



COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE, BUDGET REPORT

Tuesday, March 18, 2025

7:30 pm

Board Room

Administration Building

133 Greenbank Road

Ottawa, Ontario

Trustees Present:	Justine Bell (electronic communication), Donna Blackburn, Donna Dickson, Lyra Evans, Julia Fortey, Jennifer Jennekens, Nili Kaplan-Myrth (electronic communication), Matthew Lee, Cathryne Milburn, Suzanne Nash, Amanda Presley (electronic communication), Lynn Scott, Jeffrey Zhang (Student Trustee, electronic communication), Ezio De Stefano (Student Trustee, electronic communication)
Staff Present:	Pino Buffone (Director of Education), Randy Gerrior (Associate Director of Business Operations), Jesse Mark (General Counsel, Governance & Legal Services), James Proulx (Executive Officer, Business & Learning Technologies), Reg Lavergne (Superintendent of Instruction), Shawn Lehman (Superintendent of Instruction), Kevin Gardner (General Manager, Financial Services), Sandy Owens (General Manager, Business & Learning Technologies), Kate Stoudt (Superintendent of Learning Support Services), Diane Pernari (General Manager, Communications & Public Relations), Michael Guilbault (Multimedia Coordinator, Communications), Darren Gatley (General Manager, Governance Services), Barry Scott (General Manager, Employee Services), Tamara Persaud (Board/Committee Coordinator)
Non-Voting Representatives Present:	Inini McHugh (ACE), Melodie Gondek (OSSTF - ESP), Philip Battison (OSSTF-PSSU), Corinne Lassaline (OSSTF-PECCS), Stephanie Kirkey (OSSTF-TBU), Anthony Wong (SEAC), Michelle Bertram (Delegate), Susan Rab (OSSTF-OT), Jason Glover (PIC)

1. Call to Order - Chair of Committee of the Whole, Budget
Chair Jennekens called the public session to order at 7:50 p.m.
2. Acknowledgement of Territorial Lands

Chair Jennekens acknowledged that this meeting is taking place on unceded Algonquin Homelands and thanked the Algonquin Nations for their stewardship of these lands since time immemorial.

3. Report from Committee of the Whole In Camera Session

Chair Jennekens noted that the Board met in camera to discuss staffing considerations related to the 2025-2026 budget. She noted that there were no recommendations.

4. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were filed.

5. Approval of Agenda

Moved by Trustee Lyra Evans,

THAT the agenda be approved.

Carried

6. Delegations

6.1 Michelle Bertram, re: Academic Staffing Plan 2025-2026

Michelle Bertram voiced her concerns surrounding Report 25-013, Academic Staffing Plan 2025-2026 and the potential reduction of Educational Assistants in schools. She expressed that students with complex special and medical needs require educational assistants throughout the school day and suggested that without these supports, many students may not be able to receive a fulsome education.

7. Action Items

7.1 Report 25-013, Academic Staffing Plan 2025-2026 (S. Lehman)

Your Committee had before it Report 25-013 providing the Board of Trustees with the recommendation plan in regards to the staffing for the 2025-2026 school year.

Director Buffone, Superintendent Lehman, and General Manager Scott provided an overview of the report.

Moved by Trustee Blackburn,

THAT the (Academic) Staffing Plan for 2025-2026, be approved, subject to adjustments related to fluctuations in projected and actual enrollment.

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

- Gratitude was extended to the staff working diligently to ensure a balanced budget is presented to the Board in relation to academic staffing for the 2025-2026 school year. The difficult nature of the task and decisions being made was acknowledged, as was their commitment to presenting a budget balanced as responsibly and respectfully as possible;
- Staff reiterated their commitment to the strategic plan. Learning, well-being, and social responsibility remain priorities as staff meet the budgetary obligations of the District;
- The 'non-academic' title in the report will be renamed to promote inclusivity for our collaborative partners and dedicated support staff in education;
- Required and associated educator funded positions are based on projected enrolment figures. Staff acknowledged that this number is subject to change based on final enrolment numbers come Fall 2026. Discretionary roles include: central instructional coaches, English as Second Language (ESL) instructors, and special education staff;
- 55% of the annual budget is allocated to all school-based staff including elementary and secondary teachers, as well as principals and vice-principals;
- Under collective agreements mandated by legislation, the District is required to employ positions such as student success teachers, guidance counselors, librarians, and reading intervention teachers;
- Early childhood educators and office staff are included under non-academic staffing. These roles are formula-driven based on projected enrolment;
- Historically, staff have presented the Board with the academic staffing plan ahead of receiving the technical papers from the Ministry of Education, followed by the presentation of the non-academic staffing plan in early May. For the 2025-2026 school year, staff integrated some of the non-academic staffing positions such as educational assistants and early childhood educators to aid trustees in decision making;
- There will be reductions in all departments and operating funds across the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (OCDSB) to remedy the projected \$20 million deficit. Staff noted that this is an opportunity to re-envision operational practises within the OCDSB and to find efficiencies;

- Communication remains a priority. OCDSB staff and union partners will receive regular updates regarding the reduction process. It was clarified that these reductions will first be achieved through attrition, retirement, resignation, and not filling vacant positions. There is currently a hiring freeze while the elimination of possible positions is being considered;
- Trustees acknowledged that the difficult budgetary pressures are compounded by the depletion of accumulated funds received to offset costs during the COVID-19 pandemic, significant increases in replacement costs, discontinuation of additional funding provided for short term services such as transportation, and inflation rates that continue to outpace the Ministry of Education grants;
- Advocacy for increased funding and additional support from the Province was encouraged as it was noted that funding continues to be reduced as the cost of public education continues to rise;
- Trustees conveyed concern that Report 25-013 is lacking in detail. In the spirit of transparency, it was requested that further information, as it becomes available, be shared publicly;
- It was clarified that the Student Achievement Through Equity (SATE) Inquiry and the Family & Community Engagement program are utilized to engage families and to highlight specific challenges faced by school communities; and
- It was proposed that research value added partnership with organizations, such as universities, be utilized to reduce costs and reduce burden on staff.

Moved by Trustee Blackburn

THAT the (Academic) Staffing Plan for 2025-2026, be approved, subject to adjustments related to fluctuations in projected and actual enrollment.

Carried

8. New Business - Information and Inquiries

There was no new business.

9. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 10:20 p.m.

Jennifer Jennekens, Chair