



COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE PUBLIC REPORT

Tuesday, April 8, 2025, 6:30 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, Nili Kaplan-Myrth, Cathryne Milburn, Suzanne Nash, Amanda Presley (electronic communication), Lynn Scott, Julia Fortey, Jeffrey Zhang (Student Trustee, electronic communication), 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), Jesse Mark (General Counsel - Governance & Legal Services), Randy Gerrior (Associate Director, Business Operations), James Proulx (Executive Officer of Technological Support Services), Reg Lavergne (Superintendent of Program Services), Shawn Lehman (Superintendent of Employee Services), A.J Keene (Superintendent, School Operations), Kate Stoudt (Superintendent Learning Support Services), Janice McCoy (Elementary Program Review Project Team Member), Karyn Carty Ostafichuk (General Manager, Planning/Transportation), Sandy Owens (General Manager, Business & Learning Technologies), Diane Pernari (General Manager, Communications & Public Relations), Kenan Omercajic (Strategic Business Analyst), Julie Cyr (General Manager, Early Learning), Darren Gatley (General Manager, Governance Services), Michael Guilbault (Central Audio/Visual Technical Specialist), Kathy Mak (Board/Committee Coordinator)
Non-Voting Representatives Present:	Jamieson Dyer (OCEOTA), Stephen Skoutajan (OCEFTO), Jean Fulton-Hale (OCSSAN), Tom Holloway (OCASC), Chris Walsh (OSSTF), Menasheh Speevak-Sladowski (ACE), Anthony Wong (SEAC), Lili Miller (IEC), Tahir Yapici (PIC)

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

Chair Milburn called the meeting to order at 6:40 p.m.

2. Acknowledgement of Territorial Lands

Chair Milburn 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. 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:

- The District will be hosting a virtual session on 10 April 2025 featuring Dr. Grant Bruno to discuss Decolonizing Autism: A Ne-hee-yo Perspective; and
- The Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (OCDSB) welcomes comments and questions regarding the 2025-2026 budget and budget process to be shared through engage.ocdsb.ca. The deadline is 10 June 2025.

6. Briefing from the Director

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

- The District congratulates Jeannie Hunter, Head of Special Education and Fine Arts at Nepean High School, who claimed the coveted 2025 MusiCounts Teacher of the Year Award at the Juno Awards;
- Registration for the 2025 Summer School programs is now open. Continuing Education offers in-person and virtual programs, and Summer School Secondary Credit programs are offered for students currently in Grades 8 to 12 and adult learners working towards their high school diploma. Remedial programs are offered for students in grades 6 to 8, and additional information can be found on the District's website; and
- The District would like to extend its best wishes to all those in our community celebrating the Festival of Passover this weekend and Vaisakhi on Monday.

7. Delegations

There were no delegations.

8. Report from Statutory and Other Committees

8.1 Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC), 8 January 2025
(Unofficial)

Moved by Trustee Dickson,

THAT the unofficial report from the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC), dated 8 January 2025, be received.

Carried

8.2 Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC), 5 February 2025

Moved by Trustee Kaplan-Myrth,

THAT the report from the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC), dated 5 February 2025, be received.

Trustee Kaplan-Myrth noted that SEAC members expressed concern regarding the accuracy of the minutes as they do not capture the full discussion and analysis that occurred.

Moved by Trustee Kaplan-Myrth,

THAT the report from the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC), dated 5 February 2025, be received.

Carried

8.3 Audit Committee, 19 February 2025

Moved by Trustee Blackburn,

THAT the report from the Audit Committee, dated 19 February 2025, be received.

Carried

9. Matters for Action

9.1 Notice of Motion Re: Anti-Racism and Anti-Hate (Trustee Dickson)

Your Committee had before it Notice of Motion Re: Anti-Racism and Anti-Hate, seeking to provide safe, respectful and safe learning environments.

