



**Board Meeting
Report No. 20-050**

26 May 2020

Revised Secondary Teacher Staffing for 2020-2021

**Key Contact: Janice McCoy, Superintendent of Human Resources
613-596-8207**

PURPOSE:

1. To seek approval for changes to secondary teacher staffing levels for the 2020-2021 school year, arising from the central agreement between the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF-Teachers), the Ontario Public School Boards Association (OPSBA) and the Crown.

CONTEXT:

2. On 31 March 2020, the Board of Trustees approved the academic staffing plan for the 2020-2021 school year, including all central and school based elementary teachers, secondary teachers, and administrators, (reference Report No. 20-031-Academic Staffing 2020-2021 dated 24 March 2020). The secondary teacher allocations presented were based on meeting the staffing formulae in the local collective agreement. Appendix A provides information on the secondary staffing that was approved on 31 March 2020.

At the time, staff indicated that it may be necessary to bring the secondary staffing back to the Board for review in the event a central agreement was reached and resulted in changes that impacted staffing. In the interim, secondary principals and vice-principals and Human Resources (HR) staff have been actively engaged in timetabling and staffing for next year.

On 20 April 2020, OPSBA announced a tentative central agreement with OSSTF teachers, which has since been ratified. The new central agreement includes several provisions that impact on secondary staffing levels, including new staffing language that is based on the Ministry's plan to change the regulated maximum average class size for secondary classes to 23.

Based on the above, staff has developed a revised secondary teacher staffing plan for the Board's consideration.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS:

3. Factors that Inform Academic Staffing

As outlined in Report 20-031-Academic Staffing 2020-2021, several factors inform or influence academic staffing levels. In general, the academic staffing plan should:

- align with the strategic priorities identified by the Board for improving student achievement and well-being;
- meet Ministry, regulatory and collective agreement obligations related to the number and/or the nature of teaching positions established by the District;
- maintain, to the extent possible, existing core services and supports provided by teachers;
- prioritize services and supports for students who may be at risk, students who have traditionally been underserved by typical structures, and students with the highest needs;
- consider the impact of any proposed changes to academic staffing on the overall budget, including on other staff supports that may be required to meet student needs and District priorities; and
- consider, but not be unduly constrained by, potential funding and funding parameters.

These principles continue to inform staff decision-making related to academic staffing and staff's current thinking with respect to potential revisions to secondary staffing.

Staff's thinking has also, of course, been informed by the current COVID-19 crisis and the impact on student learning and well-being this year and the potential for ongoing impacts next year, particularly for those students who are already at risk or underserved.

4. Classroom Allocation and Regulated Class Size Average

As indicated above, the maximum average class size for secondary classes will be revised to 23 beginning 2020-2021 and the language in the newly ratified collective agreement reflects this change.

The impact of moving to a maximum class size average of 23 represents a reduction of approximately 58.0 FTE classroom positions from the 1331.5 FTE already approved by the Board on 31 March 2020. For reasons outlined below, staff is recommending a change to secondary staffing that would reflect an increase in average class size that is within the range of 22.33 to 22.5. This change represents a reduction of approximately 20.0 FTE to 30.0 FTE classroom positions across the District's 25 secondary schools and four alternate programs.

5. Several factors have been considered with respect to the change being recommended to secondary staffing for next year, including the following:

- a) Impact on secondary programming: The first consideration is the potential impact on programming for students. Based on the experiences of other districts this year, any significant increase in the class size average would undoubtedly have a substantial adverse impact on programming and course offerings. Although it is not completely clear at this point what the program

impact will be with the more moderate increase to 23, it should, in theory, be achievable, particularly in larger districts, without any significant impact on programming. The central agreement also includes a provision, which will provide districts with some flexibility on individual class size caps, to accommodate the increased average class size. A more moderate increase in average class size next year will provide staff with an opportunity to assess the impact of the increase on programs and, if necessary, make adjustments for the following year.

