

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE PUBLIC REPORT

Tuesday, February 11, 2020, 6:00 p.m.

Board Room

Administration Building

133 Greenbank Road

Ottawa, Ontario

Trustees Present: Donna Blackburn, Christine Boothby, Rob Campbell, Chris Ellis, Lyra Evans, Mark Fisher, Wendy Hough, Jennifer Jennekens, Keith Penny, Sandra Schwartz, Lynn Scott, Ganaabouté Gagné (Student Trustee), Prasith Wijeweera (Student Trustee)

Staff Present: Camille Williams-Taylor (Director of Education), Brett Reynolds (Associate Director), Janice McCoy (Superintendent of Human Resources), Michele Giroux (Executive Officer, Corporate Services), Prince Duah (Superintendent of Instruction), Mary Jane Farrish (Superintendent of Instruction), Peter Symmonds (Superintendent of Learning Support Services), Pamela LeMaistre (Manager of Human Resources), Sandra Owens (Manager of Business & Learning Technologies), Diane Pernari-Hergert (Manager of Communications & Information Services), Nicole Guthrie (Manager, Board Services), Darcy Knoll (Communications Coordinator), John MacKinnon, Audio-Visual Technician, Sue Baker (Acting Senior Board Coordinator)

Non-Voting Representatives Present: Malaka Hendela (Ottawa-Carleton Assembly of School Councils, Alternate)

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

Vice-Chair Penny called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m. He 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 Schwartz,

THAT the agenda be approved.

Carried

3. Interviews

Following a review of the guidelines for the meeting by Director Williams-Taylor, Vice-Chair Penny called upon each candidate, in the order listed on the agenda, to make a five-minute presentation to the Board, followed by an eight-minute question and answer period. A brief summary of each candidate's presentation and answers to questions from Board members, is provided below.

3.1 Ron Gallipeau

Ron Gallipeau thanked the Board for accommodating his request to participate electronically as he was out of the country. Mr. Gallipeau noted that he is the father of two girls who attend an elementary school in the District. He has been involved in his local school council since 2015 where he assisted in running programs for students at low or no cost to enable as many children as possible to participate. A chartered accountant in the public service, Mr. Gallipeau also coaches a case competition at Carleton University and participates in a charitable fundraising campaign. Although he does not live in Zone 10, Mr. Gallipeau indicated that he would visit all schools and parent councils in the zone before the end of the year to learn more about their issues and concerns.

In response to queries, Mr. Gallipeau noted that, although he was unable to name all schools in Zone 10, he has spoken to many parents and is familiar with some of the issues in the zone including equity, violence, and overcrowding. He noted the importance of having older students mentor younger students. With respect to the elements of the Board's strategic plan that resonate with him, Mr. Gallipeau submitted that there should be more emphasis placed on parent involvement and outreach.

3.2 Carolyn Kropp

Carolyn Kropp advised that, as the mother of four children in three OCDSB schools, she has been exposed to a wide variety of issues, successes and concerns. Although not a resident of Zone 10, she has learned about the history, capacity, and school council activities of schools in the zone. Ms. Kropp noted that she has been active in organizing events for school councils over the past 14 years while learning about Board policies and procedures and Ministry of Education regulations. She also noted her experience as a board member for a nursery school, Indigenous and other organizations. Ms. Kropp advised that she would speak to parents and community members and bring their concerns to the Board table.

In response to queries, Ms. Kropp noted that some of the challenges facing the OCDSB include a tumultuous government and uncertainty about when accommodation reviews would resume. She also noted the importance of maintaining a high graduation rate, and equity of access.

One of her priorities in the first year would be environmental stewardship and awareness and the pursuit of equity to enable all students to have the support they need to be successful.

3.3 Christine Moulaison

Christine Moulaison advised that she has been involved in school councils since 2012 when her daughter entered kindergarten. In 2014, she represented her school at meetings of the Ottawa-Carleton Association of School Councils (OCASC) and went on to become a co-chair of OCASC as well as their non-voting representative to Committee of the Whole (COW). She advised that she is very familiar with issues facing the Board through her attendance at COW meetings. In 2018, Ms. Moulaison made a presentation to the Ministry of Finance at a pre-budget consultation meeting.

