



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

**Tuesday, February 4, 2025, 7:00 p.m.**

**Board Room**

**Administration Building**

**133 Greenbank Road**

**Ottawa, Ontario**

- Trustees Present: Justine Bell (electronic communication), Donna Dickson, Lyra Evans, Nili Kaplan-Myrth, Jennifer Jennekens, Matthew Lee, Cathryne Milburn, Suzanne Nash, Amanda Presley (electronic communication), Lynn Scott, Julia Fortey, Jeffrey Zhang (Student Trustee), Sharanya Sivasathiyanathan (Student Trustee), Ezio De Stefano (Student Trustee)
- Staff Present: Pino Buffone (Director of Education), Brett Reynolds (Associate Director - Academic), Randy Gerrior (Associate Director, Business Operations), Jesse Mark (General Counsel Legal Services), James Proulx (Executive Officer of Technological Support Services), Reg Lavergne (Superintendent of Program Services), Marva Major (Superintendent of Numeracy), Kristin Riddell (Superintendent of Education), Sandra Owens (General Manager, Business & Learning Technologies), Diane Pernari (General Manager, Communications & Public Relations), Andrea Rahim (General Manager, Research Evaluation & Analytics Division), Katherine Magner (General Manager, Program Services), Steven Massey (Principal, Program Services), Michael Guilbault (Central Audio/Visual Technical Specialist), Susan Baker (Acting Senior Coordinator, Governance Services), Kathy Mak (Board/Committee Coordinator)
- Non-Voting Representatives Present: Brent Smith (OCEOC), Jean Fulton-Hale (OCSSAN), Tahir Yapici (PIC Representative), Chris Walsh (OSSTF Education Worker), Stephen Skoutajan (OCEFTO), Anthony Wong (SEAC), Thomas Holloway (OCASC), Stephanie Kirkey (OSSTF District 25)

1. Call to Order - Vice-Chair of the Board  
Chair Milburn called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.
2. Acknowledgement of Territorial Lands

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 Fortey,**

**THAT the agenda be approved.**

**Carried**

5. Briefing from the Chair of the Board

During the briefing from the Chair of the Board, the following information was provided:

- Report cards for secondary students will be distributed on 11 February 2025 and elementary students will receive their report cards on 12 February 2025;
- The Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (OCDSB) Learning Support Services (LSS) will be hosting an in-person Transition Planning Fair for youth with intellectual disabilities, and their families on 13 February 2025;
- Professional Activity (PA) Day for Elementary and Secondary will be on 14 February 2025. There will be no school for students and EarlyON Centres will be closed;
- Family Day will take place on 17 February 2025. All OCDSB schools, including early learning and childcare programs and administrative buildings, will be closed; and
- Toonie Tuesday will be held on 25 February 2025.

6. Briefing from the Director

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

- The District launched its first Inuktitut language course at Ottawa Technical Secondary School (OTSS) on 3 February 2025; and
- The online survey for feedback on the proposed Elementary Program Review (EPR) model will be open until 25 March 2025. Community meetings will be held on 6 March 2025, 17 March 2025 and 24 March. Additional information can be found on the OCDSB website.

Trustee Kaplan-Myrth expressed concern regarding the social media “X” platform and urged the District to disconnect from the platform to minimize the hurt towards Jewish and transgendered community.

General Counsel Mark clarified that the District only uses the platform to monitor situations and notify families and communities on significant matters.

7. Delegations

There were no delegations.

8. Matters for Action:

8.1 Report 25-001, School Year Calendar 2025-2026 (B. Reynolds)

Your Committee had before it Report 25-001, School Year Calendar 2025-2026, seeking approval for the 2025-2026 Elementary and Secondary school year calendars for the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (OCDSB).

Moved by Trustee Lyra Evans,

THAT the recommended school year calendar outlined in Report 25-001 be submitted by 1 March 2025 to the Ministry of Education for approval as the official 2025-2026 school year calendar for the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board's elementary and secondary schools (attached as Appendices A, B and C).

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

- In response to a query from Trustee Lyra Evans regarding four day school weeks, it was clarified that the District would be required to add missing instructional days if the District implements four instructional days per week. The District's collective agreements specify that the school year and working year cannot exceed 194 days;
- Stephen Skoutajan noted that a Professional Development (PD) day falls on a Monday in the 2025-2026 school calendar and custodial staff would need to be present on the Sunday prior for set up. It was clarified that there are custodial staff in schools due to existing permits through Community Use of Schools on weekends and will result in no additional cost in many instances;
- Associate Director Reynolds clarified that the District could consider moving the PD day to a Friday if there is an increase in expense;
- Trustee Milburn noted that staff will calculate the expense for scheduling PD day on Monday compared to Fridays and will share the data at a future date;
- In Appendix A to Report 25-001, the last day of school is 26 June 2025, the two "X" marks in the following days indicate the remainder of the month. It was clarified that this calendar is a

working template from the Ministry of Education (MOE) and the “X” will not be on the published calendar for the community;

- The MOE dictates that the District use three (3) PD days for Ministry priorities and the District is permitted to create an four (4) additional District priority days;

Trustee Jennekens assumed the Chair.

- Trustee Milburn suggested “X”, “E” and “PA” be included in the legend on Appendix A, B and C to Report 25-001. It was clarified that the calendar published on the OCDSB website will contain a detailed legend and will be colour coded;
- Associate Director Reynolds noted that input for the calendar was received from the Parent Involvement Committee (PIC), Student Senate, staff and various bargaining units; and

Trustee Milburn resumed the Chair.

