



## **COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE, BUDGET MINUTES PUBLIC**

**Tuesday, January 22, 2019  
8:00 pm  
Board Room  
Administration Building  
133 Greenbank Road  
Ottawa, Ontario**

**TRUSTEE MEMBERS:** Donna Blackburn, Erica Braunovan, Christine Boothby, Chris Ellis, Rob Campbell, Mark Fisher, Wendy Hough, Keith Penny, Sandra Schwartz, Lynn Scott, Lyra Evans, and Jennifer Jennekens.

**STAFF:** Director of Education, Camille Williams-Taylor; Associate Director of Education, Brett Reynolds; Chief Financial Officer, Mike Carson; Superintendent of Instruction, Shawn Lehman; Superintendent of Learning Support Services, Peter Symmonds; Superintendent of Human Resources, Janice McCoy; Superintendent of Curriculum Services, Dorothy Baker; Executive Officer, Corporate Services, Michèle Giroux; Manager of Financial Services, Kevin Gardner; Coordinator of Budget Services, Charles D'Aoust; Coordinator of Financial Reporting, Teri Adamthwaite; Manager of Board Services, Katrine Mallan; Manager of Communications & Information Services, Diane Pernari-Hergert; Communications Officer, Sharlene Hunter; Audio Visual Specialist, John MacKinnon; and Board/Committee Coordinator, Amanda Rock.

**NON-VOTING REPRESENTATIVES:** Jennifer Capitani, Ottawa-Carleton Elementary Operations Committee (OCEOC); Wulf Heidecker, Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO); Malaka Hendela, Ottawa-Carleton Assembly of School Councils (OCASC); Cathy Bailey, Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF) and Jennifer Tremblay, Ottawa-Carleton Secondary Schools Administrators' Network (OCSSAN).

1. Call to Order - Chair of Committee of the Whole, Budget

Chair Penny called the public meeting to order at 8:03 p.m.

2. Approval of Agenda

**Moved by Trustee Schwartz**

**THAT the agenda be approved.**

**Carried**

3. Delegations

There were no delegations.

4. Presentation/Discussion

4.1 Report 19-002, 2018-2019 Revised Estimates

Your Committee had before it Report 19-002 explaining changes that are reflected in the District's 2018-2019 Revised Estimates as compared to the District's 2018-2019 Budget.

CFO Carson and Manager Gardner introduced the report and provided the following information:

- There is a projected accumulated surplus of approximately \$37 million as of 31 August 2019;
- The accumulated surplus is higher than the District desires;
- It is the District's preference to start using some of the surplus funds;
- The revised estimates updates the budget that was approved in June 2018;
- The revised estimates are a result of changes the District did not anticipate in the approved budget, and are inclusive of additional revenue from enrolment growth offset by additional teaching staff and student supports;
- Ten elementary teaching positions were staffed to address incoming students;
- There is an increased need for the use of occasional teachers (OTs) and the availability of OTs continues to be a challenge for the District;
- There have been increased transportation costs to retain drivers; and
- The District will commit to programs for the remainder of the school year should specific grants be significantly cut.

In response to queries from trustees, the following information was provided:

- A healthy workplace is a priority for the OCDSB strategic priorities;

- The District has a committee in place for a psychologically healthy workplace that will bring recommendations forward to the Director's Executive Council (DEC);
- Teacher absences is a province-wide issue and has created challenges for the District;
- A report that addresses sick leave will be presented in February 2019;
- Classroom teachers should be consistent for the benefit of children and student achievement;
- The cost of bus drivers has been the biggest financial pressure for student transportation;
- There will be no additional funding from the government to alleviate transportation costs;
- Major contributors to the savings of \$9.1 million are employee benefits, finalized instruction costs that were overestimated, and a compensation differential for teachers;
- The unspent funding for professional development (PD) is due to OT shortages that make it challenging for PD to take place;
- OT retention is a major challenge at the secondary level;
- The rate of pay for OTs and their ability to be employed with more than one school board are major factors to consider when reviewing retention rates;
- Some variances in the budget are being accounted for as a reduction in revenue rather than an expense;
- The Ottawa-Carleton Education Network (OCENET) is a subsidiary, not-for-profit organization of the District;
- OCENET is the agent that offers and coordinates international students' opportunities to learn alongside the District's students;
- Surplus dollars that OCENET generates belong to the District;
- There has not been a recommendation for changes to international student fees between OCENET and the District; and
- The quality of school and custodial supplies varies due to cost and supplier.

