



COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE PUBLIC REPORT

Tuesday, January 21, 2025, 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, Julia Fortey, Nili Kaplan-Myrth, Jennifer Jennekens, Cathryne Milburn, Suzanne Nash, Lynn Scott, Jeffrey Zhang (Student Trustee), Sharanya Sivasathiyanathan (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), James Proulx (Executive Officer of Technological Support Services), Jesse Mark (General Counsel Legal Services), Kate Stoudt (Superintendent of Learning Support Services), Amy Hannah (Superintendent of Education), Reg Lavergne (Superintendent of Program Services), Shawn Lehman (Superintendent of Employee Services), Sandra Owens (General Manager, Business & Learning Technologies), Diane Pernari (General Manager, Communications & Public Relations), Kenan Omercajic (Strategic Business Analyst), Michael Guilbault (Central Audio/Visual Technical Specialist), Darren Gatley (General Manager, Governance Service Manager), Kathy Mak (Board/Committee Coordinator)

Non-Voting Representatives Present: Jean Fulton-Hale (OCSSAN), Justin Shulman (OCEOC), Lili Miller (IEC), Anthony Wong (SEAC), Stephen Skoutajan (OCEFTO), Jamieson Dyer (OCEOTA), Thomas Holloway (OCASC), Chris Walsh (OSSTF Education Worker), Stephanie Kirkey (OSSTF District 25)

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

Vice-Chair Milburn called the meeting to order at 7:36 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 the Chair of the Board the following information was provided:

- Chair Scott presented to the provincial Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs and advocated for fair funding for public education in the 2025 Ontario budget;
- The final evaluation period for secondary students in semestered schools is scheduled from 24 January 2025 to 30 January 2025, more information will be shared by schools;
- Learning Support Services (LSS) are hosting weekly question-and-answer sessions on 28 January 2025 for families and youth with intellectual disabilities to support students after high school. Details are available on the OCDSB website;
- 24 January 2025 is a Professional Activity (PA) Day for Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (OCDSB) elementary schools. There will be no school for elementary students and EarlyON Centres will be closed; and
- Trustee Scott recognized the recent passing of Jane Dobell and would like to recognize her contribution to the development of OCDSB, the introduction to French Immersion Program, and the lasting impact her work has on the District.

6. Briefing from the Director

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

- The OCDSB will be launching redesigned District and school websites and a new staff portal on 31 January 2025;
- The cross boundary transfer application period will be 27 January 2025 to 7 February 2025;
- The Middle French Immersion registration period is 3 February 2025 to 7 February 2025; and
- The winter night school registration is open until 13 February 2025.

Trustee Kaplan-Myrth expressed concern regarding the inclusion of social media “X” on the new OCDSB website and suggested the District remove the social media link.

General Manager Pernari clarified that the District uses “X” to monitor situations and updates from the Ottawa Police Service (OPS).

Trustee Kaplan-Myrth suggested the District implement a policy to allow the District to use “X” to monitor situations.

7. Delegations

There were no delegations.

8. Report from Statutory and Other Committees

8.1 Advisory Committee on Equity, 30 May 2024

Moved by Trustee Kaplan-Myrth,

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

Carried

8.2 Advisory Committee on Equity, 26 September 2024

Moved by Trustee Dickson,

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

Carried

8.3 Parent Involvement Committee (PIC), 20 November 2024

Moved by Trustee Nash,

THAT the report from the Parent Involvement Committee (ACE), dated 20 November 2024, be received.

Carried

9. Matters for Action:

9.1 Report 25-002, Elementary Program Review: Proposed Program Model and School Support Model

Your Committee had before it Report 25-002, Elementary Program Review: Proposed Program Model and School Support Model, seeking approval for a consultation plan for gathering feedback from the OCDSB community on the proposed program model and support for students to inform final recommendations to be presented to the Board of Trustees in spring 2025.

Moved by Trustee Scott,

THAT the consultation plan for an active community engagement campaign to take place during Winter 2025 regarding the proposed program model and support for students, as outlined in Report 25-002, be approved.

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

- The Elementary Program Review (EPR) will recommend program infrastructural changes to allow the District to reallocate resources to better serve the students in a more effective and efficient manner;
- The EPR will stabilize school configurations and move cohorts of students together rather than dispersing them in an array of unnecessary transitions;
- Currently the District is considering a number of methods to support students in the general classroom, in community schools. A mixed grade grouping of students with similar learning needs with targeted intervention at a specific time with specific support may be considered;
- The importance of understanding individual learning needs, helping school staff identify learning profiles within classroom and the broader school community, and supporting students with the available resources was noted;
- The District will need to consider the potential impact of a fully self-contained type of program and a partially integrated program and the impact of withdrawal support;
- In response to a query regarding the 39 specialized program class reductions, the focus is to understand the student learning profiles in each program class, and to research and understand the types of programs that are offered in other jurisdictions across the province. It was noted that there will be specialized program classes within every region of the OCDSB;
- The feedback gathered during the upcoming consultation period will be considered and built in the transition plan that will be brought forward between May 2025 and June 2025. Additional updates regarding the transition will be presented to the Board of Trustees regularly to ensure Trustees are informed;
- Students currently in proposed classes will remain in the program until they age out of the program. The change will affect future students considering entering in those program and the District will

discuss with families and school teams to plan different ways in supporting students within their community classrooms;

