



## **COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE PUBLIC REPORT**

**Tuesday, December 10, 2024, 7:00 p.m.**

**Board Room**

**Administration Building**

**133 Greenbank Road**

**Ottawa, Ontario**

Trustees Present: Donna Dickson, Lyra Evans, Nili Kaplan-Myrth, Jennifer Jennekens, Cathryne Milburn, Suzanne Nash, Amanda Presley, Lynn Scott, Julia Fortey, Jeffrey Zhang (Student Trustee, electronic communication), Sharanya Sivasathiyathan (Student Trustee, electronic communication), Ezio De Stefano (Student Trustee, electronic communication)

Staff Present: Pino Buffone (Director of Education), Brett Reynolds (Associate Director - Academic), Randy Gerior (Associate Director, Business Operations), Jesse Mark (Executive Officer), James Proulx (Executive Officer of Technological Support Services), Geoff Best (Executive Director, Ottawa-Carleton Education Network), Amy Hannah (Superintendent of Education), Richard Sinclair (General Counsel), Daniel Bradley (General Manager, Facilities Operations), Diane Pernari (General Manager, Communications & Public Relations), Michael Guilbault (Central Audio/Visual Technical Specialist), Darren Gatley (General Manager, Board Services), Kathy Mak (Board/Committee Coordinator)

Non-Voting Representatives Present: Jean Fulton-Hale (OCSSAN), Justin Shulman (OCEOC), Stephen Skoutajan (OCEFTO), Chris Walsh (OSSTF Education Worker), Jamieson Dyer (OCEOTA), Seema Lamba (ACE), Jo-Joe Van Hooser (IEC)

1. Call to Order - Vice-Chair of the Board

Vice-Chair Milburn called the meeting to order at 7:54 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 Kaplan-Myrth,**

**THAT the agenda be approved.**

**Carried**

5. Briefing from the Chair of the Board

During the briefing from Trustee Scott the following information was provided:

- The deadline for feedback on the updated Respectful Workplace Policy is 12 December 2024 and can be submitted on [engage.ocdsb.ca](https://engage.ocdsb.ca);
- The Ottawa-Carleton District Board (OCDSB) offers the Explore French Summer Program to provide opportunities for high school students to build language skills, enjoy French cultural activities and connect with other students from across Canada. A virtual information session will be held on 11 December 2024 at 7:00 p.m.; and
- Applications for a Parent Reaching Out (PRO) Grant are now open, school councils may apply for a grant of up to \$750 to support innovative projects and activities. The application deadline is 10 January 2025, additional details have been provided to school councils and shared in our recent Parent and Caregiver Updates.

6. Briefing from the Director

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

- Math@OCDSB is a new resource to help students develop strong math skills by providing tips, tools and websites to support students' learning at home. The first issue was shared in the last Parent and Caregiver Update;
- The District invites students and families to nominate their favourite educator for the 2025 Prime Minister's Awards. The deadline for nominations is 15 January 2025; and
- The OCDSB secondary schools will be hosting an in-person information session at the beginning of December 2024 for students and families to explore the school, tour the facilities and meet staff members.

7. Delegations

There were no delegations.

8. Matters for Action:

8.1 Report 24-124, Facilities Renewal Program and School Condition Improvement 2024-2025 Project Plan (R. Gerrior)

Your Committee had before it Report 24-124, Facilities Renewal Program and School Condition Improvement 2024-2025 Project Plan, seeking to

obtain to obtain Board approval of the Facilities Renewal Program (FRP) to be implemented under the School Renewal Allocation (SRA), Temporary Accommodations (portable moves) and School Condition Improvement (SCI) funding for the 2024-2025 budget year.

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

- The District aims to create a replacement play structure program. Currently staff is working on the implementation and what the parent council or school council can invest in;
- Trustee Nash noted that Parent Council considers replacing play structures in Spring 2024 and suggests that the District communicate with Parents Councils regarding the replacement play structure program as soon as possible;
- Trustee Scott expressed concern regarding standardizing the play structures as school sites and local needs are not uniform. She suggested that the District consider a more imaginative play structure with smaller installations to support particular kinds of activities;
- The District has compiled an inventory of all play structures and their conditions with a long term plan for replacement. Additional details will be provided as a memorandum at a future date;
- General Manager Bradley noted that the District considers the fluctuating price of electric and gas and there needs to be a balance between sustainability and fiscal responsibility;
- Trustee Kaplan-Myrth expressed concern regarding accessibility at school sites. General Manager Bradley clarified that the District upgrades accessibility on an “as needed” basis;
- It was noted that the District will be implementing two elevators in the 2024-2025 school year and aims to upgrade all inclusive washrooms in the future;
- Director Buffone noted that accessibility adaptations made on site may not all be facilities-related in nature, as there may be other adaptations put in place by staff to best meet the needs of students;
- Trustee Kaplan-Myrth requested an update be provided to trustees to indicate the number of physical barriers that have been addressed and/or reduced;

- General Manager Bradley noted that the long term plan for replacement is flexible and a shift in approach for playground operations can be considered;

Trustee Nash assumed the Chair.