CFO Carson agreed that staff will provide information on how OCENET established its fees with the District for international students.

## 5. Action Items

### 5.1 Report 19-018, Additional Expenditures 2018-2019

Your Committee had before it Report 19-018 seeking approval for additional expenditures beyond amounts identified in the 2018-2019 Budget and to provide trustees with information about internal staff adjustments that will be absorbed within the current budget.

CFO Carson advised that there was an error on page 24 of the report. The rationale for the first internal staffing adjustment should state "adjustment from vice-principal to principal".

CFO Carson and Manager Gardner presented the following information:

- Staff is seeking approval for the following increases to in-year expenditures for the 2018-2019 budget year: classroom furniture, additional emergency educational assistant (EA) allocations, improvements to WiFi infrastructure, and increasing the fleet of Chromebooks.
- Last year, there was a growth in student enrolment higher than expected;
- There is continued demand for supports in English as a Second Language (ESL);
- An additional \$450,000 has been allocated to ESL programs as a result of enrolment growth;
- There is a surplus of old furniture that is no longer suitable for a modern classroom;
- The additional funding for furniture will support schools modernizing learning spaces within their facilities;
- The overall additional spending can be achieved while still meeting a projected surplus of \$3 million; and
- Additional spending will provide some flexibility for future budgets.

In response to queries, staff provided the following information:

- The additional \$500,000 allocated for emergency EAs will support approximately eight to ten full-time EAs;
- A standard 1:4 ratio is the minimum number of Chromebooks the District is aspiring to have in every school;
- A five-year technology plan was introduced to add Chromebooks, Ipads, and other devices to schools;
- All teachers will be able to access devices with the 1:4 standard ratio;
- Adding working projectors in all classrooms is a technological support that is a part of the five-year technology plan; and
- School councils should be using their discretion when choosing to fundraise for devices beyond the 1:4 ratio.

Trustee Schwartz commented that the 1:4 standard ratio could be an equity issue as there are many low-income schools that are not able to fundraise the same amount of money as more affluent schools.

Moved by Trustee Schwartz,

THAT the Board approves the following increases in budget allocations:

1. Classroom furniture at a cost of \$500,000;
2. Additional emergency educational assistant allocations at a cost of \$500,000;
3. Accelerate improvements to WiFi infrastructure at a cost of \$4,000,000; and
4. Increasing the system fleet of Chromebooks at a cost of \$1,600,000.

During the ensuing discussion, the following points were noted:

- The District's current technological infrastructure is old with wireless access points and switches that will no longer be supported;
- The District's schools and facilities are using technology more frequently;
- The modern classroom will be designed to enable students to learn anywhere with interchangeable furniture;
- The investment in infrastructure will accelerate the five-year technology plan;
- Chromebooks will not meet the needs of all students;
- Students have varying needs and ways of learning that do not necessarily require a Chromebook;
- The 1:4 Chromebook ratio that the District aspires to have in every school does not include School Equipment Amount (SEA) equipment; and
- The 1:4 ratio was determined by what can be a sustainable practice rather than being supported by research.

Trustee Lyra Evans requested a separate vote on Part 2 of the motion. She expressed concern with Part B of the motion and would rather have those funds spent on furniture than hiring EAs on a short-term basis. She stressed that the District should be reviewing what kind of employer it is and expressed concern with regard to short-term contracts, precarious employment, and employee well-being.

