



SPECIAL BOARD PUBLIC MINUTES

**Tuesday, July 21,
2020
9:00 pm
Zoom Meeting**

Trustees Present: Justine Bell, Donna Blackburn, Christine Boothby, Rob Campbell, Chris Ellis, Lyra Evans, Mark Fisher, Wendy Hough, Jennifer Jennekens, Keith Penny, Sandra Schwartz, Lynn Scott

Staff Present: Camille Williams-Taylor (Director of Education), Brett Reynolds (Associate Director), Mike Carson (Chief Financial Officer), Janice McCoy (Superintendent of Human Resources), Michele Giroux (Executive Officer, Corporate Services), Dorothy Baker (Superintendent of Instruction), Prince Duah (Superintendent of Instruction), Mary Jane Farrish (Superintendent of Instruction), Eric Hardie (Superintendent of Instruction), 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), Stacey Kay (Manager of Learning Support Services), Sandra Lloyd (Manager of Risk and Supply Chain Management), Karyn Carty Ostafichuk, (Manager of Planning), Sandy Owens (Manager, Business & Learning Technologies), Sandra Lloyd (Manager of Diane Pernari-Hergert (Manager of Communications & Information Services), Christine Kessler (System Principal, Learning Support Services), Rebecca Grandis (Senior Board Coordinator), Amanda Pelkola (Board/Committee Coordinator), Nicole Guthrie (Manager of Board Services)

1. Call to Order -- Chair of the Board

Chair Scott called the public meeting to order at 9:11 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 Schwartz, seconded by Trustee Blackburn,
THAT the agenda be approved.**

Carried

3. Report From Special Board (In Camera)

Vice-Chair Penny reported, the Board met in camera this evening, and reports and recommends as follows:

Moved by Trustee Campbell, seconded by Trustee Penny,

THAT staff proceed as directed at Board, in camera with respect to a human resources matter.

Carried

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

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

AGAINST: Nil (0)

ABSTENTION: Nil (0)

Moved by Trustee Blackburn, seconded by Trustee Penny,

THAT staff proceed as directed at Board, in camera with respect to a labour relations matter.

Carried

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

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

AGAINST: Nil (0)

ABSTENTION: Nil (0)

4. Matters for Action

4.1 Report 20-065, Return to School Planning Update (B. Reynolds, M. Giroux, N Towajj)

The Board had before it Report 20-065, Return to School Planning Update, providing trustees an opportunity to review and approve planning

documentation for the return to school in September 2020 prepared in accordance with Ministry directives and Board guiding principles.

Director Williams-Taylor noted that the District strives to provide timely, accurate, transparent and reliable information. She noted that staff are utilizing a coordinated approach and that decisions are influenced by the Ministries of Education and Labour, the Council of Ontario Directors of Education (CODE), the Ottawa Student Transportation Authority (OSTA), the Ottawa Catholic School Board (OCSB), coordination within the collective agreements and information provided by Ottawa Public Health (OPH).

Director Williams-Taylor advised that a plan must be developed by 4 August 2020 in order to have students return to school in September 2020.

The following points were highlighted during the staff presentation:

- The report outlines the three modes of learning directed by the Ministry of Education: full school with changes to the typical school day, a hybrid or adaptive model which would include smaller cohorts to limit close contact, and fully remote learning for all students and staff;
- Three professional activity (PA) days are scheduled for early September 2020 to conduct staff training;
- The District expects the Ministry will provide additional direction on outbreak protocols and personal protective equipment (PPE);
- The District has allocated additional resources for virtual platforms and to acquire additional hotspots and Chromebooks;
- The District is currently developing a hybrid plan for the extended day program (EDP);
- Kindergarten pre-registration will commence on 20 July 2020; and
- The District will meet with the Ministry of Education on 23 July 2020 to discuss the developed modes of return. The Ministry will decide on which mode of return will be used on 4 August 2020.

Moved by Trustee Campbell,

THAT the Board approve the high-level plans for the delivery of public education during the 2020-2021 school year as outlined in OCDSB Planning for September 2020, attached as Appendix B to Report 20-065, developed in accordance with guidance from the Ministry of Education and the guiding principles established by the Board on July 9, 2020.

During question period, the following points were made:

- Trustee Campbell queried whether or not the principles created by the Board on 9 June 2020, were reflected accurately in the presentation. Director Williams-Taylor highlighted that there were six amended motions and the essence of the motions were captured;
- Director Williams-Taylor provided an overview of the roles of the parties involved in the decision making process to return to school. She noted that Central Public Health is run by Dr. David Williams and he provides advice and perspective to the province. While OPH collaborated with the District, their direction is provided by the Ministry which overrides decisions that are made locally. Where the District has local purview, OPH provides guidance but does not provide approval or direction but ensures decisions are responsible. OPH is working with central public health to create the safety protocols for outbreaks. Most decisions are made at the provincial level but OPH has met with the Ministries of Health and Education to advocate for clarity on the roles and responsibilities;
- Director Williams-Taylor advised that the feedback from the 9 July 2020 Board meeting has helped inform the return to school plan. Both trustees and members of the community clearly stated that a full return to school was a priority. She noted that safety remains a key factor in decision making and a full-time return to school would include additional parameters to enhance safety. The language “as safely as possible” implies that the District cannot provide a guarantee that no one will be infected by the virus. The parameters, restrictions and changes to protocol, will assist in a sustainable return to school;
- Staff will provide an update to trustees on the outcome of the meeting with the Ministry of Education;
- Prior to the end of the 2019-2020 school year, the District encouraged staff with underlying medical conditions to alert employee wellness if they were unable to return to their position to ensure sufficient time for planning. She added that a hiring pool of occasional teachers has been created to ensure sufficient staffing for September;
- A guidance document to assist families in finalizing their plans is currently in production. The guidance document will not be released until it is confirmed by the Ministry of Education and Public Health;
- Families that elect to keep their child(ren) at home would be captured in cohort C and will be served by a virtual structure. A request to families encouraging them to indicate their preference for learning will be sent out in the coming weeks.
- Additional clarity on the expectations, manner of delivery and assessments for synchronous learning will be provided;

