

Delegation
18 August 2020
Committee of the Whole Budget
Andea Morissette

Dear Trustees,

Thank you all for your continued efforts and questioning of the back the school plan. I have been watching all of the board meetings. Although the very last one on Aug. 14th provided some more information, there are still more questions moving forward that I hope you will be able to ask at the next meeting on August 18th. I realize that time is precious to ask questions during these meetings, and am hoping that mine will be answered, as a parent who DOES NOT have the choice to keep their children at home and must send them to school this September. As a parent, this continues to be an extremely stressful time, with so many unknowns in front of us in the days, weeks, months ahead...My questions are as follows.

- 1) Will the board commit to sharing a status report of the ventilation of ALL OCDSB schools for all parents before school starts. Perhaps a spread sheet indicating:
 - a) the system
 - b) the age of the system
 - c) status of air quality ventilation
 - d) major repairs needed (planned timeline)
 - e) minor repairs needed (planned timeline)
 - f) what are the next steps to improve air at the facility in order to reopen in September (e.g., purchasing air purifiers, increased HVAC cleaning, increase change in filters etc.)
 - g) criteria to shut down a poorly ventilated room
 - h) criteria to shut down a poorly ventilated school

CFO Carson has indicated the ventilation systems have been looked at since April. Surely there must be some status report that can be provided to the public. The FAQ's on the OCDSB website DO NOT address my questions about the ventilation in schools.

We all know good ventilation is key to lower transmission rates, but great concerns remain about the ventilation in our schools:'

2) Will the board commit to having each school share with the parent community exactly the number of children in each class before the September start date. In the last meeting Aug. 14 and last Ministry announcement on Aug 13 a lot of information was shared regarding remote learning. I am sure parents who have that choice appreciate that information. For parents like myself who do not have a choice we need to know that school is as safe as possible. This very much includes reduction in class sizes. I was under the impression that all students would be attached to a class in their community school. For example, a class of 27 grade 5 students (the average at my child's school), if 10 stayed home for remote learning that would mean that there would only be 17 in class, allowing for improved physical distancing. With the meeting Aug 14 and the opening of "virtual schools, and not being attached to your school community", that could mean that the board could put all classes to the max. of their caps. This is terribly concerning that this will happen for students attending in school learning. As a parent, I need to know what the size of my child's class is BEFORE school starts, and be given appropriate updates as to the fluctuations of the class size. This would help me in planning what we do in our personal lives such as whether or not to continue to include grandparents in our bubble or not. Certainly a well ventilated school, with enhanced physical distancing measures due to lower class sizes will have an impact on transmission and the way families operate in the community. With a child in Kindergarten, grade 3 and grade 5, classes that are smaller allow for increased physical distancing hopefully beyond the 1m recommended and could lower transmission rates. The number of students in my child's class will impact behaviours outside of school and this information is needed. I believe Trustee Bell also asked this question on August 14th, but did not get an answer. Since the questionnaire about return to school is past, surely some information can now be shared.

3) DO NOT hesitate to make recommendations to delay the school year, at least until September 8th. The Director herself has said that they are finding that in theory policies and procedures may be good but do not reflect the day to day operations of a school. Only a handful of Principals have sat together to run through scenarios at one school, as mentioned Aug. 14th. Every school is different, wouldn't it be wiser to allow for an extra 2 days at least for the staff at school to put into practice the procedures, run through them themselves, and work out logistics before children

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arrive? In 3 days staff are supposed to learn a new math curriculum, all of the NEW health and safety procedures, new expectations for learning in school and remotely, setting up virtual classrooms regardless of in school or not. I have watched just how long your meetings take trying to get answers to questions, now have multiple staff members trying to get answers to those questions, 3 PD days are not enough time to set up properly. As brought up by Trustee Scott, the Education Minister, when pressed said the time could be used if there was a justifiable reason. Well I can't think of any better reason than preparing properly for the opening of schools in the OCDSB. In fact, I would say that taking that extra time of just 2 days may in fact show the community just how much more critical thinking and constant reflection is going into planning. One last point is that you are expecting Staff to take in all this information under a time of heightened stress in general. We know that children don't learn well in stressful situations, why are expecting thousands of adults too?

4) Here is some more information about back to school planning, that has information from Denmark, and also emerging evidence that we do not really know how the virus impacts children with regards to transmission in children, since most have been in some form of lock down since the Pandemic was declared. There is still emerging science and evidence and children may not be as "less at risk" as first

Thank you again for your time. I know that for all involved there are tremendous efforts being made, but more needs to be done to get this right for my children and family, your children and/or loved ones and family, for Educators and staff, and for our greater community.

I am hoping to get answers to these questions on August 18th.

Thank you and stay well.

Andea Morissette
Parent of 3 elementary school age children.