

## BOARD PUBLIC MINUTES

**Tuesday, April 28, 2020, 7:00 pm  
Zoom Meeting**

- Trustees: Justine Bell, Donna Blackburn, Christine Boothby, Rob Campbell, Chris Ellis, Lyra Evans, Mark Fisher, Wendy Hough, Jennifer Jennekens, Keith Penny, Sandra Schwartz, Lynn Scott, Ganaaboute Gagne (Student Trustee), Prasith Wijeweera (Student Trustee)
- Staff: Camille Williams-Taylor (Director of Education), Brett Reynolds (Associate Director), Dorothy Baker (Superintendent of Instruction), Prince Duah (Superintendent of Instruction), Mike Carson (Chief Financial Officer), Mary Jane Farrish (Superintendent of Instruction), Eric Hardie (Superintendent of Instruction), Michele Giroux (Executive Officer, Corporate Services), Janice McCoy (Superintendent of Human Resources), Shawn Lehman (Superintendent of Instruction), Shannon Smith (Superintendent of Instruction), Peter Symmonds (Superintendent of Learning Support Services), Nadia Towaij (Superintendent of Program and Learning K-12), Petra Duschner (Manager of Mental Health and Critical Services), Pamela LeMaistre (Manager of Human Resources), Sandra Lloyd (Manager of Risk and Supply Chain Management), Sandy Owens (Manager, Business & Learning Technologies), Diane Pernari-Hergert (Manager of Communications & Information Services), Richard Sinclair (Manager of Legal Services and Labour Relations), Carolyn Tanner (Human Rights and Equity Advisor), Lisa Gowans (planner), Nicole Guthrie (Manager, Board Services), Rebecca Grandis (Senior Board Coordinator), Amanda Pelkola (Board/Committee Coordinator)

1. Call to Order -- Chair of the Board

Chair Scott called the public meeting to order at 7:21 p.m. She 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 the Agenda

**Moved by Trustee Lyra Evans, seconded by Trustee Ellis,**

**THAT the agenda be approved.**

**Carried**

3. Report from the Board (In Camera)

Trustee Penny reported that the Board met in camera this evening, and reports and recommends as follows:

**Moved by Trustee Boothby, seconded by Trustee Penny**

**THAT staff be authorized to proceed, as directed in Board in camera, with respect to a financial matter.**

**Carried**

A recorded vote was held and the motion was carried unanimously by those present:

FOR: Trustee Bell, Boothby, Campbell, Ellis, Lyra Evans, Fisher, Hough, Jennekens, Penny, Schwartz, Scott (11)

AGAINST: Nil (0)

ABSTENTION: Nil (0)

4. Briefing from the Chair of the Board

Chair Scott noted that the Minister of Education announced that schools will remain closed until at least 31 May 2020. Chair Scott thanked OCDSB staff, students and families for their commitment to working through these difficult circumstances and making student learning and well-being a priority.

Chair Scott announced a tentative central agreement was reached between teachers and education workers represented by the Ontario Secondary Schools Teachers' Federation (OSSTF). These agreements are scheduled for final ratification in May. The central agreement with the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO) was formally ratified on 28 April 2020. The contributions made by all parties were acknowledged especially considering the COVID-19 pandemic.

Chair Scott noted that during the 31 March 2020 Board meeting, concerns were voiced from the community regarding an alleged incident between Trustee Donna Blackburn and a young person in a community park. Chair Scott advised that a complaint has been received under Policy P.073 Board Member Code of Conduct. The Code of Conduct sets the standard of behavioural expectations for trustees of the OCDSB. It includes a process for complaints; investigations; the decision-making process to determine if there was a breach of the Code; and a list of possible sanctions. Chair Scott added that the complaint is being investigated by an independent third party who will provide a report to the Board. The process is confidential while underway, but once the Board receives a

report, it will be considered and a decision will be rendered at a public meeting of the Board of Trustees.

5. Briefing from the Director

Director Williams-Taylor noted that this year, families celebrating blessed Ramadan have had to deal with the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. At a time where families typically come together to celebrate, people need to practice physical distancing. While students are encouraged to continue their school activities during this time, teachers will be flexible and accommodate the needs of those participating in Ramadan.

Director Williams-Taylor shared that the OCDSB recently announced the winners of the Director's Citation Awards. These awards recognize outstanding and significant staff contributions to the District and its students. The full list of winners is located on the OCDSB website. She added that the 2019-2020 school year has been unprecedented, and thanked all staff for their tremendous contributions.

Director Williams-Taylor announced that May 4-8 is Education Week in Ontario. This is an annual celebration of teaching excellence and student achievement. While school is different these days, there remains much to celebrate, particularly the dedication of OCDSB staff and their commitment to student success.

