



## **COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE, BUDGET REPORT**

### **Board Room**

**Monday, June 3, 2019**

**7:00 pm**

**Board Room**

**Administration Building**

**133 Greenbank Road**

**Ottawa, Ontario**

Trustees Present:	Donna Blackburn, Christine Boothby, Erica Braunovan, Rob Campbell, Chris Ellis, Lyra Evans, Mark Fisher, Wendy Hough, Jennifer Jennekens, Keith Penny, Sandra Schwartz, Lynn Scott , Samantha Lin (Student Trustee)
Staff Present:	Camille Williams-Taylor (Director of Education), Brett Reynolds (Associate Director), Dorothy Baker (Superintendent of Curriculum), Mike Carson (Chief Financial Officer), Mary Jane Farrish (Superintendent of Instruction), Michele Giroux (Executive Officer, Corporate Services), Olga Grigoriev (Superintendent of Instruction), Shawn Lehman (Superintendent of Instruction), Janice McCoy (Superintendent of Human Resources), Peter Symmonds (Superintendent of Learning Support Services), Frank Wiley (Superintendent of Instruction), Kevin Gardner (Manager of Finance), Charles D'Aoust (Coordinator of Budget Services), Teri Adamthwaite (Coordinator of Financial Reporting), Katrine Mallan (Manager of Board Services), Diane Pernari-Hergert (Manager of Communications & Information Services), Miro Vala (Manager of Facilities), Sharlene Hunter (Communications Coordinator), John MacKinnon (Audio-Visual Technician), Nicole Guthrie (Committee Coordinator)
Non-Voting Representatives Present:	Nancy Akehurst (Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation - ESP, PSSU, PSSP, EA, PECCS), Cathy Bailey (OSSTF Teachers/Occasional Teachers), Jennifer Capitani (Ottawa-Carleton Elementary Operations Committee), Jean Trant (OSSTF-SSP), Malaka Hendela (Ottawa-Carleton Assembly of School Councils), Wulf Heidecker (Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario), Donna Owen (Special Education Advisory Committee), Stacey Kay (Non-affiliated Staff), Pat Dixon (Ottawa-Carleton Elementary Occasional Teachers' Association), Kelly Granum (OSSTF-OT)

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

Chair Penny called the public session to order at 7:05 p.m. and acknowledged that the meeting is taking place on unceded Algonquin Territory and thanked the Algonquin Nation for hosting the meeting on their land.

2. Approval of Agenda

**Moved by Trustee Braunovan,**

**THAT the agenda be approved.**

**Carried**

3. Delegations

3.1 Janet Bowen, Chair, Crystal Bay Centre for Special Education School Council

Ms. Bowen, Chair of the Crystal Bay Centre for Special Education School Council, expressed concern over the class sizes and staff to student ratios at the school. She requested the teacher to student ratio be altered to 1:6 to match that of the Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) program to support the breadth of needs the students require. Specifically, she requested the Board allocate additional funding to hire 3.0 FTE teachers and 9.0 FTE educational assistants (EAs).

Ms. Bowen noted that while she had not spoken to, nor speaks on behalf of the school council of Clifford Bowey Public School, she observed that the situation at both schools is similar.

In response to a query from Trustee Ellis, CFO Carson noted that the funding received by the District for special education is based on the ratio set for the elementary level and depends on the age of the student. In the case of specialized classes, additional teachers and EAs are a part of the special education allocation.

In response to a query from Trustee Boothby regarding the teacher to EA ratio for students with multiple exceptionalities, Superintendent Symmonds advised that the support models for specialized program classes differ. He noted that Learning Support Services (LSS) has noticed a change in the complex profile of developmental disabilities students at the Crystal Bay Centre for Special Education. LSS staff carefully monitors and reviews the support staff requirements and allocations for the site. LSS has increased the EA, learning support teacher (LST) and vice-principal allocations as a result. The requested change requires further consideration as the facility may not be able to accommodate both the large, physical equipment required by the students and the additional staff.

