



COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE PUBLIC REPORT PUBLIC

Tuesday, April 2, 2019, 7:30 pm
Board Room
Administration Building
133 Greenbank Road
Ottawa, Ontario

TRUSTEE MEMBERS: Donna Blackburn, Christine Boothby, Erica Braunovan, Chris Ellis, Lyra Evans, Rob Campbell, Mark Fisher, Wendy Hough, Jennifer Jennekens, Keith Penny, Sandra Schwartz, Lynn Scott, Isaac Glassman (Student Trustee), Samantha Lin (Student Trustee).

STAFF: Director of Education, Camille Williams-Taylor; Associate Director of Education, Brett Reynolds; Chief Financial Officer, Mike Carson; Superintendent of Human Resources, Janice McCoy; Superintendents of Instruction, Mary Jane Farrish, Olga Grigoriev and Shawn Lehman; Executive Officer, Corporate Services, Michèle Giroux; Manager of Planning, Karyn Carty-Ostafichuk; Manager of Human Resources, Pamela LeMaistre; Manager of Field Services, Stacey Kay; Manager of Board Services, Katrine Mallan; Manager of Communications & Information Services, Diane Pernari-Hergert; Human Resources Officer, Employee Wellness and Disability Management, Jenny Bolduc; System Principal of Learning Support Services, Amy Hannah; Communications Officer, Sharlene Hunter; Audio Visual Specialist, John MacKinnon; and Board/Committee Coordinator, Amanda Rock.

NON-VOTING REPRESENTATIVES: Malaka Hendala, Ottawa-Carleton Assembly of School Councils (OCASC); Andrew Nordman, Ottawa-Carleton Elementary Operations Committee (OCEOC); Elizabeth Kettle, Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO); Cathy Bailey, Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF), Rupi Bergamin, Ottawa-Carleton Secondary School Administrators Network (OCSSAN) and Mark Wylie, Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC).

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

Vice-Chair Braunovan called the meeting to order at 7:45 p.m. She acknowledged that the meeting is taking place on unceded Algonquin Territory and thanked the Algonquin Nations for hosting the meeting on their land.

2. Approval of Agenda

Moved by Trustee Penny

THAT the agenda be approved.

Carried

3. Briefing from the Chair of the Board

Chair Scott advised that on 29 March 2019, the Ministry announced some interim changes to the Education Development Charges regulation to provide school boards with the ability to propose modest Education Development Charges (EDC) rate increases of 5% while the government continues to review the EDC policy framework. She noted that these amendments do not restrict the ability of school boards to pass bylaws for the full five-year term, which the District did at the last Board meeting. Further information is contained in Memo 19-055.

4. Briefing from the Director

Director Williams-Taylor advised that 02 April 2019 is World Autism Awareness Day. The goal of the day is to help in the building of stronger, more inclusive communities for people with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). One of the ways in which our schools celebrated this day is by participating in the "Raise the Flag" campaign, in collaboration with Autism Ontario. Students incorporated the flag into their activities to celebrate the diversity of our students as we continue to promote inclusion and acceptance in our schools.

Additionally, the ASD team will be hosting another Parent Information Night on 23 April 2019 at 6:00 pm at Sir Robert Borden High School. Dr. Jonathan Weiss from York University will be the keynote speaker, and will address mental health and well-being with regard to students with ASD. The ASD Team will also be present to provide mini workshops for parents regarding supports and services within the District.

Director Williams-Taylor advised that a school climate survey for students in grades 4 to 12 will be conducted in all schools during the period from 23 April to 10 May 2019. The survey is completely anonymous and parents will be asked to sign a consent form for their children to participate. Information for parents will be posted on the District and school websites on 05 April 2019.

Director Williams-Taylor advised that students are organizing "walk-outs" on 04 April 2019 in response to the Ministry's recent education funding

announcements. The District has not sanctioned any of these events. She noted that student safety is the District's top priority. A letter has been prepared by Communications and shared on the District's website.

In response to a query from Trustee Braunovan, Director Williams-Taylor advised that all students from grades 4-12 have access to participate in the student climate survey. She noted that the survey cycles within the District every second year.

5. Delegations

There were no delegations.