An amendment moved by Trustee Lyra Evans,

THAT Part 1 be revised to "\$1 million" and that Part 2 be deleted.

Trustees Braunovan, Scott, Ellis, Schwartz, and Jennekens indicated that they did not support the amendment as EAs are needed in schools on an urgent basis.

In response to queries about the emergency EAs, the following information was provided:

- The emergency EAs will be contacted from the current casual pool of employees;
- Safety concerns are arising more frequently in schools;
- Emergency EAs are deployed to schools that have urgencies such as behavioural and/or medical issues;
- Interviews and screening have already taken place for emergency EA employment;
- The additional funding for emergency EAs would provide casual EAs with more hours;
- Predicting retirement dates for EAs is challenging;
- Many EAs find permanent employment with the District by starting as a casual employee; and
- Many casual EAs have the potential to be working every day given the number of absences that the District is currently experiencing.

Moved by Trustee Blackburn,

THAT the debate be closed and a vote taken on the amendment.

Carried

An amendment moved by Trustee Lyra Evans,

THAT Part 1 be revised to “\$1 million” and that Part 2 be deleted.

Defeated

In wrap-up, Trustee Lyra Evans encouraged her colleagues to consider what kind of employer the OCDSB is going to be.

In the discussion that ensued, the following was noted:

- Funding for permanent EA positions may need to be considered to retain employees;
- There are significant impacts on families whose EA support hours vary;
- There are approximately 4500 Chromebooks that have been in use for five years;
- Most of the Chromebooks being added to the fleet will be used to replace older models;
- Schools will continue to retain some of the older Chromebooks; and
- Chromebooks are purchased both by school councils and by the District.

In response to a query, Superintendent Lehman agreed that staff will provide information that differentiates between the total number of

Chromebooks purchased by school councils and those purchased by the District.

In wrap-up, Trustee Schwartz stressed that it is prudent of the Board to be looking at additional expenditures before the budgeting exercise for the 2019-2020 year.

**Moved by Trustee Schwartz**

**THAT the Board approves the following increases in budget allocations:**

**1. Classroom furniture at a cost of \$500,000;**

**3. Accelerate improvements to WIFI infrastructure at a cost of \$4,000,000; and**

**4. Increasing the system fleet of chromebooks at a cost of \$1,600,000.**

**Carried**

**Moved by Trustee Schwartz**

**2. Additional emergency educational assistant allocations at a cost of \$500,000.**

**Carried**

**6. Discussion Items**

**6.1 Report 19-014, 2019-2020 Budget Process**

Your Committee had before it Report 19-014 providing information on the issues affecting the 2019-2020 budget cycle and to provide the timelines and processes.

When introducing the report, CFO Carson provided the following information:

- Significant budget pressures include inflationary pressures, the District's infrastructure, professional development, and staffing needs;
- Significant budget risks include potential funding reductions from the province and the expiration of collective agreements at the end of 2018-2019;

- Positive contributors to the budget include an accumulated surplus, enrolment growth, and teaching staff's compensation differential;
- There is flexibility for a deficit that does not exceed more than one percent of the overall budget;
- Grant projections from the province are challenging to predict; and
- The District's budget timelines are fluid and dependent on the Ministry's timelines.

In response to queries, staff provided the following information:

- The COW budget meeting schedule is determined at agenda planning meetings;
- The upcoming budget document will provide additional details on the District's top priorities; and
- The decrease in PD days is a provincial issue and is a discussion topic at senior staff meetings.

Malaka Hendela stressed that parents in the District need a budget document that they can comprehend in order to advocate for priorities. She suggested that the budget and the strategic planning process be aligned.

7. New Business - Information and Inquiries

Superintendent Symmonds agreed to provide a memo with regard to the cost of the summer learning program over the last three years.

8. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 10:24 p.m.

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Keith Penny, Chair