- b) Attrition and enrolment: As part of the central agreement, reductions in staffing to accommodate the increase in the average class size will be absorbed through attrition or increased enrolment in order to minimize or avoid potential layoffs. The usual attrition rate for secondary teachers is between 50.0 and 60.0 FTE annually, mostly due to retirements. This year the number of retirements submitted to HR has been lower than usual, at less than 30. Enrolment projections are also more precarious than other years based on the impact of the pandemic, particularly in relation to international students. This is also having an impact on classroom staffing levels, which are directly tied to enrolment. The resulting uncertainty is creating some additional staffing challenges in planning for next year.
- c) Minimizing disruption to staff and students: The need to minimize disruption, perhaps this year more than others, is another important factor that informed the recommendation. Although staffing and timetabling a secondary school are always demanding and complicated tasks, there is no question that they are considerably more complicated and challenging this year as a result of having to do the work virtually, off-site and without easy and direct access to the usual resources and supports, and taking into consideration some of the uncertainty outlined above. Notwithstanding the difficult circumstances, and due in large measure to the incredible efforts of our secondary principals, vice-principals and the secondary staffing division of human resources, the staffing and timetabling process is well underway. In anticipation of possible staffing adjustments, some proactive steps have already been taken in terms of trying to minimize potential disruption and avoid the need to revisit work that has already been done by school administrators. Additional substantive reductions at this point would require making adjustments to individual school staffing allocations that would be difficult to absorb without significant disruption and re-timetabling. Looking ahead to the rest of this year and to next year, there are still many unanswered questions about what teaching and learning will look like when school starts in September, or what additional supports might be required.
- d) Funding: The Ministry has indicated that the funded average for secondary classroom positions will be adjusted to 23 next year, although the Grants for Student Needs (GSNs) have yet to be released. The revised staffing allocation being proposed would reduce the funding shortfall originally forecasted based on the staffing levels approved on 31 March 2020, although there would continue to be a gap. While the funding parameters are not necessarily determinative of spending decisions, they are an important consideration. In this case, on balance, staff supports moving forward with implementing a

moderate change to the average class size to reduce expenditures and decrease the funding gap. In the context of the overall budget, it is staff's view that the revised plan represents an appropriate balance between fiscal responsibility and a need to provide some measure of stability, particularly in the face of so much uncertainty and instability.

In summary, staff is recommending a revised secondary staffing plan that reduces the basic classroom allocation by a minimum of 20 FTE, to reflect an increase in the average class size for next year.

6. Student Support Funding

The central agreement includes additional funding for school boards to support additional positions to support special education, unique student needs or mental health initiatives. The amount of the funding allocated to the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (OCDSB) in each of the next two years will support the addition of 11.0 FTE teaching positions. It should be noted that the additional 5.0 FTE program enhancement positions approved already were recommended in anticipation of the additional funding being restored next year. On that basis, these positions fall within the additional 11.0 FTE, for a net increase of 6.0 FTE, and that is reflected in the revised secondary staffing plan. As part of the central agreement, the deployment of the 11.0 FTE is a matter for discussion between the local parties. On that basis, preliminary discussions have taken place and some potential deployment options have been identified, including support for specific program needs in small schools, guidance, special education, ESL and student success, all of which are consistent with the parameters outlined for use of these funds.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

7. The funded average for secondary teachers for 2020-2021 will be adjusted to 23, to align with the change in the regulated maximum average class size. The shortfall between the funded average and the staffing levels approved on 31 March 2020, represented approximately \$6.0 million. The revised staffing plan reduces the shortfall in 2020-2021 by between \$2.0 and \$3.0 million.

COMMUNICATION/CONSULTATION ISSUES:

8. Discussions with the local OSSTF regarding potential changes to the class size average have been on-going and will continue, including through the joint Secondary Staffing Committee. Principal representatives have also been consulted with respect to the proposed allocation of the Student Support Funds.

STRATEGIC LINKS:

9. Decisions related to staffing expenditures and allocations should be guided by the priorities articulated through the 2019-2023 Strategic Plan. The revised academic staffing plan for secondary teachers will increase alignment with available funding and provide greater flexibility for decision-making in other operating areas of the budget to have the greatest impact in achieving the District's strategic priorities. The proposed

revision balances the District's commitment to fiscal responsibility and maintaining services and supports for students.

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the Board approve the revised secondary staffing plan for the 2020-2021 school year, as outlined in Report 20-050, and set out in the attached Appendix A.

Janice McCoy
Superintendent of Human Resources

Camille Williams-Taylor
Director of Education and Secretary of
the Board

Appendix A - Secondary Staffing Summary 2020-2021