In response to queries, Ms. Moulaison submitted that good governance means working together, following policies and procedures, and ensuring nothing is missed. Through discussions with residents in Zone 10, Ms. Moulaison noted parents are concerned about overcrowding in schools due to intensification and construction of new condominiums in the area. Many of the schools are older and have maintenance issues. She also advised that, as a stay-at-home mother, she would have time to visit schools and interact with parents in the area. With respect to the Board's strategic plan, Ms. Moulaison stressed the importance of reaching out the community to be as inclusive as possible.

3.4 Jerry Kovacs

Jerry Kovacs drew attention to three areas in his application, including his teaching experience at the university and college level which taught him the importance of student achievement and well-being and a student-centered experiential learning environment. As a lawyer, Mr. Kovacs worked in the human rights and business areas where goal-setting, professionalism, positive working relationships, and accountability to clients are important and transferable skills. As an advocate, Mr. Kovacs stressed the importance of effective listening and communication skills on a range of platforms. He added that he has spoken with teachers who have identified class sizes, cutbacks, and assistance in the classroom for students with special needs as issues of concern.

In response to queries, Mr. Kovacs advised that he would work to improve student voice by visiting schools in the zone, talk to students and personally invite them to contact him if they had any concerns. Regarding his experience with students with special needs, Mr. Kovacs spoke about volunteering at events that are accessible to students with special needs. He drew attention to a family member with special needs and the requirement for patience, caring and tolerance. Mr. Kovacs also noted the concerns of teachers who feel they do not have adequate assistance in

the classroom to deal with students who have physical, emotional or mental health issues. Mr. Kovacs noted that he wished to become a school trustee to share his life skills and give back to the community.

3.5 Deborah Owusu-Akyeeah

Deborah Owusu-Akyeeah submitted that she is an outspoken advocate for others with experience in the design of strategic plans and strengthening governance in an organization. She spoke of her first-hand experience with racism and how public education can provide a pathway to success. Ms. Owusu-Akyeeah applauded the Board for its collection of identity-based data to assist in making evidence-based decisions. She noted her strong connections to the Black African community through literacy workshops and workshop facilitation experience. As an empathetic and policy-based leader with strong analytical skills, Ms. Owusu-Akyeeah advised that she wished to ensure that the Board is accountable to racialized students.

In response to queries, Ms. Owusu-Akyeeah advised that by being a presence in Indigenous organizations and Black groups in Ottawa, she has shared her personal narrative to show that people in marginalized groups can see possibilities for success. With respect to the Board's strategic plan, Ms. Owusu-Akyeeah submitted that the culture of caring ensures the Board's commitment to marginalized students and parents. She offered to connect the Board to Black educators in the City to assist in identifying key performance indicators for the number of expulsions and bullying rates. Ms. Owusu-Akyeeah noted that she would begin her tenure as a trustee by doing as much research as possible to learn about issues facing the Board. She also intends to continue her work in the community so parents can trust that someone who reflects their culture is speaking on their behalf.

3.6 Jessica Vis

Jessica Vis advised that she grew up in downtown Toronto and likes to be involved in education. She taught in Ghana as well as facilitating town halls and training sessions. As a co-chair of a school council she gained an appreciation for making changes to ensure a diverse and inclusive environment for children. Ms. Vis spoke about the need to address bullying in schools. As a parent with children living and attending school in Zone 10, Ms. Vis submitted that she would make a trustworthy representative for parents in the area.

In response to queries, Ms. Vis understands that a trustee is a conduit to change from parents, children, and politicians. It would be her responsibility to learn what is important to them and how to make it happen and be effective. She advised that social responsibility is everyone's responsibility and that innovative change can happen

quickly. Ms. Vis noted that she has many ideas and wants to have her voice heard, find solutions, and make decisions.

3.7 Justine Bell

Justine Bell noted that, as a senior advisor at Global Affairs Canada working on poverty reduction, she is experienced in the use of indicators, intersectional analysis, and an environmental lens. She spoke of her ability to synthesize and evaluate information, and to be clear and succinct when answering questions or providing advice. Ms. Bell has worked with refugee children in Mexico City, served as vice-president of a faith-based community organization, and volunteers in the Zone 10 community. Ms. Bell has a child in kindergarten who is experiencing physical violence and disruptive behaviour in the classroom. As a result, Ms. Bell learned about strategies being developed by the Board and Ministry of Education.

