

BOARD PUBLIC MINUTES

**Tuesday, May 26, 2020, 9:00
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, Prasith Wijeweera (Student Trustee)

Staff: Camille Williams-Taylor (Director of Education), Brett Reynolds (Associate Director), Dorothy Baker (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), Peter Symmonds (Superintendent of Learning Support Services), Shannon Smith (Superintendent of Instruction), Carolyn Tanner (Human Rights and Equity Advisor), Pamela LeMaistre (Manager of Human Resources), Sandy Owens (Manager, Business & Learning Technologies), Diane Pernari-Hergert (Manager of Communications & Information Services), Richard Sinclair (Manager of Legal Services and Labour Relations), Charles D'Aoust (Coordinator of Budget Services), 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 9:15 p.m. She 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 the Agenda

**Moved by Trustee Campbell, seconded by Trustee Fisher,
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 has no report.

4. Briefing from the Chair of the Board

Chair Scott highlighted that the Ontario government extended the closure of publicly funded schools until the end of the school year. Chair Scott shared her appreciation to all the OCDSB staff and community members for their continued commitment to support student learning and well-being during the closure.

Chair Scott noted that the Minister of Education announcement stated that a plan would be shared in June, to assist schools in preparing for the reopening in September. On 26 May, the Ministry of Education advised that a consultation on the plan had been launched and feedback would be received by email. A link to the plan was added to the supplemental items under the COVID-19 update on the 26 May 2020 agenda package.

Chair Scott highlighted that the District is working locally and with the Ministry of Education to plan for the school reopening in September. More information will be shared with parents and students when available.

During the week of 18-22, May 2020, a memo was sent to school councils regarding end of year planning and finalizing outstanding school council business. Chair Scott, on behalf of the Board of Trustees, expressed thanks to all of the school council volunteers. Chair Scott highlighted that during the closure period, councils have interacted with principals and families and assisted in providing support to families in need in the community.

Chair Scott shared the unfortunate news that physical distancing restrictions would prevent in-person end of year gatherings and celebrations that school councils would have ordinarily held. It also prevents the Volunteer Appreciation Reception from taking place, where the Board of Trustees thank council members directly.

Chair Scott announced that the central agreements with teachers and education workers represented by the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF), have now been ratified. This followed the ratification of central agreements with the Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario (ETFO), that was announced at the 28 April 2020 Board meeting.

5. Briefing from the Director

Director Williams-Taylor wished Eid Mubarak to everyone in the community celebrating the end of Ramadan.

Director Williams-Taylor highlighted that in order to help students learn at home, the District has now delivered more than 11,000 Chromebooks and over 1000 internet hotspots to students in need.

Director Williams-Taylor thanked the Education Foundation of Ottawa's Executive Director, Clarissa Arthur, for her assistance with collecting and distributing emergency school supplies to 700 Ottawa children in need. Packages of school supplies were delivered to help students participate in learning at home activities.

Director Williams-Taylor commended educators for the innovative approaches taken to assist learning and supporting students at home.

Director Williams-Taylor noted that through the partnership of the Education Foundation, Just Foods and Ottawa Good Food Box, the District was able to deliver food boxes and garden packages to approximately 1000 students. The packages come with instructional materials about how to grow vegetables at home. They are also designed for students who may live in an apartment and do not have access to outdoor space.

Director Williams-Taylor noted that in April, the OCDSB launched a thank you campaign directed at essential workers. Students shared more than 450 letters, pictures and videos. The District has taken these materials and sent them to local organizations across the city. The messages of support were well received and can be found on display in local hospitals, shared in the employee newsletter, and highlighted on social media.

6. Delegations

6.1 Robin Browne, re Code of Conduct Policy and Process

Mr. Browne, speaking on behalf of his community, voiced concerns over the Board's process for addressing complaints of alleged violations to the Code of Conduct by Board members. In his delegation, Mr. Browne provided an overview of the four issues he felt were concerning.

In response to the issues Mr. Browne outlined in his submission, Trustee Scott and Executive Director Giroux addressed each item individually in the order they were submitted:

1. Under the Code of Conduct, there is a provision that investigations involving multiple infractions should result in a formal review. When there is a breach, an assessment is conducted, and sanctions can only be applied once a breach has been confirmed. Regarding the severity

of the sanctions, the Board does provide input but there are many factors that must be considered;

2. Chair Scott stated that in the past, when a formal review was conducted, the Board selected an appropriate sanction based on the severity of the incident;
3. Chair Scott noted that the sanctions available to the Board are only those provided by provincial legislation and what is outlined in *the Education Act*. Sanctions that the Board has available include banning the member from attending meetings or barring them from sitting on a committee, for no longer than 6 months. The Board cannot impose a sanction that is more onerous than these and cannot demand a trustee vacate their seat; and
4. Executive Officer Giroux stated that there is a balance between the rights of the community to appear as a delegation and procedural fairness. The code states individual members of the Board cannot undertake an independent investigation and although this does not apply specifically to delegations, when trustees ask delegations questions, this could be construed as seeking additional information. In order to protect the integrity of the process, the Board reviewed the merits of the requested 28 April 2020 delegation and worked with legal counsel to formulate the decision.