Moved by Trustee Dickson,

WHEREAS the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board is committed to providing safe, respectful, and inclusive learning environments where everyone feels valued; and

WHEREAS constituents have raised concerns of an increase in racial and hateful behaviour within schools.

THAT the Director of Education shall ensure that the next report or update delivered to the Board regarding the District's *Indigenous, Equity and Human Rights Roadmap* ("Roadmap") includes a specific reference to how the District is implementing the requirements of the Ministry of Education's *Policy/Program Memorandum 119, Developing and implementing equity and inclusive education policies in Ontario schools (PPM 119)*, and that if no report on the Roadmap is delivered before September 30, 2025, the Director of Education shall ensure that a specific update on the implementation of *PPM 119* is provided to the Board no later than September 30, 2025.

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

- Currently there is no established start date to implement the Notice of Motion; however the District aims to integrate this into the ongoing work relating to the Elementary Program Review (EPR) and the Roadmap;
- A future EPR report containing the recommendation will provide the framework for the implementation of equity and inclusive policies;
- The District continues to reach out to marginalized schools and communities, collaborate with advisory committees and work with Indigenous Academic, Laurie Robinson and Arnold Blackstar to gather additional input for the EPR;
- General Counsel Mark clarified that the Equity and Inclusive Education Policy was last updated in 2011 and is currently under review to be updated, and the Human Rights Policy was passed in 2022; and
- Concern was expressed regarding the method the District used to collect EPR data and feedback during the consultations and noted that families may face a number of barriers preventing them from participating.

General Counsel Mark called point of order noting that the discussion should be focused on the motion and not the EPR.

Trustee Kaplan-Myrth called point of order noting that she took offense to a non-voting representative wearing a keffiyeh.

Moved by Trustee Dickson,

THAT the Director of Education shall ensure that the next report or update delivered to the Board regarding the District's *Indigenous, Equity and Human Rights Roadmap* ("Roadmap") includes a specific reference to how the District is implementing the requirements of the Ministry of Education's *Policy/Program Memorandum 119*,

Developing and implementing equity and inclusive education policies in Ontario schools (PPM 119), and that if no report on the Roadmap is delivered before September 30, 2025, the Director of Education shall ensure that a specific update on the implementation of PPM 119 is provided to the Board no later than September 30, 2025.

Carried

10. Matters for Discussion:

10.1 Report 25-022, Comprehensive Report on the Elementary Program Review: Revised Proposal (P. Buffone)

Your Committee had before it Report 25-022, Comprehensive Report on the Elementary Program Review: Revised Proposal, providing a revised proposal related to program model and support for students, attendance boundaries and grade configurations.

Lili Miller called point of order requesting an apology from Trustee Kaplan-Myrth regarding her comment about the keffiyeh worn by an individual at the meeting. Chair Milburn noted a two (2) minute break to be taken to discuss the governance practice.

The meeting recessed at 7:11 p.m. and resumed at 7:13 p.m.

Chair Milburn noted that the point of order is required to be raised during the point of discussion to be valid.

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

- The revised Elementary Program Review (EPR) proposal will allow the District the opportunity to consider grandparenting (exemptions) students;
- General Manager Ostafichuk noted that the District will need to determine the families that require exemptions and the capacity of schools needs to be taken into consideration;
- Staff will begin work to determine the families eligible for exemption accommodations once the Board approves the EPR; however, the eligibility for exemptions may be determined on a case by case basis;
- The District aims to communicate to families the timeline and process in which decisions on exemptions will be made by the end of the 2024-2025 school year;
- Students on cross boundary transfers (CBT) will be allowed to stay at that school until the end of the grade configuration in the school should there be a program for them;