6. Matters for Action:

6.1 Report 19-032 Base Rate Increase for Not-For-Profit Leases for 2019-2020 (M. Carson, ext. 8881)

Your Committee had before it Report 19-032 to obtain Board approval of increases to the base rate charges for not-for-profit agencies leasing space in District facilities for the 2019-2020 school year.

Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Carson noted the following:

- The base rate was not increased during the 2018-2019 school year;
- Staff have considered the fact that the District had a one-year rate freeze when increasing the base rate for 2019-2020 school year;
- The proposed base rate increase amounts to approximately 3.2 percent; and
- The total amount of revenue being generated by the base rate increase is approximately \$47,000.

In response to trustee queries, the following information was provided:

- The District has experienced increases in salary costs for custodians, an increased cost of utilities, custodial supplies, and services over the last two years;
- The District has strived to align its practice with the Consumer Price Index (CPI) changes; and
- The word "partially" could have been the word "approximately".

Moved by Trustee Blackburn,

THAT Board approve an increase to the base rate charges to \$10.62 per square foot for non-profit agencies leasing space in District facilities, effective 1 September 2019.

In response to a query from OCASC representative Malaka Hendela, regarding CPI, CFO Carson advised that staff has considered the impact

on child-care partners (tenants) and their own funding level and the total CPI over 2 years would be approximately 4.5 to 5 percent.

During the ensuing discussion, CFO Carson explained that other tenants in District facilities may be charged a higher rent where possible when the base rate matches the amount of funding that the District receives from the province.

Moved by Trustee Blackburn

THAT Board approve an increase to the base rate charges to \$10.62 per square foot for non-profit agencies leasing space in District facilities, effective 1 September 2019.

Carried

7. Report from Statutory and Other Committees

7.1 Special Education Advisory Committee, 06 March 2019

Moved by Trustee Jennekens,

THAT the Special Education Advisory Committee report, dated 06 March 2019, be received.

Carried

8. Matters for Discussion:

8.1 Report 19-031 Learning Support Services Operational Review of the Process for Identification, Needs Assessment and Placement (P. Symmonds ext. 8254)

Your Committee had before it Report 19-031 outlining the plan including the scope of work for the Learning Support Services (LSS) Operational Review of the process for identification, needs assessment, and placement for all exceptionalities.

Superintendent Symmonds noted that on 30 October 2018, the Board passed the following motion:

Moved by Trustee Boothby, seconded by Trustee Scott,

THAT staff be directed to undertake an operational review of the process for identification, needs assessment (including the use of tiered interventions as a support for all students, and as identification and placement evidence), and placement for all exceptionalities;

THAT a report be provided to the Board no later than February 2019, with a proposed outline and timeline for the operational review, and an update

on any changes in practice introduced in the wake of the discussion of this motion; and

THAT staff produce a series of updates, beginning no later than the end of October 2019, detailing the number of applications and the number of children receiving assessments and placements in all congregated programs, by exceptionality, at both the elementary and secondary levels, and details of waitlists for all congregated programs by geographic zone.

Superintendent Symmonds noted the following considerations:

- A clear scope of work is required in order to ensure that the operational review of the process for identification, needs assessment and placement provides meaningful, relevant feedback that can be translated into future work plans;
- A clearly defined scope for the operational review does not limit the District's opportunity to explore further areas of improvement in the future;
- The District will contract an external consultant to complete the operational review; and
- The external consultant will advise which methodology would be most effective to achieve the goals of this operational review.

Superintendent Symmonds highlighted the following with regard to the scope of the work:

- The 25 February 2019 SEAC meeting provided a structured and collaborative discussion to facilitate the identification of key questions, goals, and deliverables to inform the scope of the work;
- There are three areas of focus for the LSS operational review which include needs assessment (including the tiered approach to intervention), identification, and placement; and
- Consolidating and strengthening the skills and strategies of classroom educators related to planning, assessment, and instruction is a goal of the operational review.

Superintendent Symmonds noted that the work done by SEAC at the 25 February 2019 SEAC meeting was meaningful.

Superintendent Symmonds advised that four key questions emerged from the consultation as follows:

- What processes are used in the OCDSB to learn about individual student needs?
- What are the indicators used District-wide to determine that a student's needs are being met?

- What are the processes (or mechanisms) used within the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (OCDSB) to provide and receive feedback to parents/guardians regarding student needs? and
- What indicators are used to measure the effectiveness of the current supports and processes used in engaging all students and families?