During question period, the following comments were made:

- Mr. Browne expressed interest in providing a delegation to the investigator leading the Code of Conduct investigation. The District will review this request and inform Mr. Browne of the decision;
- Mr. Browne stated he was unfamiliar with the provincial legislation regarding how Boards deal with code of conduct matters. He noted he would familiarize himself with other Board's codes prior to escalating his grievances with Ontario's provincial representative; and
- The OCDSB has established the role of integrity commissioner and will be reviewing the parameters of the position once an individual has been appointed.

7. Matters for Action

7.1 Confirmation of Board Minutes:

7.1.a 28 April 2020, Board

Moved by Trustee Fisher, seconded by Trustee Schwartz,

THAT the 28 May 2020 Board minutes be confirmed.

Carried

7.1.b 12 May 2020, Special Board

Moved by Trustee Hough, seconded by Trustee Fisher,

THAT the 12 May 2020 Special Board minutes be confirmed.

Carried

7.2 Business Arising from Board Minutes

There was no business arising from the 28 April 2020 Board minutes nor the 12 May 2020 Special Board minutes.

7.4 Report 20-046, Appointments to the Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA) for 7 July 2020 to 7 July 2021 (M. Giroux)

Your Committee had before it Report 20-046 seeking to establish the appointments to the Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA) for the period of 07 July 2020 to 07 July 2021.

Executive Officer Giroux noted the requirement to confirm the following OPSBA appointments:

- Two directors to the Board of Directors; and
- Two alternate directors to the Board of Directors.

Chair Scott invited trustees to nominate or self-nominate representatives for the role of director on OPSBA.

Trustee Penny, seconded by Trustee Schwartz, nominated Trustee Boothby. Trustee Boothby accepted the nomination.

Trustee Boothby, seconded by Trustee Schwartz, nominated Trustee Penny. Trustee Penny accepted the nomination.

Trustee Lyra Evans, seconded by Trustee Ellis, self nominated.

Moved by Trustee Campbell, seconded by Trustee Hough.

THAT nominations be closed.

Carried

Following an election, Chair Scott declared Trustees Boothby and Trustee Penny as the two directors to the OPSBA Board of Directors for the period of 07 July 2020 to 07 July 2021.

Chair Scott invited trustees to nominate or self-nominate representatives for the role of alternate director on OPSBA.

Trustee Boothby, seconded by Trustee Penny nominated Trustee Bell. Trustee Bell accepted the nomination.

Trustee Campbell, seconded by Trustee Hough, self-nominated.

Trustee Boothby, seconded by Trustee Ellis nominated Trustee Lyra Evans. Trustee Lyra Evans accepted the nomination.

**Moved by Trustee Campbell, seconded by Trustee Penny.
THAT nominations be closed.
Carried.**

Following an election, Chair Scott declared Trustee Bell and Trustee Campbell as the two alternate directors to the OPSBA Board of Directors for the period of 07 July 2020 to 07 July 2021.

7.5 Report 20-050, Revised Secondary Teacher Staffing for 2020-2021 (J. McCoy)

Your Committee had before it Report 20-050, seeking approval of the revised secondary teacher staffing plan for 2020-2021. Superintendent McCoy provided an overview of the revisions made to the 31 March 2020 approved plan, to reflect the updated secondary teaching complement, which resulted from the ratified central agreement. Based on the ratification, new staffing language was applied that impacts what was outlined in the approved March plan.

The memorandum of settlement included a commitment on the part of the Crown to provide additional funds to school boards to add positions to support special education, unique student needs and mental health initiatives. The allocation for the OCDSB is equivalent to an additional 11.0 full time equivalent (FTE). The additional 11.0 FTE include the 5.0 program enhancement positions already approved. This is included in the revised staffing plan.

There is a reference in the new agreement to a maximum average class size of 23. The change in maximum average class size has an impact on the classroom staffing positions that the District allocates. Staff are recommending class size averages of between 22.33 and 22.5 for next year with attrition and enrolment being taken into account. This will allow staff to review the impact of larger class sizes and allow for a transition to a class size average of 23 for 2021-2022. In March, the trustees approved a staffing allocation of 1331.5 FTE; the revised staffing plan will see a reduction of 20.0 FTE classroom positions.

The District's proposed staffing allocation plan would reduce the funding shortfall originally approved in the staffing plan from the 31 March 2020 Board meeting. However, there will continue to be a gap between funds provided by the Grants for Student Needs (GSNs) and actual classroom staffing levels until the Board achieves a class size average of 23.

The proposed net reduction of 14.0 FTE represents an appropriate balance between the District's commitment to fiscal responsibility and its efforts to ensure stability for staff and students.