- It was noted that the Osgoode, Greely, Castor Valley and Metcalfe communities expressed concern as their voice may not be heard. General Manager Ostafichuk clarified that there were no communities that were prioritized over others and staff had considered all the feedback that was provided;
- The District has made an deliberate decision to maintain at least 50% of students at their home school and would qualify as exempt from Pupil Accommodation Review (PAR) policy to ensure there is sufficient consultation for the EPR;
- It was noted that a motion brought by SEAC will be presented at the 15 April 2025 COW meeting;
- Concern was expressed regarding past reports indicating the disproportionality indices and underrepresentation of particular groups in French Immersion (FI) and urged the District to address the disparities in the EPR;
- The District aims to ensure the culture created by the EPR will provide the required support for students who have chosen Enhanced English (EE) or the FI program;
- The thought exchange Artificial Intelligence (AI) tool was used along with thought exchange research partners and data analysts to interpret gathered data. The AI tool used a contained data universe that accessed data collected for the EPR and is not influenced from an alternate outside source;
- The 15 April 2025 COW report will contain implementation considerations for a series of frameworks around a renewed approach to teaching and learning across the District that is literacy focused;
- The District will work in collaboration with the union partners in the context of the approved school year calendar to aid in facilitating staff movement;
- The resources from a phased out special program will be reinvested into regular classes to support the diversity of learners, and students with learning needs will be supported in a similar way through the tiers of intervention;
- Members of the Learning Support Services (LSS) team are currently discussing the roles of central team members and the ways support in school can be used for the learning profiles of students;

- The District will collaborate with Indigenous Academic Lori Robinson to ensure Indigenous ways of knowing, living and learning can be applied across the system;
- Concern was expressed regarding the systemic inequity at predominantly English only schools in low-income neighbourhoods and noted the insufficient demographic data captured;
- Director Buffone noted that the revised EPR proposal was the result of additional community consultation indicating that implementing dual-track schools across the District has implications for other factors including grade configurations for school sites, for instance;
- Director Buffone added that the grade configuration of junior kindergarten (JK) to grade 3, and grade 4 to grade 8 caused significant hardships, as shown through feedback provided by community members with larger families who rely on siblings walking to school together, for example;
- Gratitude was expressed to Superintendent Duah, the Family and Community Engagement (FACE) team and the Student Achievement Through Equity (SATE) team for their work in engaging with parents for consultation;
- The District will reallocate existing resources and a plan has been created for fall of 2026 to determine the type of resources that will need to be purchased;
- Staff will look at building development and upcoming plans for rural areas when creating boundaries within a new development area;
- General Manager Ostafichuk noted that offering a dual track program at Greely Elementary School will increase student population and the portable, septic and facilities capabilities have been taken into consideration;
- The revised EPR model has changed time allocation at the elementary level from 40 minute blocks to 60 minute blocks to reduce the need to allocate additional educators to cover time slots and create additional staffing efficiencies to cover the sites that would have FI introduced;
- General Manager Cyr noted that the revised EPR has addressed the impacts on the OCDSB extended day and third party community partners that were impacted by the grade configurations. Currently there are no concerns regarding accessibility to before and after school care beyond what was present in the past;

- The District will collaborate with City of Ottawa and community partners to support families in the event a community demonstrates a higher need of child care;

The meeting recessed at 8:32 p.m. and resumed at 8:45 p.m.

- Concern was expressed regarding the lack of FI program offering to students that have been racialized, students with disabilities and immigrant families and it was noted that there are a number of schools in Alta Vista without FI program;
- General Manager Ostafichuk noted that five (5) out of eight (8) schools in Alta Vista are English only with an Alternative program and staff was only successful in offering FI to the remaining three (3) schools through a change in grade configuration;
- The utilization rate of Merivale High School is due to the demographic of the community with a low intake of kindergarten students and an increase in intermediate students. Currently additional portables are not required; however, these may be needed at a future date;
- Concern was expressed regarding the viability of programming at specific schools and it was suggested that the District maintain the Alternative program and use it to guide the implementation of alternative tenants;
- Director Buffone noted that the alternative tenants will not be a separate plan and the District will continue to incorporate tenants into the ongoing work related to the District's teaching and learning approach;
- A report providing an overview of the budget and the reinvestment of resources will be presented to the Board at a future date; however, it was noted that the purpose of the EPR is not cost saving measures but a reallocation of resources into mainstream classroom from specialized program classes;
- Superintendent Stoudt noted that resources taken from the discontinued specialized program classes will be redistributed into special education programming with the aim of having 100% reinvestment after three (3) years;
- Early learning and child care programs throughout the District must adhere to the Ministry of Education (MOE) requirements and must meet the threshold of financial viability based on the District's contribution agreement with the City of Ottawa and licensing. The District must ensure there is a sufficient number of children registered for before and after care, with the current minimum of thirteen (13) to fifteen (15);