The District is aware that COVID-19 is having an impact on mental health and well-being. Now more than ever it is important to be kind and gentle to ourselves and recognize that everyone is doing the best they can to get through this. May 4-10 is the Canadian Mental Health Association's Mental Health Week. This year the theme is "Don't just get loud, get real," which means to speak up about how you really feel. In times of crisis like this, even though physically apart, remember connections are needed more than ever.

6. Delegations

6.1 Richard Sharpe, re Identity Based Data Collection Initiative

Mr. Sharpe expressed his interest in receiving information on the outcomes of the Identity Based Data Collection initiative that was part of the OCDSB's school survey conducted at the end of 2019. Mr. Sharpe also expressed his concern about the safety of black and racialized students within the OCDSB.

During question period, the following comments were made:

- Director Williams-Taylor confirmed that the study has been interrupted by COVID-19 but noted preliminary results will be provided before July 2020. This delay will not impede efforts to work on the equity, inclusion and structural adjustments planned to be implemented in the fall.

- Executive Officer Giroux noted that analysis has commenced on the data and is expected to be complete by June 2020. Appropriate methods are being explored to share this large data set with the community.
- Mr. Sharpe noted that the primary concerns of his community are associated with suspensions and exclusions with racial overtones and the overall well-being of students. There is interest in seeing if the quantitative data will support these observations.
- Mr. Sharpe noted that the engagement with the black community leading up to the survey was significant enough that there is optimism that the OCDSB has noble intentions to support the community.
- Mr. Sharpe stated that this current home school dynamic has allowed the black community to experience less stress and they want their youths to feel this ease when returning to school.

## 7. Matters for Action

### 7.1 Confirmation of Board Minutes:

#### 7.1.a 31 March 2020 Board

**Moved by Trustee Schwartz, seconded by Trustee Lyra Evans,  
THAT the 31 March 2020 Board minutes be confirmed.  
Carried**

### 7.2 Business Arising from Board Minutes

There was no business arising from the 31 March 2020 Board minutes.

### 7.3 Non-Consent Items

### 7.4 Report 20-039, New Stittsville Secondary School Attendance Boundary Consultation Plan, (M. Carson ext. 8881)

Your Committee had before it Report 20-039, to obtain approval to commence an online consultation initiative in regards to the new Stittsville secondary school attendance boundary plan. Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Carson noted that the consultation process commenced in December 2019 to set boundaries for the school. Four working groups were originally outlined in the plan however only three have taken place due to the pandemic. CFO Carson feels it is important to continue with the process and honour the work of those members in the community that have submitted their input to date. Therefore it is proposed that an online version be offered as the fourth in the form of a presentation to replace a public meeting. A modified Thoughtexchange platform will be offered to solicit feedback from the community. The consultation will be carried out in May and June with a final decision scheduled for the end of June 2020.

Trustee Boothby noted that the public meetings were productive and provided a complete representation of stakeholders. She expressed concern over the possible delay of the process as it would necessitate additional consultations to reflect new administration and student counsellors in the fall.

In response to a query, CFO Carson confirmed that information on the new boundaries and the consultation would be sent to the community and include all the feeder schools that are scheduled to attend South Carleton High School. In addition, postings will be made in the community newspapers to spread awareness.

**Moved by** Trustee Boothby

**Seconded by** Trustee Hough

**THAT the amendment to the timeline, attached as Appendix B to Report 20-039 and the consultation plan, attached as C to Report 20-039, for the new Stittsville secondary school study for establishing the attendance boundary, program offering, opening grade structure and associated changes, be approved. (Attached as Appendices A and B)**

**Carried**

A recorded vote was held and the motion was carried unanimously by those present:

Trustee Bell, Boothby, Campbell, Ellis, Lyra Evans, Fisher, Hough, Jennekens, Penny, Schwartz, Scott (11)

AGAINST: Nil (0)

ABSTENTION: Nil (0)

7.5 Report 20-040, Purchase of New Portable Classrooms (M. Carson, ext. 8881)

Your Committee had before it Report 20-040 seeking approval to procure new portable classrooms. CFO Carson stated the increase in enrolments experienced this school year indicates the need for additional portables this fall. The purchase would be funded by reserves and available funds. A request for capital has been requested and a decision is imminent.

The following points were noted during the discussion:

- Trustee Schwartz and Trustee Lyra Evans expressed concern about energy efficiency and were interested in the cost differential between more efficient and standard portables. CFO Carson noted due to the

pandemic, this request was made earlier than anticipated and as a result, information on options was difficult to acquire;

- The proposed portables meet all code requirements, are held to the same standards of permanent school structures and are 13 percent above the minimum portable standard;
- If the portables have additional insulation, such as R60, this increases the amount of mechanical required to ensure proper air exchange; and
- It was clarified that the \$1.5 million budget included construction and installation and that furniture had already been acquired.