Moved by Trustee Blackburn

Seconded by Trustee Campbell

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. (Attached as Appendix A)

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

FOR: Trustees Bell, Boothby, Blackburn, Campbell, Ellis, Lyra Evans, Fisher, Hough, Jennekens, Penny, Schwartz and Scott (12)

AGAINST: Nil (0)

ABSTENTION: Nil (0)

8. Matters for Discussion

8.1 COVID-19 Update

The following points were noted during the discussion:

- The school closure period has been extended until the end of the 2020-2021 school year;
- The Empower reading program, offered in partnership with SickKids, will resume for those students previously enrolled. This will ensure that the students have the ability to advance or complete the program for the month of June and or in the fall;
- There is a new website for parents of students with non-verbal or minimally verbal abilities. Speech language pathologists have created additional resources to assist parents during the quarantine period and beyond. This site is a complement to the resources already available and in effect;

- The District continues to develop further mental health resources for students and staff. Previously a series of staff mental health workshops were offered and the District plans to continue and extend these efforts;
- The District is creating a comprehensive plan to enable students and staff to retrieve belongings from schools;
- The District invited graduating high school students to provide suggestions on ideas for graduation celebrations while recognizing physical distancing. Based on feedback, the District will release a District wide strategy for spring 2020 high school graduation celebrations. Formal graduations will be held in the fall of 2020, but the date has not been determined. The details will be provided by the beginning of June;
- The Ottawa Citizen and Ottawa Sun will pay tribute to high school graduates. They are inviting submissions of photos of students in graduation attire or speeches, to be submitted between 18-20 June, to be considered for online and social media posting, and a 12 June submission deadline to be considered for print;
- To celebrate elementary students' graduations, there will be virtual celebrations. The District will be equitable in their approach and ensure that privacy is respected. More details will be provided by the schools;
- The Ministry has indicated that guiding principles for the reopening of schools will be shared in June. The District has already begun planning using best practices from other provinces and jurisdictions; and
- The international administration dates for the Diplôme d'études en langue française (DELF) are administered by Centre International d'Etudes Pédagogiques (CIEP) in France, who govern administration of the DELF. The administration dates were previously set for April, May and June of 2020 but due to COVID-19, were cancelled. The replacement dates for Canadian administration have yet to be established.

During question period, the following points were noted:

- In response to a query regarding the reopening of extracurricular activities and third party use of OCDSB outdoor properties, Director Williams-Taylor noted there have been no commitments made and the District will seek guidance from Ottawa Public Health (OPH);

- In response to a query from Trustee Campbell regarding whether or not landscaping and external facilities projects would be proceeding this summer, staff agreed to provide an update; and
- In response to a query from Trustee Campbell regarding the nature of the partnership between the Red Cross and the OCDSB, staff agreed to provide an overview of this partnership and its scope.

* * * The 10:30 pm vote obtained the required 2/3 majority to continue the meeting * * *

- In response to an inquiry regarding whether the District would enforce mandatory COVID-19 vaccinations for students and staff, Director Williams-Taylor responded that the direction would be provided by OPH and they would abide by whatever regulations are set around immunization; and
- It was noted that requests to use school sites for community gardens were denied. Director Williams-Taylor noted that the request was denied due to concerns around liability and risk. She added that school properties, although funded by the public, remain the domain and responsibility of the OCDSB. This matter could be considered at a later date, if a process agreement is arranged.

Several trustees expressed interest in the Chair drafting a letter to the Minister of Education to request an extension on the 30 June 2020 budget submission deadline. Chair Scott invited trustees to provide their content suggestions to her via email. Chair Scott noted that letters from the Chair are public and posted on the OCDSB website.

8.2 Report from OPSBA Representatives (if required)

Trustee Boothby provided the following highlights from the OPSBA meeting:

- The Ministry of Education has been working on curriculum and capital announcements. It is anticipated that an announcement regarding the new Fernbank elementary school is forthcoming;
- The Minister of Education recognized the challenges in equity of learning, internet access, and the issues with vulnerable students. and acknowledged that these students' best interest must be taken into consideration when the province makes decisions;
- There is a significant amount of professional development available for teachers to assist in adapting to online learning. The province has created a program entitled "Ontario Together" to help provide updates

and information to parents and students of all ages, including post-secondary;

- OPSBA is conducting a poll on the challenges families are experiencing during the school closure, and the concerns that families have about returning to school in September. This is expected to be completed in time to inform the Minister's September opening plan;
- Social distancing and transportation were identified as primary concerns. If the recommended distancing practices were respected on transportation, it would decrease school bus capacity from 72 students to 12;
- The Workplace Safety and Insurance Board premiums are increasing significantly due to concerns over the volunteer program. Employees that are volunteering are not in a designated role and they are deploying voluntarily; and
- OPSBA is currently working on their strategic priorities for 2020-2021 and trustees are invited to provide recommendations to Trustees Boothby and Penny.

9. Matters for Information

There were no matters for information.

10. New Business -- Information and Inquiries

There was no new business.

11. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 10:48 p.m.

Lynn Scott, Chair of the Board