- It was noted that greenhouse gas emission has been reduced 2-3% across the District;
- Vice-Chair Milburn suggested staff list the various sites as a line item expenditure in Appendix B of Report 24-124, Facilities Renewal Program and School Condition Improvement 2024-2025 Project Plan, so trustees can easily indicate to the community where the specific funding is allocated;

Trustee Milburn resumed the Chair

- General Manager Bradley noted that while there is a budget allocation for unplanned projects that may occur throughout the school year, the District identified projects wherever possible as the Ministry of Education (MOE) requires detailed reports;
- In response to concerns expressed regarding the \$882 million backlog of work, Director Buffone noted that this amount reflects, in part, changes over time for building codes which necessitate required upgrades;
- General Manager Bradley added that the backlog represents a five year window for high and urgent need items that is constantly changing. The amount is an estimated renewal cost based on a specific lifespan of the facility and is not an accurate representation of the condition of our buildings;
- It was noted that a number of funding sources do not apply to administrative buildings; and
- Trustees noted that many schools are nearing the end of their expected lifespan and will require significant repairs.

Trustee Lyra Evans requested a recorded vote.

**Moved by** Nili Kaplan-Myrth

1. **THAT the Facilities Renewal Program and School Condition Improvement Project budget in the amount of \$105,753,017 be approved as detailed in Appendix B of Report 24-124 (Attached as Appendix A);**
2. **THAT staff be authorized to proceed with individual project tenders within the Facilities Renewal Program and School Condition Improvement Project plans;**

3. **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**
4. **THAT the Chair of the Board and Director of Education are authorized to award contracts above \$500,000 that are within this overall available uncommitted approved budget.**

For (9): Donna Dickson, Julia Fortey, Lyra Evans, Jennifer Jennekens, Nili Kaplan-Myrth, Cathryne Milburn, Suzanne Nash, Amanda Presley, and Lynn Scott

**Carried (9 to 0)**

9. Reports from Statutory and Other Committees

9.1 Advisory Committee on Equity (ACE), 30 May 2024

Moved by Trustee Fortey,

THAT the report from the Advisory Committee on Equity (ACE), dated 30 May 2024, be received.

Trustee Kaplan-Myrth objected to comments made to her by a committee member. Following a brief recess, Vice-Chair Milburn advised that the report will be reviewed by staff and brought to the committee for approval at a future date.

9.2 Advisory Committee on Equity (ACE), 26 September 2024

Moved by Trustee Presley,

THAT the report from the Advisory Committee on Equity (ACE), dated 26 September 2024, be received.

Trustee Kaplan-Myrth requested that comments from David Sachs on behalf of Jewish Federation of Ottawa (JFO) made during the community discussion be included in the report.

Vice-Chair Milburn advised that the report will be reviewed by staff and brought back to the committee for approval at a future date.

9.3 Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) 9 October 2024

Moved by Trustee Kaplan-Myrth,

THAT the report from the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC), dated 9 October 2024, be received.

Trustee Scott noted that Trustees Blackburn and Nash should be listed as guests.

**Moved by Trustee Kaplan-Myrth,**

**THAT the report from the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC), dated 9 October 2024, be received, as amended.**

**Carried**

9.4 Parent Involvement Committee (PIC) 16 October 2024

**Moved by Trustee Nash,**

**THAT the report from the Parent Involvement Committee (PIC), dated 16 October 2024, be received.**

**Carried**

9.5 Indigenous Education Council (IEC) 17 October 2024

Moved by Trustee Fortey,

THAT the report from the Indigenous Education Council (IEC), dated 17 October 2024, be received.

Trustee Scott noted that Kyl Morrison should be listed as a staff member.