Superintendent Symmonds explained that LSS will work collaboratively with Risk and Supply Chain Management to develop the Request For Proposals (RFP) and establish an evaluation process to review proposals and presentations to identify which proposal best meet the expectations of the RFP.

In response to trustee queries, the following information was provided:

- The LSS operating budget will support the \$100,000 costs for external consultants;
- The external consultant will provide expertise on process;
- The time spent on the operational review may limit the amount of time to engage in other emerging priorities;
- Parents have expressed concern with regard to their understanding of the tiered intervention process;
- Aligning stakeholders' different understanding of processes is a goal for the LSS operational review;
- LSS anticipates that all students with exceptionalities will be captured under the IPRC process review; and
- The Individual Education Plans (IEPs) will be discussed within the tiered intervention and needs assessment work.

In response to queries from OCASC representative, Malaka Hendela, the following information was provided:

- A workplan will be established with the external consultant;
- The type of approach being used for the operational review will be determined in collaboration with the external consultant;
- The operational review will have consultation phase and focus groups that include parents, staff, and students if deemed appropriate; and
- The discussions at Committee of the Whole will help to alleviate the perception that there is a lack of transparency in the community.

SEAC representative Mark Wylie indicated that he supports the review. He noted that SEAC is in favour of evidence-based reporting.

Trustee Ellis expressed the view that the funding spent on the operational review will be meaningful and bring resources to students in a more timely manner.

In response to queries from Trustee Boothby, staff provided the following information:

- LSS will be moving forward to pilot the Guide to Supporting Gifted Learners in a Regular Classroom;
- The roll-out of the Interest Academy is a joint project between LSS and Curriculum Services staff who will provide a memo update in May; and
- Families can request that their child be given the CCAT 7 assessment through school.

8.2 Report 19-022 Employee Well-Being and Absenteeism (J. McCoy, ext. 8207)

Your Committee had before it Report 19-022 to provide an update on employee absenteeism due to sick leave, identify contributing factors, review current efforts to promote wellness, and respond to identified attendance barriers.

Superintendent McCoy highlighted the following:

- Availability of replacement staff has become an identified stressor especially among principal and vice-principal groups;
- The OCDSB average annual sick leave for permanent employees increased from 8.60 to 12.0 days over the last 5 years;
- Contributing factors to increased employee absenteeism are increased mental health concerns, workplace stressors, and the revised sick leave program design;
- The OCDSB has three programs that support employee well-being which include attendance management and support, disability management, and wellness initiatives;
- The attendance support program is centrally monitored and managed, and focused on sporadic and long-term absences;
- The Disability Management program focuses on short and long-term disability case management and identifies suitable workplace accommodations to reduce absence duration; and
- Wellness initiatives include the Employee & Family Assistance Program (EAP), Short-Term Childcare Program, and the implementation of the National Standard for Psychological Health & Safety in the Workplace supported by the Mental Health Commission of Canada;
- Sick leave continues to increase across all employee groups;
- Employee well-being is attributable to various factors, including workplace factors; and
- The OCDSB makes ongoing efforts to identify and address contributing factors to employee absenteeism.

In response to queries from the Committee, the following information was noted:

- The funding model provides \$10 million dollars per year to support supply teacher costs;
- The Designated Occasional Teacher (DOTs) have been assigned to work every day in a particular school or schools to reduce the number of unfilled absences, including on-going recruitment for casual employees;
- The DOTs have had a positive impact on the District's schools and are redeployed to neighboring schools that may be experiencing higher absences among teaching staff;
- Schools continue to experience high absences and difficulty with replacing Early Childhood Educators (ECEs) and Educational Assistants (EAs);
- The District has 6-8 positions identified as ECE floaters;
- There is a high turnover rate among ECEs;
- The District may create a pool of replacement EAs such as the DOT program;
- The District is having difficulty finding and retaining EAs for casual and short-term positions;
- There are more permanent changes to terms and conditions of casual employment which apply to teachers, ECEs, and EAs;
- The District has a range of strategies to replace absent teachers including reassigning EAs to other area schools for the day and using lunch monitors and other staff in emergency situations;
- There are not any students within the District who have an exclusion due to a lack of or absent EAs;
- The District's attendance management coordinator will consider entering an employee in the attendance management program should they be absent for 11 days or more;
- Sick days taken by OCDSB employees are below the provincial average;
- ECEs have a rapidly increasing rate of absences and usage of sick leave days;
- The OCDSB is one of few school boards that operate their own Extended Day Program (EDP);
- ECEs within the District may be taking more sick days because they often cover EDP programs before and after school;
- ECEs tend to have the highest average of absences in other school boards;
- The nature of ECE duties can contribute to stress and a challenging environment;
- Custodial staff perform duties that require physical and laborious work which may contribute to absentee rates; and