In response to queries, Ms. Bell submitted that it is important to listen, reach out, and learn about strategies to empower marginalized students with high needs in order to have equity of outcome. She noted the difficulty of engaging parents who work all day. She expressed the view that good governance is about engagement, reaching out, understanding the needs of constituents, being transparent and working with those who are responsible and hold the power. Regarding challenges and opportunities for the Board, Ms. Bell noted the need to meet the objectives in the strategic plan, make hard decisions in accommodation reviews, address achievement differences between the English and Early French Immersion programs, all while considering socio-economic and societal factors in the community.

3.8 Serge Lafontaine

Serge Lafontaine advised that he is an engineer and sales and marketing professional who resides in Zone 10. He has two teenage daughters attending OCDSB schools and enjoys working with children. He noted his experience as a board member for a private school and a golf club, as well as his involvement in junior achievement, and teaching golf to juniors. Mr. Lafontaine submitted that he would bring critical thinking and reasoned judgement to the Board as well as an understanding of the budget process. He also noted his intention to be a candidate in the next municipal election.

In response to queries, Mr. Lafontaine submitted that funding and labour relations will be challenges for the Board in the next few years. He noted the importance of bilingualism in the classroom and the requirement to ensure it meets the needs of all students. Regarding his understanding of systemic racism, Mr. Lafontaine noted the need to work collegially with people from other cultures and treat them with respect. He noted that he does not have any experience working with people with special needs.

3.9 Lucas Malinowski

Lucas Malinowski spoke of his experience as an immigrant child learning English in a new culture. He learned about challenges faced by educators from his mother who is a teacher and his brother who is on the autism spectrum. Mr. Malinowski noted his extensive experience with early learning and child care through his work as an advisor to the Ontario Minister for Early Learning and Child Care. Mr. Malinowski has a child in junior kindergarten and is currently the chair of the OCDSB Advisory Committee for Extended Day and Child Care Programs. Mr. Malinowski expressed the view that he is obliged to give back to the community and this was a deciding factor in his decision to apply to be a trustee. He added that he is passionate about equity and inclusivity.

In response to queries, Mr. Malinowski noted that he was struck by the weight of expectations put on students who are dealing with their studies, extracurricular activities and plans for the future. Engagement with students is more than listening and creating town halls. It also includes creating a feeling of empowerment so students feel they have a right to be heard. Mr. Malinowski noted that he has experienced racism because of his accent and name. He added that, as a white man, he has had many privileges that may not be available to some minorities.

3.10 Omotayo Sodeinde

Omotayo Sodeinde introduced herself and noted that she has been working with children since she was a child. Over the past 25 years, she has worked as a caregiver and a tutor and listened to the concerns of parents, particularly those from lower socio-economic backgrounds where English is not their first language. Ms. Sodeinde noted that she is prepared to do the research and listen to Board members, staff and parents in order to help children become well read members of society.

In response to queries, Ms. Sodeinde indicated that, as a member of a minority, she would like to work on inclusion and help every child to thrive, regardless of race and financial status. With respect to the Board's strategic plan, Ms. Sodeinde noted that she works in process improvement, and would like to take the time to review the strategic plan and suggest areas for improvement. As a trustee, she sees her role as an advocate for children. She is able to listen, respect all views, and select the best option for the District as whole.

3.11 Janet Spencer

Janet Spencer indicated that she is a recently retired public servant with time to learn about the roles and responsibilities of being a trustee. She noted that her grandchildren are students and she would like to be part of the team to improve the way children learn and interact with each other. Ms. Spencer expressed concern about bullying and student safety

and noted she would welcome the opportunity to work with parents and communities to bring their concerns to the Board. Her primary interest is leveling the playing field so that every child, regardless of their background and capabilities, has the same opportunity to succeed. As a mediator with 20 years of experience, Ms. Spencer advised that she is a good listener.

In response to queries, Ms. Spencer expressed the view that governance means interpreting the Education Act and implementing policies and practices to ensure the District has the best staff available for student success. Ms. Spencer noted the importance of the pillar of caring in the strategic plan as it relates to the safety, security and respect that are owed to children. She noted that she has not decided if she would run in the next election as it would depend on how successful she would be as a trustee.