Trustees supported the need to acquire additional portables but requested that the concerns brought forward be considered for future purchases.

*An amendment moved by Trustee Lyra Evans,*

*THAT a second part be added to the motion that reads "THAT all future reports brought forward to the Board with a recommendation to purchase modular portable classrooms include multiple options of various energy-efficiencies, the ecological impact of each as well as the associated cost differentials."*

*Carried*

**Moved by** Trustee Evans

**Seconded by** Trustee Ellis

**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.**

**THAT all future reports brought forward to the Board with a recommendation to purchase modular portable classrooms include multiple options of various energy-efficiencies, the ecological impact of each as well as the associated cost differentials.**

**Carried**

A recorded vote was held and the motion was carried unanimously by those present:

FOR: Trustees Bell, Boothby, Campbell, Ellis, Lyra Evans, Fisher, Hough, Jennekens, Penny, Schwartz, Scott (11)

AGAINST: Nil (0)

ABSTENTION: Nil (0)

8. Matters for Discussion

8.1 Report 20-044, Results from Thoughtexchange: Students, Parents and Community (M. Giroux, ext 8607)

**Moved by Trustee Evans, seconded by Trustee Schwartz.  
THAT the board move to adopt the rules of committee.  
Carried**

The Committee had before it Report 20-044, providing an overview of the results from the Thoughtexchange, that collected feedback from stakeholders on the OCDSB's continuity of learning initiative. Executive Officer Giroux advised the exchange was open for one week over the second week of the learn at home initiative. The information from the Thoughtexchange assists the OCDSB in refining the learning at home model.

During the presentation the following points were highlighted:

- There were over 7000 participants: 774 by grade 7-8 students, 2304 by 9-12 students, 3168 by parents of K-8 students, 731 by parents of 9-12 students and 41 from the community;
- The top themes rated 4.0 + related to:
  - Family stress and life balance - The transition was difficult having to balance student schedules and work;
  - Hours of work were questioned and clarity was requested to assess whether the assigned amount of work exceeded or fell short of recommendations;
  - Feedback was provided around teacher led learning and how much value teacher led learning provides to the experience;
  - Difficult for youths to be motivated; and
  - Questions about assignments and evaluations and what will happen with their marks if students do not complete the work.
- Based on survey feedback, the OCDSB provided education to teachers during the last two weeks of April;
- The OCDSB is looking at arranging peer to peer discussion based on feedback from grade 12 students interested in exploring options for a year end celebration; and
- Another survey is planned, however the format has not been determined.

The following points were noted during discussion:

- Although the Ministry of Education will not be providing ongoing direction regarding assessments and evaluations, the OCDSB is continuing to discuss these topics with the learning council. The OCDSB's perspective is that secondary students can improve their marks during the closure and should not see their mid-term marks be compromised;
- There is an assessment record program available to the OCDSB and currently it is being researched to ensure it has the capability to indicate the baseline mark prior to the closure and current marks;
- Final exams will not be administered however students will receive ongoing descriptive feedback and evaluations until the end of the year to improve current grades. This feedback will be reflected in student assessments and this information will be communicated;
- Trustee Hough expressed the view that students require a clear outline of what is expected to maintain their grades prior to 13 March. She added that students need clarity around what assignments will be provided and the expectations of the assignments;
- Multicultural liaison officers and social workers are making efforts to contact students who have yet to be reached. Through their contact they have obtained additional information on overall well-being, complex family situations, variations between workload, the ability to access the work, and students missing connections with peers and teachers;
- A media campaign has been running on CHIN radio and other community media outlets, covering four different topics: learning at home, reach out campaign, assessments and evaluations as well as community well-being and supports;
- Due to COVID-19 some families are in different situations than anticipated which are not conventionally true. Some students have home responsibilities or their income contributes to the household income. In some cases, older students are the teacher and or caregiver to their younger siblings;
- A task force has been analyzing the details of the Thoughtexchange feedback particularly in regard to synchronous learning. The team disseminating this information has representation across the District including union partners and their recommendations will be provided at the beginning of May;
- Secondary students highlighted that working from home was doubling or tripling the time to complete a project. Potential solutions are to



increase interactions and synchronous learning, to decrease the workload for students, and perhaps provide annotated slide decks;

- The District has focused communications with secondary staff and students, to ensure that the memorandums from the Ministry are being properly interpreted. The District is determined to further opportunities for students to demonstrate improvements in learning past 13 March. Secondary students that were struggling prior to the closure will be offered a credit rescue approach that incorporates students' interests and skills, to increase motivation and engagement;
- In cases where students feel that concessions are not being made to accommodate them, they are encouraged to approach their teachers directly and if this fails, approach the principal to address the concern at a school level;
- Trustees can review all memorandums sent to students and staff online in the student portal to assist them in answering questions and providing clarity; and
- In response to a comment from Student Trustee Gagne regarding confusion surrounding the District's policies on one on one communication between students and teaching staff, Superintendent Towaij noted she would provide clarification and ensure that the District's policies are properly communicated.

