



COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE, BUDGET REPORT

Thursday, August 13, 2020

7:00 pm

Zoom Meeting

Trustees Present: Justine Bell, Christine Boothby, Rob Campbell, Chris Ellis, Lyra Evans, Mark Fisher, Wendy Hough, Jennifer Jennekens, Sandra Schwartz, Lynn Scott, Charles Chen (Student Trustee), Joy Liu (Student Trustee)

Staff Present: Camille Williams-Taylor (Director of Education), Brett Reynolds (Associate Director), Mike Carson (Chief Financial Officer), Janice McCoy (Superintendent of Human Resources), Dorothy Baker (Superintendent of Instruction), Peter Symmonds (Superintendent of Learning Support Services), Mary Jane Farrish (Superintendent of Instruction), Michele Giroux (Executive Officer, Corporate Services), Shawn Lehman (Superintendent of Instruction), Eric Hardie (Superintendent of Instruction), Prince Duah (Superintendent of Instruction), Shannon Smith (Superintendent of Instruction), Nadia Towajj (Superintendent of Program and Learning K-12), Carolyn Tanner (Human Rights and Equity Advisor), Kevin Gardner (Manager of Financial Services), Sandy Owens (Manager of Business & Learning Technologies), Karyn Carty Ostafichuk (Manager of Planning), Diane Pernari-Hergert (Manager of Communications & Information Services), Pamela LeMaistre (Manager of Human Resources), Sandra Lloyd (Manager of Risk and Supply Chain Management), Joan Oracheski (Manager of Research, Evaluation, and Analytics Division), Nicole Guthrie (Manager of Board Services), Christine Kessler (System Principal, Learning Support Services), Charles D'Aoust (Coordinator of Budget Services), Teri Adamthwaite (Coordinator of Financial Reporting), Michael Guilbault (Central AV Technical Specialist), Rebecca Grandis (Senior Board Coordinator), Amanda Pelkola (Board/Committee Coordinator).

Non-Voting Representatives Present: Jennifer Capitani, (OCEOC); Jennifer Coleman (OCSSAN); Stephanie Kirkey, (OSSTF-Teachers); Susan Gardner (OCETFO), Corine Lassaline (PECCS) Jean Trant (OSSTF-SSP), Kelly Granum (OSSTF-OT); David Wildman, (OCEOTA); Melodie Gondek, (OSSTF-ESP); Troy Cluff (PSSU); Malaka Hendela, (OCASC); Rob Kirwan (SEAC) and

Stacey Kay,(Non-affiliated Staff.)

1. Call to Order - Chair of Committee of the Whole, Budget

Chair Schwartz called the public session to order at 7:01 p.m. and acknowledged that the meeting is taking place on unceded Algonquin Territories and thanked the Algonquin Nations for hosting the meeting on their land.

2. Approval of Agenda

Moved by Trustee Bell,

THAT the agenda be approved.

Carried

3. Declarations of Conflict of Interest

Trustee Campbell advised that he had declared his conflict of interest at the 11 August 2020 meeting and wishes that to be known for all future budget meetings.

4. Delegations

4.1 Abdullah Al-Ogaidi, Statement Regarding the Staff Resource Officer (SRO) Program

Mr. Abdullah Al-Ogaidi expressed the opinion that the Staff Resource Officer (SRO) program is a valuable asset at West Carleton Secondary School. He encouraged trustees to hear statements from Ottawa Police Service (OPS) constables and children's psychologists about the benefits of having a police presence in school prior to making a decision on the program.

In response to a query from Trustee Scott, Mr. Al-Ogaidi stated there have been changes at West Carleton Secondary School and he has not had the opportunity to meet with the constables. He added that his friends have had positive interactions with SROs when seeking assistance in their personal life and have created friendships with them. Mr. Al-Ogaidi would support a review of the program, as funding could potentially be increased or stay the same, and it would allow for the interactions that officers have with students to be enriched.

At the request of Student Trustee Liu, Mr. Al-Ogaidi stated that the SRO currently has limited time in schools, and he would wish to see an increase in the time they could spend at schools. This would allow for them to speak casually with students and even to have meetings with classes to allow opportunities for further bonds to be formed. It is his experience, when troubled students speak to the constables, they change for the better. It should be easier for students to have access to the SROs.