- In the event a community demonstrates interest in adding a before and after school program, the District will be able to provide a survey to ascertain the numbers of individuals that wish to register full time;
- Staff will present the MOE's budget for special education detailing the core education funding and budget that will be allocated to special education in the spring of 2025; however, there will be no additional funding from special education aside from the annual grants and funds;
- The District will be required to create criteria for exemptions eligibility and staff may consider a process similar to Cross Boundary Transfer (CBT);
- The District aims to redistribute the teaching positions from the 26 specialized classes to be closed;
- There was an inquiry about staff considering moving Middle French Immersion (MFI) from Richmond Public School to Goulbourn Middle School to create additional students for the English and FI program. It was noted that MFI placement was considered; however, Richmond Public School is a challenging area due to the facility itself and the small number of students;
- It was noted that the Indigenous Education Council (IEC) has expressed concern regarding special education supports, educational assistants (EA) brought in based on Jordan's Principale who are required to support non-Indigenous students and additional opportunities for outdoor education;
- Superintendent Stoudt noted that the Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC) and Individual Education Plan (IEP) process are legislated responsibilities of the special education team in schools and will not be altered by the EPR;

Trustee Jennekens assumed the Chair.

- A family's retention of their existing child care spot will depend on the new school location, the potential third party partner at the new location and boundary changes; however, families with students attending an OCDSB school will be given priority;
- During the 2025-2026 school year, staff will bring forward quarterly reports to provide an update on the EPR transition, District properties, and enrolment data. The District aims to undertake an annual review to track the progress related to the OCDSB Strategic Plan surrounding learning, well-being and social responsibility;

Trustee Milburn resumed the Chair.

- Concern was expressed regarding the lack of FI at Arch Street Public School, Hawthorne Public School, Featherston Public School and Charles Hulse Public School and it was suggested the District support disadvantaged students through the offering of FI at these sites;
- It was noted that SEAC had expressed interest in revising a recommendation regarding the closure of specialized program classes and suggested staff consider rescheduling a committee meeting to an earlier date. Chair Milburn noted Governance Services will be consulted on this request and the Board will be notified of the outcome at a future date; and
- It was suggested staff consider a shorter phase out period for Alternative programs with the final year in 2025. Director Buffone noted that staff will take the suggestion under consideration.

11. Information Items:

11.1 Report from OPSBA (if required)

Trustee Jennekens reported that trustees attended the Eastern Regional Ontario Public School Board Association (OPSBA) Board of Directors' meeting on 5 April 2025 hosted by Upper Canada. She noted that a presentation was shared depicting a real world learning program that connected students' work to the community and suggested featuring this in the District's programs.

11.2 Report from OSTA (if required)

There was no OSTA update.

12. New Business - Information and Inquiries

In response to a query from Trustee Blackburn, it was noted that there is no policy on wearing a keffiyeh and the Board has not determined that wearing a keffiyeh represents an act of aggression.

Trustee Kaplan-Myrth expressed the view that the District had made a statement outlining the effect that the keffiyeh has on the Jewish community.

Chair Milburn suggested that staff investigate any policies surrounding the keffiyeh and to follow up with community members through a memorandum.

It was noted that SEAC members expressed concern regarding the insufficient numbers of EA for special needs students. Director Buffone noted that staff will follow up on and provide a memorandum to trustees at a future date.

13. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 10:16 p.m.

Cathryne Milburn, Chair