## 8.2 COVID-19 Update

Director Williams-Taylor noted that due to COVID-19, the District's plan is to focus on learning at home and business continuity. Planned projects may be delayed and the timelines adjusted.

During the presentation, the following information was provided:

- Weekly memos are being sent to trustees to keep them informed of OCDSB's activities and actions;
- The reading intervention program Empower, has continued during the closure, in thanks to the partnership with SickKids;
- Learning opportunities have been offered to teachers by Dr. Small, a recognized international math expert, who volunteered her time to train staff;
- Secondary school commencements and ceremonies will be deferred until the fall but a date has not been set. The District has been in discussions with principals to consider appropriate options to commemorate the conclusion of high school in June, while respecting physical distancing restrictions;

- Registration for summer school, both reach ahead and credit recovery programs, will open 30 April and will be offered in a fully digital platform. Summer learning programs offered to kindergarten to grade 8 students are being reviewed to assess if the instructions can be modified to be held virtually;
- The summer learning program for students with autism spectrum disorder and developmental disabilities, will likely not be offered given the medical and safety needs that must be considered. All summer camps run by the OCDSB will not be held this summer;
- The Ministry of Education has begun discussing reopening schools but no timeline has been established, nor have any protocols or procedures been outlined. Decisions will be based on collaborative discussions with the Ministry of Health and the OCDSB will take direction from the municipal, provincial and federal recommendations. The OCDSB will begin developing a framework at the beginning of May which will be shared with trustees to solicit feedback from the community; and
- The Ministry of Education has not ruled out continuing the school year past June but there are many variables to consider.

In response to questions, the following points were noted:

- 9000 Chromebooks have been distributed to students and requests that are outstanding, will be delivered the first week of April. During the last week of March, 1100 mobile hotspots were distributed and additional requests are anticipated. Assistive technology have also been couriered to all requiring students;
- The Ministry of Education continues its dialogue with post-secondary students, universities and colleges, and there is a commitment to a fair transition for students into post-secondary school and flexibility regarding deadlines;
- The Education Foundation of Ottawa (EFO) has a sub-fund "Bridges Over Barriers" which has raised \$11,000 to support vulnerable families and it will build on the existing structure that the Ottawa Network for Education (ONFE) has created;
- ONFE has provided food kits, breakfast replacement kits, and food pick up to places that have the resources, staff and infrastructure to carry out distribution. In addition, there are 38 locations, including shelters, distributing food packages. The program will expand geographically and look to open locations in Blackburn Hamlet and Heron Park. The next phase is to have principals and social workers register families, with their permission, to receive an individualized

level of service. The goal is to reach the entire city and provide food where required. The Indigenous community has connected the OCDSB with community members so assistance can be offered;

- Trustee Campbell highlighted the interest in having school council funds be released to support families or provide funding to EFO. He requested that consideration be given as to how the school councils can convene in order to release disposable funds into the community. Director Williams-Taylor agreed this would be discussed by senior staff;
- The Zoom platform is to be used for business and corporate reasons and Google Meet or Hangouts are the preferred platforms for learning due to the fact that data is encrypted by Google;
- Trustee Ellis stated considerations should be given to obtaining supplies for reintegration such as the purchase of hand sanitizer; and
- Trustee Schwartz shared that her community was frustrated with the continued school re-opening delays and that a decision to close until September should be considered. She also stated it would be useful to evaluate the technology measures put in place for elementary students to establish best practices for the future.

**Moved by Trustee Schwartz,  
THAT the Board move to end the rules of committee.  
Carried**

8.3 Report from OPSBA Representatives (if required)

Trustee Boothby shared that the OPSBA annual general meeting will be postponed until the fall.

Trustee Lyra Evans questioned when the election of a representative will be selected.

Chair Scott confirmed a representative will be determined before the AGM.

9. Matters for Information

Chair Scott highlighted that the Ministry of Education has provided two memorandums to trustees to distribute to families.

10. New Business -- Information and Inquiries

No new business to report.

11. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 10:23 pm.

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Lynn Scott, Chair of the Board