Mr. Al-Ogaidi added that students who may have been in trouble in the past are often the ones who see the SRO in a negative way. However, when they speak with the SRO and learn what they do and how they can be of help, many of these students have become more at ease with the SRO.

Mr. Al-Ogaidi shared the belief that pausing the program would have negative effects, especially for incoming grade 9 students. His concern is that it could result in these students feeling uncomfortable around SROs in grade 10 due to the lack of exposure and opportunity to have early interaction with officers.

4.2 Annette Dillon, Parent, Questions on Secondary School

Ms. Dillon questioned the cost to open secondary schools for 115 minutes under the hybrid model as well as the cost to keep schools open full-time.

Director Williams-Taylor advised that the model for program delivery at secondary schools is not driven by cost but by safety measures required to keep the cohorts together without direct contact. She also noted that indirect contacts are difficult to track.

5. Matters for Action

5.1 Report 20-063, 2020-2021 Staff-Recommended Budget

At the time of adjournment of the meeting of 11 August 2020, the following motion and amendments were on the floor:

Moved by Trustee Lyra Evans,

- A. THAT the unconsolidated 2020-2021 operating budget of \$1,008.3 million as presented in Report 20-063, 2020-2021 Staff-Recommended Budget and detailed in the 2020-2021 Staff-Recommended Budget Binder be approved, subject to Ministry authorization to use the accumulated surplus in the amount required to balance the budget;
- B. THAT the 2020-2021 capital budget of \$97.9 million as presented in the 2020-2021 Staff-Recommended Budget Binder, be approved; and
- C. THAT the In-Year Deficit Elimination plan as presented in the 2020-2021 Staff-Recommended Budget Binder, be approved.

An amendment moved by Trustee Lyra Evans,

- A. THAT \$95,976 be removed from the School Programs and Support budget which pays for two dedicated School Resource Officers (SROs) at Gloucester High School and Ridgemont High School; and
- B. THAT \$95,976 be put towards hiring a conflict mediator, and a reconciliation officer; to be placed in the same schools to which the SROs were assigned.

A sub-amendment moved by Trustee Bell,

THAT the OCDSB pause the SRO program and conduct a review of the program and the impact (both positive and negative) that it has on student populations.

With the consent of the Committee, Trustee Bell withdrew her amendment as the Chair advised that it was out of order. Trustee Bell urged the Committee to support Trustee Lyra Evans' amendment to remove the SRO funding from Gloucester High School (HS) and Ridgemont HS and place it where it can be used to carry out the most impactful, anti-racism focus. She added that the Board has a responsibility to take immediate action and to build back trust with the marginalized community.

During discussion of the amendment, the following points were noted:

- Trustee Boothby advised that she has reviewed the recording of the meeting last year at which a similar amendment was proposed. A principal indicated that SROs were part of the school community and it would be a difficult loss for the schools. She noted that discussion at a meeting of the Indigenous Education Advisory Committee (IEAC) was divided on the value of the program. Trustee Boothby expressed the view that the Board has a duty to students to build relationships with the police as they are part of our community and the Board cannot isolate and must be part of the holistic environment that will help develop relationships with officers;
- Trustee Lyra Evans submitted she supports a review of the program but will not remove or pause the program before hearing the perspectives of the community. She suggested that the District's Human Rights and Equity Advisor should also review the program and carry out the consultation; and
- Ms. Granum supported a review of the SRO program and noted that building relationships with the community are important, but she is uncertain as to whether building relationships with the police is the District's mandate or that of the OPS.

A sub-amendment moved by Trustee Ellis,

THAT Part B of the amendment be revised to read "THAT the \$95,976 be apportioned to the two schools on a per pupil basis to be administered within the urban priority high school framework."