**Moved by Trustee Lyra Evans,**

**THAT the recommended school year calendar outlined in Report 25-001 be submitted by 1 March 2025 to the Ministry of Education for approval as the official 2025-2026 school year calendar for the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board’s elementary and secondary schools (attached as Appendices A, B and C).**

**Carried**

9. Report from Statutory and Other Committees

9.1 Indigenous Education Council (IEC), 21 November 2024

**Moved by Trustee Dickson,**

**THAT the report from the Indigenous Education Council (IEC), dated 21 November 2024, be received.**

**Carried**

9.2 Advisory Committee on Equity (ACE), 18 December 2024

**Moved by Trustee Scott,**

**THAT the report from the Advisory Committee on Equity (ACE), dated 18 December 2024, be received.**

**Carried**

10. Matters for Discussion:

10.1 Report 25-003, Student Learning Update: Core Academic Skills (B. Reynolds)

Your Committee had before it Report 25-003, Student Learning Update: Core Academic Skills, providing an update on student achievement planning and reporting in literacy and math, and the Board Priority Learning Plan for 2024-2025.

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

- Educators will use a number of specific instructional strategies and monitoring tools to identify student learning progress and specific gaps;
- The English as a Second Language (ESL) team, the Indigenous team and the Student Achievement Through Equity (SATE) team collaborate to develop professional learning strategies, opportunities and resources that reflect an inclusive approach;
- Culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy and universal design for learning strategies are the priorities in professional learning. Educators are focused on understanding the student, and making math accessible, relevant and responsive to student needs;
- Students are developing strong reasoning skills and the ability to articulate their learning through the use of different tools, visual aids and the conversations that occur in classrooms;
- The District aims to improve Indigenous students' reading proficiency by placing a greater emphasis on traditional storytelling and building relationships between younger students and educators;
- Indigenous students are supported in the acquisition of math through the implementation of sharing circles in classrooms, smaller group instruction, hands on learning experiences and additional land-based learning;
- Currently there is no comparable Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) data due to the significant shift in 2020 to 2021 and a new baseline needs to be re-established. The assessment is now available online and students do not receive the same questions;
- Staff expects there to be a slow and steady improvement in EQAO student data as the District focuses on creating the conditions for learning and improving student attendance;
- The School Climate Surveys indicate there is a correlation between student well-being, sense of belonging and student attendance rates;

- Educators gather information regarding students' strengths and adjust their instructions to support areas of need through the use of the OCDSB Numeracy Assessment Tool (ONAT);
- The District began the midterm rescreening of all students in year 2 Kindergarten, Grade 1 and Grade 2 on 3 February 2025 for comparison with data collected in September 2024 to identify areas requiring early intervention;
- The preliminary data indicates that students are engaged with components of structured literacy;
- The Multilingual Language Learner (MLL) step data indicates that there is significant improvement for students who are at step 5 and step 6;
- Trustees expressed concern regarding the achievement gaps among marginalized students;
- The Elementary Program Review (EPR) will improve equity of access, opportunity, experience and outcomes for students;
- The District's hiring practices aim to attract a wide variety of applicants who focus on student achievement and well-being with an underpinning of equity;
- The learning gained through the SATE inquiry in selected schools is applied across the District;
- The School Priority Learning Plan focuses on a number of areas including math, literacy and well-being. Through the use of data and evidence, schools identify learning needs, actions, and timelines for implementation;
- The Student Accelerating in Literacy (SAIL) summer program is an ESL support program for students learning English;
- The District calculates a student's socioeconomic status based on postal code information provided from Statistics Canada;
- Regarding concerns expressed about declining math scores as students progress through school, Superintendent Major noted that student confidence decreases as they engage in more challenging work and it is important to create a safe space for students to practice and take risks;
- The current initiatives are being communicated to students through SAIL and various social media pieces;

\*\*\*The meeting recessed at 8:56 p.m.\*\*\*

\*\*\*The meeting resumed at 9:10 p.m.\*\*\*

- Anthony Wong noted the importance of focusing resources on younger students during critical formative years to ensure they are set up for success;
- The importance of prioritizing educators' screening and assessment of student progress was noted. Screening tools are used as an aid to help identify where a student requires support;
- The District offers dual credit programs to allow high school students to earn credits in college and university courses while completing their high school credit;
- Students have opportunities to engage in learning experiences and career pathway opportunities in various trades throughout the year;
- There are a number of events organized for female students interested in pursuing Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) programs; and
- A report on well-being and engagement will be presented to the Board in March 2024 to complement the current report on Student Learning Update: Core Academic Skills.

11. Information Items:

11.1 Report from OPSBA (if required)

Trustee Scott noted that the Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA) is seeking a trustee to serve on a committee for the selection of OPSBA awards. The deadline for applications is 20 February 2025.

11.2 OSTA Update (if required)

Trustee Lee noted that OSTA will communicate directly with the principals of schools affected by the change in bell times.

12. New Business - Information and Inquiries

Director Buffone noted that the Ottawa Police Services (OPS) has coordinated a community youth unit to engage with the four local school boards. The District continues to collaborate with the OPS to address some of the issues within schools.

Principal Massey noted that the MOE has directed schools to incorporate students' EQAO scores from 10% up to 30% of the students' final grade.

Trustee Kaplan-Myrth expressed concern regarding the use of artificial turf at school sites. Associate Director Gerrior clarified that it is not common for the District to use artificial turf and will only do so in spaces where grass does not perform well. The Facilities Department considers a number of options prior to artificial turf and the District continues to ensure there is a proactive and safe play space for students to use.

13. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:54 p.m.

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Cathryne Milburn, Chair