

**BOARD  
Report No. 20-040**

**28 April 2020**

**Purchase of New Portable Classrooms**

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**PURPOSE:**

1. To obtain approval to purchase ten new modular portable classrooms in order to provide the District with sufficient flexibility to accommodate student enrolment.

**CONTEXT:**

2. Report No.19-036, Purchase of New Portable Classrooms, was presented to the Committee of the Whole on 16 April 2019, requesting the approval of 20 new portable classrooms. Board approval was received. These portables were required in order to ensure that the District would have a sufficient number of surplus units available to meet anticipated needs for the 2019-2020 school year. Acquisition of the newly constructed portables was subsequently approved by the Ministry and construction is currently in progress.

At that time, staff indicated they would monitor the portable inventory and would report back to the Board in the future.

**KEY CONSIDERATIONS:**

3. Enrolment at both the elementary and secondary panels is expected to increase significantly for the 2020-2021 school year (a total of over 1,000 students).

While there is some uncertainty as to the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic on the District's enrolment forecast, there remain areas within the District that are experiencing accommodation pressures, where portables are required. In addition, there are portable requirements to accommodate students in schools that are experiencing facility issues and/or renovations.

The annual portable allocation process for the coming school year will commence in April 2020, with principals submitting their requests. Staff estimates that the District will likely require the use of all available surplus portables in order to meet needs. Please note that this count includes the new

portable classrooms that were approved for purchase in 2019, which will be arriving over the next few months.

The increases in enrolment which the District has been experiencing in recent years are forecasted to continue beyond the upcoming school year and into the foreseeable future. This trend will generate a continuing need for additional temporary classroom accommodation.

Over 70% of the District's portable classrooms are in excess of 25 years old. Although annual maintenance and renewal assists in the continued use of these portables, a number may have to be replaced in the coming years with newly constructed units.

Recent updates to the energy efficiency requirements in the Ontario building code have enhanced the overall performance of newly constructed portable structures by upgrading the building envelope through increased insulation volume and continuity. In addition to the building envelope performance upgrades, mechanical systems for portables are now required to incorporate energy recovery. Portables are run entirely off electricity which reduces their carbon footprint by not consuming any natural gas.

Inquiries to the three coterminous school boards have confirmed that none have surplus portables available for purchase at this time. All of the boards responded that they are in a similar position to the OCDSB, either requiring all available portables or seeking the acquisition of additional new units.

Given the information above, it is prudent for the District to begin moving forward with the acquisition of additional portables for the 2020-2021 school year and beyond.

It has been staff's experience recently that it has taken longer than expected to receive Ministerial approval for capital expenditures. In order to ensure that accommodation needs are met in a timely fashion, staff is recommending the purchase of an additional 10 new portable classroom units at this time.

It should be noted that separate funding for temporary accommodation is provided by the Ministry, based on average costs incurred over the three preceding years. Under the funding model, staff is projecting that the OCDSB will receive approximately \$900,000 for 2020-2021, all of which would be used for portable moves.

Staff has had discussions with the Ministry regarding the need for the purchase of new portables and the funding mechanism. The recommendation is to fund their acquisition from reserves, subject to Ministry approval.

## **RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:**

4. New modular portable classrooms include air conditioning and are estimated to cost \$155,460 per unit. This estimate excludes HST and any costs to prepare

the site, provide service connections, and receive the portables. Additional administrative and permit fee costs, estimated at a total of \$20,000, can also be expected. The purchase of 10 new portable units is estimated at a total cost of \$1,574,600 (plus HST) to be funded from reserves.

The updated figures reflect the most recent actual cost experience under the administered standing agreement.

### **COMMUNICATION/CONSULTATION ISSUES:**

5. There are no communication or consultation issues associated with the recommendations contained in this report.

### **STRATEGIC LINKS:**

6. The purchase of new portable classrooms will ensure that students are provided with learning opportunities and resources to support well-being. This is consistent with the culture of caring objectives in the 2019-2023 Strategic Plan.

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

THAT the purchase of ten new modular portable classrooms, at a budgeted total cost of \$1,574,600 (excluding HST), be approved and funded from reserves, subject to Ministry approval.

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