During discussion of the sub-amendment, the following points were noted:

- Trustee Ellis noted that one of the two assigned SROs at Gloucester HS and Ridgemont HS is funded by the OPS. He submitted that the budget funding allocation be redirected to the Urban Priorities Fund which is designed to assist schools with diversity and economic issues. Keeping the funding in the school would assist students at high risk;
- Trustee Campbell queried why funding was not specifically allocated to serve students at risk at Gloucester HS and Ridgemont HS if they need additional resources. In response to a query from Trustee Scott with respect to the impact on feeder schools if the funding was reallocated, Associate Director Reynolds advised that Urban Priorities funding is directed to designated schools and not allocated to feeder schools. Additional budget funds could be allocated to schools that are not tied to Urban Priorities funding. The principals of these schools could use the additional funding to acquire SROs or other services; and
- Trustee Ellis expressed the opinion that reallocating the SRO funding would provide additional resources to Gloucester HS and Ridgemont HS that would contribute to student success and well-being.

A sub-amendment moved by Trustee Ellis,

THAT Part B of the amendment be revised to read "THAT the \$95,976 be apportioned to the two schools on a per pupil basis to be administered within the urban priority high school framework."

Carried

During discussion of the amendment, the following points were noted:

- Trustee Campbell noted the difference of opinion at IEAC and suggested that students and the Advisory Committee on Equity (ACE) be consulted before making changes to the SRO program;
- Trustee Hough supported the provision of assistance to students at risk; however, she also supports a review of the SRO program and consultation with the community;

- In response to a query from Trustee Scott with respect to discontinuing the SRO program for one year, Associate Director Reynolds advised that if the discontinuation were to apply to one or two of the SROs, those officers would return to their regular patrol duties. The relationship with the affected schools would be lost and the school would need to deal with the disruption in service;
- In response to a query from Trustee Boothby, Associate Director Reynolds advised that the SRO program was restructured by the OPS a few years ago in response to human resource shortages, and some proactive activities were scaled back. More recently, OPS has undertaken additional hiring and some proactive actions have been restored;
- Trustee Boothby expressed the view that the Board would not be in a position to conduct a robust review this year, and if it is delayed, the program may disappear
- Trustee Jennekens noted the uncertainty due to the pandemic and suggested that the mandate of the SRO program be reviewed;
- Trustee Bell expressed the view that the Board needs to re-prioritize the District's racialized community and those that are marginalized. After the review, the Board will have an opportunity to build a new relationship with the police. Trustee Bell requested that a discussion on this topic take place at a future meeting of the Committee of the Whole;
- Trustee Ellis advised that the amendment does not eliminate the SRO program, but rather the funding of a police officer for an enhanced SRO presence at a designated school. He added that it is unknown whether the OPS will continue to fund the second SRO position. The largest impact will be for those two secondary schools and their feeder schools. Trustee Ellis submitted that placing funds in the principals' control will allow them to allocate the funding appropriately, based on the issues;
- Associate Director Reynolds confirmed that principals are free to consult with the community and allocate the funds as long as it falls within the priorities of the District; and
- Student Trustee Liu noted that there has not been any consultation with the students of Gloucester HS and Ridgemont HS, and the Board cannot presume to know the will of the students. For this reason, both she and Student Trustee Chen are not in favour of the amendment.

In conclusion, Trustee Lyra Evans expressed the view that the police do not contribute to feelings of safety within the community.

An amendment moved by Trustee Lyra Evans,

- A. *THAT \$ 95,976 be removed from the School Programs and Support budget which pays for two dedicated School Resource Officers (SROs) at Gloucester High School and Ridgemont High School; and*
- B. *THAT the \$95,976 be apportioned to the two schools on a per pupil basis to be administered within the urban priority high school framework.*

Carried

An amendment moved by Trustee Lyra Evans,

- A. THAT the budget for instructional salaries be increased by \$100,000,000, to provide the hiring of 1025 additional elementary teachers, reducing the class sizes to a maximum of 15;
- B. THAT the budget for school operations be increased by \$10,000,000, to provide for additional custodial and maintenance positions at the elementary levels;
- C. THAT accommodation costs be increased by \$15,000,000 to provide for the rental and acquisition of 1000 elementary classrooms equivalent space;
- D. THAT the budget for school operations be increased by \$5,000,000 for additional custodial and maintenance positions at the secondary level; and
- E. THAT the accommodation costs be increased by \$30,000,000 to provide for the rental and acquisition of 1600 (CFO to confirm) secondary classroom equivalents.

In introducing her amendment, Trustee Lyra Evans submitted that trustees have a fiduciary duty to the well-being of students and education. She noted that the District could have 30 grade 7-8 students less than a meter apart. The union partners advised that custodial staff cannot meet the standards for cleaning. Students with Individual Education Plans (IEPs) will struggle. The Board must advocate to support students by proposing an unbalanced budget to meet their health and safety concerns.

