB aims to improve access to technology and the internet to achieve a one to one ratio in grade 7 to grade 12;
- Executive Officer Proulx noted that the one to one ratio will allow students to be familiar with the technology used in schools which will help to mitigate technology anxiety;

- Trustee Milburn requested that an additional update regarding internet hotspots be provided at a future date;

Trustee Milburn resumed the Chair.

- Trustees expressed concern in maintaining the integrity and authenticity of testing as AI could be used to create answers. It was noted that currently there is no accurate program to determine if something is AI generated;
- Executive Officer Prolux noted the importance of critical thinking and the ability to navigate and understand new emerging technology through the use of an emerging technology framework. This will determine the appropriate tools for student use;
- Staff noted that grade 7 students will be equipped with a new Chromebook which they will carry up to grade 12 and the District will replace any damaged equipment;
- Staff clarified that students will have their Chromebook for 6 years and that Google supports their device for up to 10 years. Staff noted that they would consider a trustee suggestion to leave the Chromebooks with students after grade 12; and
- Chair Scott noted that students should be able to express themselves without the use of technology.

Vice Chair Milburn called the meeting into recess at 8:14 p.m.

Vice Chair Milburn called the meeting back to order at 8:20 p.m.

9.2 Report 24-110, Elementary Program Review: Relevant Research and District Data (N. Towaij)

Your Committee had before it for discussion Report 24-110, Elementary Program Review: Relevant Research and District Data, seeking to provide the analyses of District-level data and contextually-relevant external research related to the elementary program review. The report also contains an update of the status of the review and a revised timeline for sharing proposed model(s).

During discussion and in response to queries, the following information was noted:

- Superintendent Towaij noted that questions and comments during discussion will be compiled into an Frequently Asked Question (FAQ) Google document and will be shared back to trustees at a future date with responses;
- Director Buffone noted that it is not OCDSB's intention to eliminate all self-contained classrooms. There are overarching principles put

into place on community-based schooling, dynamic bilingual teaching and learning environments, and a continuum of inclusion. Students on the autism spectrum and those who require additional supports, for instance, will be taken into consideration when looking at potential program models;

- There will be a full process for public feedback once the elementary program model is shared. This will be comprised of in-person sessions, online opportunities and an evening set for delegations. In addition, the OCDSB aims to work with Student Achievement Through Equity (SATE) and the Indigenous community to hear their voices once the models are released;
- The OCDSB aims to provide students within specialized program classes to have opportunities for integration and engagement with peers of various ages. In addition to program structure, the accessibility and the type of program available must also be taken into consideration;
- Director Buffone noted the importance of having sufficient support in special education classes to accompany an integrated approach to ensure the success of students and program models;
- Superintendent Towajj noted that currently there are no school boards in Ontario that are exclusively French immersion or exclusively English with core French. She added that research found that smaller specialized program classes may not lead to higher academic success for students compared to those who were integrated into regular classrooms;
- Director Buffone noted that the program model(s) will need to be an integrated approach with a broader infrastructure around the diversity of staff that reflects the students;

Trustee Lee assumed the Chair.

- Executive Officer Mark noted that staff is currently working on a summary of the research which will be completed in time for fall advisory committee consultations;
- The revised timeline is largely due to accommodate additional consultation with advisory committees of the Board and the public to ensure all voices are heard;
- The OCDSB aims to gather additional student voices during the future consultation period;

Trustee Milburn resumed the Chair.

- Trustee Lyra Evans expressed concern that the new Board of Trustee municipal election will occur in fall 2026 and will not benefit

from the four year consultation prior to the elementary program consultation if additional delays occur. She expressed the view that the new Board may make an uninformed and reactionary decision;

- A professional development (PD) plan will be brought forth along with a program model to ensure the information presented is accessible to all;
- Trustee Scott expressed concern as multi-language students are channeled into other types of support, staying in the English program and not having the advantage of more extensive French despite their capabilities. Superintendent Towaij noted that the physical location of single track English schools versus dual track schools is a barrier. It is estimated that a quarter of OCDSB schools do not offer Early French Immersion (EFI) program and many are located in neighborhoods that have a high percentage of multilingual learners and high percentages of students living in low income households.

9.3 Update on Enrollment Status

During discussion and in response to queries, the following information was noted:

- Currently the elementary enrolment is 1,130 students below projections and an estimated 700 students have since been added from the beginning of September 2024;
- The secondary enrolment is close to projections of just under 27,000 students;
- Currently there is no calculated number for financial ramifications of the decrease in student enrolment; however, it will be a factor in the OCDSB revised estimates;
- The OCDSB reviews student enrollment numbers weekly and the District has the potential to add classroom based staff, support staff and learning resource educators in the event there is an increase in enrolment;

Trustee Jennekens assumed the Chair.

- Principals have noted that there are numerous factors to the decline in enrolment including families moving, the proximity between school and residence and transportation availability;
- Superintendent Lehman noted that the OCDSB is currently gathering information informally through staff in various sites and areas of the District. He suggested a review on the way enrolment number is estimated be reviewed; and

- Trustee Milburn requested that accessible transportation concerns be brought forward to the Ottawa Student Transportation Association (OSTA). She urged that the District consider the transportation model be paired with the elementary program review.

Trustee Milburn resumed the Chair.

10. Information Items:

10.1 Report from OPSBA (if required)

Trustee Jennekens noted that local government week is 21 to 25 October 2024 and that trustees are encouraged to meet with their schools' grade 5 to grade 10 civic classes to share the roles and responsibilities of a trustee.

Trustee Scott noted that an Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA) Board of Directors meeting was held on 27 September 2024 to 28 September 2024 and a summary of this meeting will be circulated to trustees at a future date.

10.2 OSTA Update (if required)

There was no OSTA update.

11. New Business - Information and Inquiries

In response to a query from Trustee Lyra Evans regarding government regulation requiring signs to be displayed for at least 90 days when doing construction over \$250,000, staff noted that the OCDSB currently has 69 signs up, costing approximately \$900 each. In addition, \$500 signs were ordered to be put on fences and \$1,000 in signage will be installed on two site posts, in total three additional signs have been ordered for new projects.

12. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:41 p.m.

Cathryne Milburn, Chair