3.12 Peter Biasone

Peter Biasone introduced himself and noted that he is a parent to two daughters attending schools in Zone 10. He drew attention to the rebuild of Broadview Avenue Public School and noted that the new building has reinvigorated and energized the entire community. He is now looking forward to the completion of renovations to Elmdale Public School. Mr. Biasone advised that he is a public servant with over 15 years of experience in the Treasury Board Secretariat. He reviews departmental programs to ensure they are well designed and comply with policy. He expressed the view that the most important activity for a trustee is to engage with stakeholders, consult, gather feedback, and make the best decisions possible and then report back to the stakeholders.

In response to queries, Mr. Biasone referred to the culture of innovation in the strategic plan as it fosters new ways of learning, for example, open, collaborative spaces in schools to advance innovation. He also drew attention to the importance of ensuring all learning spaces are accessible to people with disabilities. With respect to the challenges in Zone 10, he cited intensification and older facilities that require significant upgrading. Opportunities include the use of technology and social media as tools for learning. Mr. Biasone expressed the view that good governance means being well organized, transparent, and clearly accountable for actions taken.

3.13 Adam Gibbard

Adam Gibbard noted that he grew up and now lives in Zone 10. He has a four-year old child who started kindergarten this year. Although he has a Bachelor of Education, Mr. Gibbard now works as a community journalist. He noted the importance of instilling in people the joy of learning and expressed the view that the OCDSB is among the best school boards in the country in fulfilling this role. He spoke about the

challenges of maintaining the English and French immersion programs, the number of school boards in the city, and the need for mitigation strategies for climate change. He also acknowledged the challenges with the provincial government.

In response to queries, Mr. Gibbard expressed the view that there may be opportunities to evaluate how the two-tier English and French immersion programs affect students living in low income or poverty and whether the English program should continue to be an option. Trustees are important to public education for transparency, setting the budget, and representing children through their parents. Regarding systemic racism, Mr. Gibbard advised that his son is of mixed race and he worries about the struggles he may encounter in the future. He noted that he has worked with organizations that have challenges with representation and diversity.

3.14 Roman Mukerjee

Mr. Mukerjee did not appear at the scheduled time for his interview. He was moved to the bottom of the list to allow him additional time; however, he did not attend the meeting.

NOTATION: After the meeting, it was discovered that Mr. Mukerjee had provided notice that he would be unable to participate.

Moved by Trustee Blackburn,

THAT, in the absence of Mr. Mukerjee, the Board move to the next item on the agenda.

Carried

4. Appointment of Election Assistants by the Director and Secretary of the Board (2)

The Director of Education, Camille Williams-Taylor, appointed Executive Officer, Corporate Services, Michele Giroux, and Associate Director, Brett Reynolds, to the role of election assistants.

5. Nomination of Candidates

Moved by Trustee Schwartz, seconded by Trustee Boothby,

THAT the following applicants be nominated for election to the office of Trustee, Zone 10, Kitchissippi Somerset:

- a. Justine Bell;
- b. Peter Biasone;
- c. Ron Gallipeau;
- d. Adam Gibbard;
- e. Jerry Kovacs;

- f. Carolyn Kropp;
- g. Serge Lafontaine;
- h. Lucas Malinowski;
- i. Christine Moulaison;
- j. Roman Mukerjee;
- k. Deborah Owusu-Akyeeah;
- l. Omotayo Sodeinde;
- m. Janet Spencer; and
- n. Jessica Vis.

6. Election of Trustee, Zone 10 (Somerset/Kitchissippi)

Director Williams-Taylor explained the voting process and noted that the successful candidate must receive a majority of valid votes cast.

Director Williams-Taylor advised that if no candidate received a clear majority on the first ballot then a second ballot would be held. If no candidate received a clear majority on the second ballot, the names of the persons receiving the fewest votes would be dropped from the ballot and the trustees would vote on the remaining candidates. This would continue until one candidate received the majority vote. With 11 trustees present, a majority would be 6 votes. In the event of a tie, an additional ballot shall be held for the candidates in the tie, to break the tie.

Following five (5) ballots, Vice-Chair Penny declared that Justine Bell received a majority of the votes cast and will be recommended to the Board, at a special meeting on 18 February 2020, to be the candidate for Trustee, Zone 10, to complete the unexpired term to 14 November 2022.

7. Motion to Destroy Ballots

Moved by Trustee Hough,

THAT the ballots for the election of a trustee for Zone 10 be destroyed.

Carried

8. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:58 p.m.

Keith Penny, Chair