Moved by Trustee Campbell,

THAT the following amendment be deferred to the Committee of the Whole Budget meeting of 18 August 2020:

“An amendment moved by Trustee Lyra Evans,

- A. THAT the budget for instructional salaries be increased by \$100,000,000, to provide the hiring of 1025 additional elementary teachers, reducing the class sizes to a maximum of 15;**
- B. THAT the budget for school operations be increased by \$10,000,000, to provide for additional custodial and maintenance positions at the elementary levels;**
- C. THAT accommodation costs be increased by \$15,000,000 to provide for the rental and acquisition of 1000 elementary classrooms equivalent space;**
- D. THAT the budget for school operations be increased by \$5,000,000 for additional custodial and maintenance positions at the secondary level; and**
- E. THAT the accommodation costs be increased by \$30,000,000 to provide for the rental and acquisition of 1600 secondary classroom equivalents. “**

Carried

During discussion of the main motion, the following points were noted:

- In response to queries from Ms. Kirkey with respect to online and in-class instruction in secondary schools, staff advised that 8,800 teachers participated in professional development (PD) classes in the spring. Classes are also offered during the summer institute, and ongoing PD days will provide staff development opportunities with instructional coaches from the Business & Learning Technologies (B & LT) and Program and Learning K-12 departments;
- Mr. Kirwan noted that the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) had concerns, most of which have been addressed and he added that SEAC is requesting additional educational assistants (EAs);
- Staff advised that every secondary school will have WIFI switches replaced, and 16 additional switches will be installed to increase the ability for students and staff to connect. An additional 5,000 ethernet adapters will be hard wired in early September. B & LT staff will be reallocated to schools across the District, and if required, additional supports will be provided;
- Ms. Hendela noted that funds have not been allocated for parent engagement, and Parent Reaching Out (PRO) grants were reduced by the province, leaving a net loss of \$80,000 in funding for the

annual parent conference. The Parent Involvement Committee (PIC) and school councils are now at risk without funding to conduct elections or support the Board. She requested that staff identify areas in the budget that will allow PIC to undertake its legislated mandate. Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Carson advised that staff provide support; however, they have not yet created a specific plan;

- With respect to the Minister's latest announcement on funding for remote learning, Trustee Scott queried whether staff has had an opportunity to assess the impact on staffing. CFO Carson advised that staff is waiting to hear further details from the Ministry of Education about any flexibility the Board would have in the use of its reserves;
- The Board is required to submit an approved, balanced budget by 31 August 2020;
- In response to Trustee Hough's suggestion about class sizes, CFO Carson advised that staff would need to recalculate the cost of increasing staffing to accommodate a ratio of 20:1. Based on a staffing ratio of 15-1, the District would require 1,000 extra classrooms, leaving a shortage of more than 750 classrooms across the system and schools could be unable to open before the Christmas break;
- In response to Trustee Bell's query with respect to smaller class sizes for JK-grade 4, CFO Carson advised that staffing is in alignment with collective agreements. If funds were available, staff would look for space in schools that are under-utilized, closed but not yet sold, or empty spaces in other school boards as well as spaces throughout the city;
- The model for the delivery of in-class learning is based on safety. If additional space and staff were available, it may be possible to increase the time in school and still maintain minimal transitions;
- Trustee Bell requested additional costing information based on a limit of 50% of time spent in secondary in-school learning;
- In response to a query, Executive Officer Giroux advised that additional funds have been allocated to the Communications department to provide support;
- Trustee Fisher expressed the hope that the District's facilities renewal funding could be used to upgrade heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems;