**Moved by Trustee Fortey,**

**THAT the report from the Indigenous Education Council (IEC), dated 17 October 2024, be received, as amended.**

**Carried**

9.6 Advisory Committee on Equity (ACE), 24 October 2024

**Moved by Trustee Nash,**

**THAT the report from the Advisory Committee on Equity (ACE), dated 24 October 2024, be received.**

**Carried**

9.7 Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) 6 November 2024

**Moved by Trustee Scott,**

**THAT the report from the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC), dated 6 November 2024, be received.**

**Carried**

9.8 Audit Committee, 25 November 2024

**Moved by Trustee Jennekens,**

**THAT the report from the Audit Committee, dated 25 November 2024, be received.**

a. Approval of 2023-2024 Consolidated Financial Statements

This recommendation was approved at the Board meeting of 26 November 2024.

b. Approval of 2023-2024 Annual Report on Internal Audit Activity

**Moved by Trustee Lyra Evans,**

**THAT Appendix A to Report 24-131 be approved as the 2023-2024 Annual Report on Internal Audit Activity (Attached as Appendix B).**

**Carried**

c. Approval of the Audit Committee Annual Report for 2023-2024

**Moved by Trustee Scott,**

**THAT Report 24-132 be approved as the Audit Committee Annual Report to the Board for 2023-2024 (Attached as Appendix C).**

**Carried**

10. Matters for Discussion:

10.1 Report 24-125, International Education Initiatives and Programs in the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (A. Hannah)

Your Committee had before it Report 24-125 providing an overview of the OCDSB's international education initiatives, which are provided in collaboration with the Ottawa-Carleton Education Network (OCENET). This report highlights the key accomplishments and programs in international education, and provides recommendations for future growth and development.

Superintendent Hannah and OCENET Executive Director Geoff Best provided a presentation. During the ensuing discussion, and in response to queries, the following points were noted:

- The cost per student is approximately \$14,000;
- Students are placed in schools that are below capacity;
- Some international students receive English as a Second Language (ESL) support;
- There are 572 international students in grades K-12 across the District;
- OCENET is an independent entity;

- Approximately 36 school districts have similar programs for international students;
- In response to a request from Trustee Kaplan-Myrth regarding equity and inclusivity, staff agreed to provide a memo with information and data on students from marginalized groups or of lower socio-economic status who are unable to travel internationally;
- International education includes virtual learning, access to bursaries based on need, and school fundraising initiatives;
- Director Buffone noted the exchange program provides students an opportunity for experiential learning such as engaging in an international certificate program, offered system-wide, for instance;
- Data indicating the cost and return on investment in the program will be presented in the 2025-2026 budget process;
- Students expressing interest in the program initiate the work with the OCENET staff. Currently 40 secondary students from across the District are eligible for the Aix-Marseille Exchange each year;
- Superintendent Hannah notes that OCENET offers shorter exchange programs at a lower cost through the international certificate program;
- It was noted that the total cost for international students with accommodation and medical insurance fees is estimated between \$30,000 to \$33,000. OCENET does not arrange the accommodation and works closely with a third party provider;
- Director Buffone noted the collaboration with OCENET allows for the filling of pupil places within the existing staffing complement, to a significant extent, in order to optimize organizational effectiveness and efficiency;
- Trustee Nash suggested that students who have experienced the exchange program become ambassadors of this program to share their experience and stories;
- Trustees noted the valuable experience students gain from this program and the additional post-secondary opportunities that will open for students;
- OCENET has selected a specific school in the District and in the city of Bologna to participate in working on global projects by connecting staff and students within each school virtually; and



- Trustees expressed concern regarding the opportunity of low income families affording the exchange program and urged the program to become more equitable for all students.

11. Information Items:

11.1 Report from OPSBA (if required)

There was no report from the OPSBA representatives.

11.2 OSTA Update (if required)

Trustee Lyra Evans noted that the District may incur a year-end deficit of approximately \$4.6 million related to a proposed increase in the cost of OC Transpo youth passes, effective 1 January 2025. Price increases are established by the City of Ottawa.

Trustee Milburn declared a conflict of interest relating to her employment with the City of Ottawa's Transit Services Department (OC Transpo) and did not take part in the discussion.

Trustee Kaplan-Myrth assumed the Chair.

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

- The Ministry of Education does not usually fund in-year budget changes of this nature;
- Trustee Presley suggested that the District engage the Chair of the Transit Commission, the Mayor, and OC Transpo management to discuss this cost increase;
- Trustee Jennekens noted that OSTA issued a weather announcement on social media that caused some confusion among parents and students attending Canterbury High School. Staff agreed to follow up with OSTA; and
- Trustee Lyra Evans noted that OSTA remains committed to ensure all students who require transportation to Canterbury High School receive it.

12. New Business - Information and Inquiries

Trustee Milburn resumed the Chair.

Trustee Kaplan-Myrth noted that Durham and Limestone District School Boards have officially left X (formerly known as Twitter) as they are of the opinion that it is not a social media platform with which they wish to engage with their community. She inquired whether the OCDSB would take a similar action. Executive Officer Mark advised that this is an operational decision. The District

has been using X to make announcements and has been actively disengaging since September 2023.

13. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 10:06 p.m.

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Cathryne Milburn, Chair