- Currently there will be no immediate reintegration of students; however, it was noted that staff has started to develop a transition and exit plan for students for the upcoming years;
- The tenets of alternative education can facilitate the opportunities to diversify and create differentiated learning experiences for students. The District aims to build elements of those tenets into professional learning to create a more diversified and accessible learning environment for all students;
- Trustees suggested a risk analysis be conducted and brought forward at a future date. Director Buffone clarified that a report that will be brought forward in March 2025 will contain details on risk analysis, risk on transitioning and school boundaries;
- The EPR will create a one-time significant move for students and in the following years, the amount of movement will decrease significantly as the school grade configuration stabilizes. Students will return to their community schools and bring students closer to the services that can support them;
- The focus of EPR is not to save money but to redistribute budget and create greater effectiveness and efficiency within school communities;
- The phasing out of specialized programs is dependent on the number of years the program is offered and the process will start in the Fall of 2026;
- The District will collaborate with an external Indigenous researcher to help understand effective practices for Indigenous learners and students interested in learning about Indigenous ways of knowing and living;
- The external Indigenous researcher's input will be integrated over winter 2025 and spring 2025 into upcoming reports for the Board of Trustees;
- The District aims to have open and transparent dialogue to discuss transition plans for students finishing in their program, the support available across the system and the classes students will access at that point in their educational journey;
- The District will maintain a general learning program (GLP) for students of intermediate school age;

- The data on streaming of students at an early age indicates students entering specialized programs tend to remain in the pathway leading into the GLP. Taking additional time to understand the student profile will allow families to make a better informed decision;
- Trustees expressed concern regarding the disparities in outcome within the programs and suggested that a metric to evaluate outcomes be built into the consultation plan to address disparities;
- A series of trackers for early literacy and early numeracy, as well as a version of *Diplome d'etudes en langue Française* (DELF) at the elementary level (DELF-Prim) will be implemented to help the District understand student progress in French-language acquisition;
- There is a number of tools that provide data on student strengths and areas where support is needed and allow educators to implement targeted specific interventions and supports on student learning;
- Early reading screening data, math assessment tools, and step assessment for English as a second language (ESL) and English literacy development (ELD) will be used more frequently to monitor student progress in learning programs;
- Trustees noted the importance of incorporating feedback into the EPR model and suggested a review of the model be undertaken with an equity perspective;

Trustee Lyra Evans assumed the Chair.

- The importance of reaching out to the community through a variety of consultations was noted to ensure that voices from underrepresented groups of the community are heard. The District aims to conduct three broad community consultations across the city, virtual sessions, gather input from students and conduct specific consultations with the Indigenous community;
- Currently staff is working to finalize the consultation dates and will collaborate with Student Achievement Through Equity (SATE) and Family and Community Engagement (FACE) to broaden the consultation to underrepresented communities;

Trustee Milburn resumed the Chair.

- It was noted that there are a number of dates dedicated to meet with the Student Senate to hear about their elementary experience and gain additional feedback.

The meeting recessed at 8:59 p.m.

The meeting resumed at 9:10 p.m.

- In response to a concern expressed about the lack of specific references to Indigenous pedagogy and content in the report, staff advised that, at the request of the Indigenous Education Council, an Indigenous scholar was engaged to provide feedback on the District's current program offerings and staff is currently awaiting their input. The District's Indigenous Education team also provided input. The next round of consultations scheduled for the spring of 2025 will include a substantial consultation with the the Indigenous population;
- The implementation of the new program model will include professional development and a learning resource strategy to support and assist educators in developing individual education plans (IEPs) for students through universal design for learning, differentiated instruction, and culturally and relevant pedagogy;
- It is anticipated that a simplified and streamlined program model will allow for the redeployment of educational assistants and early childhood educators to more optimally serve students with special needs;
- The District provides Behaviour Modification System (BMS) training to assist educational assistants in helping students regulate their behaviour. It was noted that there may be an increase in dysregulated behaviour as some students move to a different school;
- Enhanced English includes tracking and monitoring progress in early literacy and early numeracy;
- The Ottawa-Carleton Virtual School (OCV) will offer both the Enhanced English and the French Immersion programs;
- Staff, students, parents/guardians, and community members may provide feedback on the proposed models through the District's Engage website;
- The new model aims to provide both the Enhanced English and French Immersion programs in most schools to provide equity of access in both languages and provide opportunities for students in these two programs to be combined. There may be a few schools that offer only one program where it makes sense in order to ensure their viability;
- The Ministry of Education expects English school boards to offer an English program;

- Students with special needs are found in all schools, regardless of the programs offered. Alternative schools do not receive any programing enhancements or staffing enhancements;
- Transition plans will be developed for all students with an IEP who will be changing schools;
- The proposed model would not eliminate current socioeconomic disparities among schools; however, it is anticipated that by optimizing resources, the disparity could be minimized;
- The community school model will need to provide intensive support when required, along with the concept of the school as a family where all students belong;
- The composition of students currently in French Immersion is not what was envisioned when the program was established 40-50 years ago;
- Staff is considering the implications of allowing “grandfathering” students to permit them to remain at their current school; however, it is unlikely that it would be applicable to all students, and it could extend the implementation phase over several years;
- Some systemic guidance will provide checks and balances before a student is moved from French Immersion to the Enhanced English program; and
- Upon approval of the consultation plan, a schedule of consultation meetings will be posted on the District’s website.

Moved by Lynn Scott

THAT the consultation plan for an active community engagement campaign to take place during Winter 2025 regarding the proposed program model and support for students, as outlined in Report 25-002, be approved.

Carried

10. Information Items:

10.1 Report from OPSBA (if required)

There was no report from the OPSBA representatives.

10.2 OSTA Update (if required)

Trustee Lyra Evans noted that the Ottawa Student Transportation Authority meeting in January 2025 is cancelled.

11. New Business - Information and Inquiries

There was no new business.

12. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 10:28 p.m.

Cathryne Milburn, Chair