4. Matters for Action:

4.1 Report 19-066, 2019-2020 Staff-Recommended Budget

Moved by Trustee Blackburn,

A. THAT the unconsolidated 2019-2020 operating budget of \$980.1 million as presented in Report 19-066, 2019-2020 Staff-Recommended Budget and detailed in the 2019-2020 Staff-Recommended Budget Binder be approved; and

B. THAT the 2019-2020 capital budget of \$82.8 million as presented in the 2019-2020 Staff-Recommended Budget Binder, be approved.

Trustee Blackburn thanked the staff for preparing the recommended 2019-2020 Budget and acknowledged that the District is fortunate to be in a positive financial position, unlike that of other Ontario boards that are experiencing financial strain. She submitted that she looks forward to further questions and debate.

During discussion of Report 19-066, 2019-2020 Staff-Recommended Budget, supplemental Memo 19-077, Revisions to the Staff-Recommended Budget, and supplemental Memo 19-075, 2019-2020 Staff Recommended Budget Questions and Answers, the following points were noted:

- The District has entered the second phase of the wireless infrastructure enhancement project and the use of one-time reserve funding totaling \$8.2 million in 2019-2020 will permit its completion. Capital investments will decrease in 2020-2021 to align with available funding and use of reserves to balance the budget would not be required;
- The pilot program for registered behaviour technicians (RBTs) enabled the District to train 50 EAs, but there was no requirement for certification. The District intends to utilize RBT training to augment the skills and knowledge of its EAs but are not looking at creating a group of dedicated RBTs. LSS will be reviewing options to enhance knowledge among its 700 EAs;
- Employee life and health trusts are included as other income within the special education/other grants as a result of the cost allocation. A portion of the revenues and expenses are allocated to the special education envelope. The amount does not impact the net overspending within special education;
- The Identity Based Data Collection planned for the fall is identified in the 2019-2020 Budget. \$50,000 has been allocated for additional operating and communications costs associated with the project. The District have a Ministry grant for the collection of the qualitative data

and staff are confident that the quantitative data collection can be accomplished within existing department resources;

- The District utilizes the Communications budget in support of two primary advertising campaigns, back to school and kindergarten registration. Additional advertising in local media is required to meet regulatory requirements;
- Continuing Education generates more revenue than its expenditures through a combination of the popularity of special interest course offerings and the receipt of federal and provincial grants;
- The transitional funding related to the attrition and loss of secondary teachers as a result of the Ministry's class size changes is provided through the Teacher Qualification and Experience grant and is approximately \$105.0 million;
- The change in cross-departmental savings is a placeholder. For the 2019-2020 Staff-Recommended Budget the target amount has been reduced by \$250,000;
- Staff is still reviewing the possibility of cost-sharing an Integrity Commissioner. The \$50,000 within the 2019-2020 Staff-Recommended Budget is an estimate to provide a retainer and additional resources as required by the Integrity Commissioner;
- The ASD Pilot Project will receive the same amount of funding from the Priorities and Partnerships Fund (PPF) as the 2018-2019 school year;
- The Risk and Supply Chain Management department is comprised of supply chain management and risk management staff. The Manager of Risk and Supply Chain management is responsible for purchasing, movement of furniture, insurance, contractual negotiations, and incident and injury reduction. The department works to find ways to reduce risk that minimize and reduce financial costs to the Board;
- Restraint savings is a Ministry-imposed grant reduction and a holdover from a previous grant, and it is unlikely it will be removed until the Ministry has conducted a formal recalculation of all the benchmarks surrounding the grant;
- Transportation costs have increased significantly as a result of contract renewals and extensions. The Ottawa Student Transportation Authority (OSTA) had traditionally been charged reduced rates for several of its runs. Increased transportation costs are an issue for school boards across the province as a result of contract negotiations and increases to driver salaries to induce driver retention. It will require further investigation at both the local and provincial levels;
- Ms. Hendela requested further information be provided on the District's three-year technology plan and the five-year mobile technology plan;
- Ms. Hendela requested further details on the differentiation between the total number of Chromebooks purchased by school councils and those purchased by the District;