- Trustee Fisher submitted that the hourly rate for occasional teachers (OT) needs to increase to be aligned with school boards across the province;
- Superintendent McCoy advised that salaries are part of central table discussions and local school boards have limited discretion to increase the rates of pay due to the current structure of collective bargaining. She added that Human Resources staff and principals have successfully recruited OTs recently;
- CFO Carson advised that additional funding was provided to allow school boards to manage staffing and supervision at the beginning and end of school days;
- Superintendent McCoy noted that additional funding for custodial staff was allocated through central bargaining and central agreements that were contemplated prior to COVID-19. These additional positions are effective for the duration of the collective agreement. Approximately 16.0 full-time equivalent (FTE) PSSU custodians have been added;
- With respect to new community partnerships being proposed, Trustee Campbell questioned whether there is any discretionary increase in pursuit of equity goals. CFO Carson advised that over the past four months, staff who controlled budgets were advised and trained on matters of equity in staff development, hiring, and training. Senior staff and principals have recognized that those internal allocations are needed to support a move towards equity;
- Mr. Cluff noted that HVAC systems, including air distribution patterns, personalized ventilation, filtration, in older buildings do not have a cleaning protocol as HVAC technicians and engineers are busy working on emergencies. CFO Carson noted that air quality has been a discussion topic for the past 10 years. Schools may need to open windows without screens. Each classroom has individual ventilation systems and teachers are reminded not to adjust those ventilation systems during the day. If a classroom does not meet standards for fresh air, it may need to be taken out of service. The funding from the province may help schools that do not pass the test for the use of capital funding;
- The introduction of the Supports for Students Fund (SSF) for most school boards was to replace the Local Priorities Fund (LPF) that expired in August 2019. For 2019-2020, the Board funded positions previously supported using LPF. Some boards used the funds to replace or retain positions that would have been lost as a result of a deficit;

- Mr. Kirwan advised that some SEAC associations are concerned that if students opt for remote learning their supports may not be available to them when they return to regular classrooms. Superintendent Symmonds advised that students will not lose their spot in specialized program classes when they return to school. School teams are encouraged to review updated information that is available and, if necessary, discuss requirements with parents to ensure appropriate levels of support are in place;
- Mr. Kirwan suggested that the Board consult with the statutory PIC, SEAC and other advisory committees more frequently;
- Superintendent Lehman advised that 27,000 Chromebooks are in service, including 11,000 that were loaned to students in the spring. It is anticipated that these Chromebooks will need to be serviced upon their return and then reallocated to schools. The Board approved the purchase of 5,000 additional Chromebooks in June 2020, based on the budget for 2020-2021. Staff anticipate having approximately 20,000 devices in schools;
- Ms. Hendela stated that some high needs schools are asking the parent community for additional funding to support programs. She expressed the hope that if there are reallocation opportunities, school councils and PIC would be advised on how equity funding can support these requests;
- Trustee Hough provided notice that she will propose an amendment at the next Committee of the Whole (COW) Budget meeting with respect to funding for PIC;
- The Ministry notes that the reference to 100 direct or indirect contacts, refers to in-class student-to-student contact and not contact with staff or those contacts outside of the school day;
- Regarding the list of equity projects, Director Williams-Taylor advised that the data collection work and community meetings on the student identification project has continued over the summer. Staff has also secured additional funding for the work and an extension of the deadline for the project;
- Trustee Campbell queried whether the approximately \$4.0 million revenue shortfall related to the Ottawa-Carleton Education Network (OCENET) and Community Use of Schools was included in the staff-recommended budget that was presented. CFO Carson advised that there has been no change to the budget since July;
- Referring to ongoing supply issues and back orders, CFO Carson advised that since the beginning of August, school boards were directed to obtain their personal protective equipment (PPE) and

some cleaning supplies from the Ministry, and it is anticipated that they will be shipped to schools in the near future;

- CFO Carson agreed to seek clarification on cleaning schedules for schools within the community use of schools;
- CFO Carson confirmed that no changes have been made to school budget allocations for schools that are deemed as highest need based on the RAISE index. He added that some of the RAISE funding may be repurposed by the school;
- CFO Carson stated that the cost of OTs is paid from a central fund. If the actual cost is higher than anticipated, staff will identify other sources of funding; and
- CFO Carson suggested that the vote to approve the budget be delayed until staff has had an opportunity to analyse the most recent information from the Ministry.

5.1. Memo 20-107, 2020-2021 Staff-Recommended Budget Questions and Answers (Release 2)

Provided for Information.

6. New Business - Information and Inquiries

There was no new business.

7. Adjournment

The COW Budget meeting will continue on 18 August 2020.

The meeting adjourned at 10:20 p.m.

Sandra Schwartz, Chair