OSSTF representative Cathy Bailey commented that Report 19-022 acknowledges that employee wellness is a complex and difficult issue to address. She advised that OSSTF has been working with the OCDSB on a number of approaches to try to improve employee wellness and attendance. Ms. Bailey highlighted the following as areas of concern:

- The lack of consistency with regard to student discipline and increasing reports of aggressive and violent student behaviours;
- There have been approximately 2,400 reports from OSSTF members of aggressive and/or violent behaviours during the current school year;
- OSSTF receives regular phone calls from members concerned about their safety and students' safety;
- Student absences create workload challenges for teachers;
- Erosion of professional judgement, autonomy, and increased workload are factors for teachers' assessment and evaluations;
- Mark deadlines and exam days are a major stressor for secondary teachers; and
- There is a correlation between the increase in the number of outstanding or new grievances and the number of sick days taken by educators.

During the ensuing discussion, the following points were noted:

- The District may need to review the underlying variables that are contributing to absenteeism;
- Federations are encouraged to continue to provide feedback with regard to what is happening with frontline workers in the District's schools; and
- Trustees and staff need to be aware of concerns by frontline staff so that the Board may consider how its policies and procedures need to be tailored.

OCASC representative Malaka Hendela noted the following:

- Report 19-022 does not account for seasonal adjustments, possible infrastructure issues, and the overall classroom experience with regard to employee absenteeism;
- Standard medical practices have significantly changed whereby an educator can easily be absent from school for 10 days due to medical procedures or surgeries; and
- It is important to address the underlying issues in the classroom that may be affecting both teachers and students.

ETFO representative Elizabeth Kettle noted the following:

- EAs can be reassigned from other classes should there be a shortage of EAs on any given day;
- ECEs are not always replaced when they are absent for the day;
- Teachers may have to sacrifice their preparation time to replace other teachers who are absent;
- Learning Support Teachers (LST), Learning Resource Teachers (LRT), and English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers may have to replace absent teachers which means that students will be missing the extra supports that they require to learn; and
- Progressive discipline has been a concern among educators.

During the ensuing discussion, the following was noted:

- Trustee Lyra Evans noted that emergency replacements should be provided with sufficient notice should they need to take public transportation;
- Staff discourages employees from coming to work when they are sick; and
- Staff have not assessed employee absenteeism based on specific age groups.

Director Williams-Taylor indicated that attempts to draw correlations to patterns of attendance and suppositions about work ethic with particular demographic groups is problematic.

9. Information Items:

9.1 Report from OPSBA (if required)

There was no report from the OPSBA representatives.

9.2 New Ministry Initiatives Update (if required)

There were no new Ministry updates.

9.3 OSTA Update - Board of Directors, 25 February 2019

The minutes from the OSTA meeting of 25 February 2019 were provided for review.

Trustee Penny commented that the OSTA report also noted that a review on a consultation of inclement weather had been completed. He recalled that the review consisted of looking at the policies of other school boards but not the OCDSB. CFO Carson advised that OSTA had considered whether a wider consultation would be worth undertaking and the Directors of OSTA determined it was not necessary to proceed with another consultation.

In response to a query from Trustee Lyra Evans, CFO Carson advised that OSTA's smaller vehicles are a temporary solution to accommodate

new communities where construction is incomplete and yellow school buses cannot safely maneuver to pick up students.

10. New Business - Information and Inquiries

In response to query from Trustee Lyra Evans, Director Williams-Taylor advised that the District has not presented any recommendations with regard to proposed lay-offs and the staffing process is still underway. There are no numbers to generate with regard to lay-offs and/or surplus letters.

11. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 10:14 p.m.

Erica Braunovan, Chair