- Ms. Hendela expressed the view that the proposed expansion of the Infant Toddler Program (ITP) is commendable but problematic as the program has been subsidized by the fees paid by the general parent community for Extended Day Program (EDP);
- Trustee Braunovan requested clarification on the differences in the grants and revenues for the EDP;
- Trustee Braunovan noted that the 7% increase in special education funding is appropriate and suggested the issue be discussed further by the Ad Hoc Committee to Develop an Advocacy Strategy;
- Trustee Braunovan requested a detailed list of instructional coach assignments by department;
- In response to a query from Trustee Fisher, staff agreed to provide a summary of the risks and challenges within the budget as they relate to both the environmental scan and the draft 2019-2023 Strategic Plan;
- The move to more cloud-based systems may result in the reallocation of staff within the Business & Learning Technologies department. It will also reduce future expenditures as the District will no longer have to replace servers or increase the size of the processing capability and storage requirements. Changes and reductions will be evident in 2020-2021;
- The report detailing the capital expenditures for 2019-2020 will be provided in January 2020;
- Police Officers in District schools are paid for by the City of Ottawa, Police Services Budget with the exception of one position funded by the District. The School Resource Officers (SROs) work cooperatively with Ottawa Police Service to serve urban priority high schools;
- Staff agreed to provide further details and an inventory of the District's environmental investments;
- The 2019-2020 Staff-Recommended Budget was informed and influenced by the 2019-2023 Strategic Plan process;
- The goal of the 2019-2020 Staff-Recommended Budget is to maintain stability. Staff anticipates Ministry funding changes which will be rolled out over the next four to five years. The reduction will impact the number of staff in schools across the District. Staff has managed to maintain the positions funded through the Local Priorities Fund (LPF) for 2019-2020. The budget process for 2020-2021 will begin in November and staff and trustees must evaluate priorities to ensure the funding reductions enable the District to continue to support its goals and minimize the impact on students and families;
- The Ministry allows school boards to utilize up to 1% of its reserves and based on a number of conversations with staff and trustees the decision was made to utilize reserves to upgrade the Wi-fi infrastructure;

- In response to a question, staff indicated that the deficit would comply with the Ministry requirements. CFO Carson noted that the Ministry may require a deficit reduction plan. As the increase was due to an increase in capital spending, staff would be submitting the deficit reduction template showing the elimination of this additional spending in 2020-2021. Owing to the other funding reductions that will be phased in, there will be other necessary actions beyond that, these will be the subject of debate during the 2020-2021 budget;
- The footnote on page 97 of the budget binder should be removed;
- Staff carefully analyse and test several scenarios based on enrollment fluctuations. Staff consistently err on the side of caution and tend to be overly conservative in enrollment projections. A drop in enrollment of 1% reduces discretionary funding by approximately 0.5%. There is always the possibility that the Ministry will make in-year decisions that impact revenues, but the District has been able to continue programming despite those changes. There are some risk factors related to expenses, but staff is confident the 2019-2020 Staff-Recommended Budget can address those. With the planned introduction of a risk management strategy the process for stress testing the budget will become more formalized;
- Staff have carefully evaluated the potential impact the changes to the Ontario Autism Fund will have on District schools. It is anticipated that transportation is an area that will be affected, and staff have increased the transportation budget accordingly. Due to the uncertainty, staff was not comfortable reducing expenditures in other parts of the budget and propose to manage the issue through the reserves if required. Autism funding from the Ministry will be slightly enhanced based on the provincial average calculation per student. There were some additional benefits if the student was enrolled after the 31 March count date, but the increase was not significant;
- Trustee Scott requested that staff review options to support trustees in the preparation of amendments to the budget;
- Trustee Campbell requested further information on the types and areas of investment made by the District in support of achievement outcomes for students of low socioeconomic (SES) status;
- The EDP is not intended to generate a surplus but some flexibility is required as enrollment fluctuates and the projected surplus for 2019-2020 is \$290,000. The operating expenses assigned to the ITP reflect the costs of program delivery and include central departmental costs; and
- In response to a query regarding the salary differential on page 140 of the budget binder, staff noted that the benchmark remains the same across the province. Additional funding may be accessed for special enhancements, or additional hours and/or additional FTEs which may cover a salary gap.

5. New Business - Information and Inquiries

There was no new business.

6. Scheduled Committee of the Whole Budget Meetings

The meeting will continue on 10 June 2019.

7. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:35 p.m.

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Keith Penny, Chair