- The capacity for virtual learning will be enhanced to include regular assessment and evaluation and will reflect a true learning environment for students. Cohort C will receive schedules in advance to provide structure and timing. The District will ensure there is access to interactive classes which would mirror that of their cohorts who are in school. Collaborative tasks will assist in peer to peer interaction among students. Educators who cannot return to school in person, will serve as additional support to cohort C;
- A central directive will be provided regarding the wearing of masks;
- Schools will be categorized differently from regular social gatherings and will not need to adhere to the maximum of 50 people. Schools will be receiving provincial direction, which will outline the requirements around physical distancing;
- Training materials on safety protocols are being developed by OPH. The intention is to provide these materials to staff on the designated training days in September 2020;
- Daily screening protocols are being developed and it is anticipated that students and staff should not attend school if they feel unwell. Schools will not be administering testing/screening, that will be the responsibility of OPH and hospitals;
- Trustee Fisher expressed his appreciation for the focus placed on synchronous and asynchronous learning. He expressed his concern about the additional pressure being placed on staff and schools with the expectation of personal health and safety measures. Trustee Fisher encouraged staff to consider protocols for teachers with younger children in the event of another quarantine and suggested exploring opportunities such as providing daycare, to allow teachers to continue to work;;
- Trustees Fisher and Boothby expressed their concern at having the Board approve high level plans given the lack of clarity and the frequency of change;
- On the record Trustee Blackburn expressed her concern for staff well-being given the many late Board and Committee meetings;
- Human resources staff have been recruiting occasional teachers to assist in meeting the anticipated needs. The recruitment effort is ongoing;
- Director Williams Taylor advised that the expectation will be that all adults and students will wear masks at school sites. There will be no policy or procedure but the District will review the code of conduct in terms of school behaviour and how compliance will be enforced. The

District will work with OPH to develop protocols for hand washing and sanitizing;

- Director Williams-Taylor advised that there will be a documented plan outlining the guidelines and this will be available to ensure expectations are known and reinforced. The guidelines will be created at collaborative tables with input from teachers, unions, and school leaders as well as other school boards.

**** The 10:30 pm vote received the required two-thirds majority to continue ****

- The District anticipates that distancing between students may need to be limited to approximately 1.5 metres. Unidirectional hallways and staggered recesses will also be employed to minimize contact in the buildings;
- In response to a query regarding transportation and the financial implications, Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Carson advised that OSTA has not allocated additional funds as it is unclear if they will be able to access additional drivers and vehicles. The number of students registered for transportation will determine whether additional small vehicle transportation is required. OSTA will communicate with parents to determine how many students will require transportation;
- Trustee Ellis requested additional opportunities for the Board to hear from the federations and advisory committees. Director Williams-Taylor noted that the current timeline precludes additional meetings of the Committee of the Whole and reminded trustees of her commitment to provide ongoing updates as a standing item on meeting agendas during the 2020-2021 school year;
- Trustee Ellis urged staff to consider holding a meeting prior to 4 August 2020 to ensure parents understand the difference between a full return and a hybrid model. Trustee Ellis advised that he would not be supporting the motion;
- Director Williams Taylor noted that a detailed plan outlining the return to school and hybrid models will not be provided prior to 4 August 2020;
- Superintendent Symmonds advised that a transition program for students with high level special education needs and mental health needs, will be provided in late August using funds provided by the Ministry. The number of students that will be participating will be limited and this is in addition to activities being conducted by the school board. The schools were contacted to determine which students qualified to participate and parents will be contacted in early August to gauge interest;

- Superintendent Towajj advised that the circular modifications that were noted in the report referred to areas such as instrumental music class and other hands-on programs such as automotive studies, due to the inability to sanitize shared items easily. The District is investigating adaptations to provide all pathways to students;
- CFO Carson stated that OSTA is working on creating transportation plans for hybrid and full return models but noted the challenge with the hybrid model is ensuring that the cohorting of families is intact;

**** The 11:00 pm vote obtained the unanimous consent required to continue the meeting ****

- Superintendent Towajj advised that the proposed hybrid model will span over a two week rotation with a ratio of 2:3 and 3:2 (i.e., two days in class and three days online and the following week three days in class and two days online or vice versa). However, in some cases, attendance will consist of five days of full-time in person learning. This will apply to vulnerable students including English language learners (ELL) and some specialized classes. Secondary students with large academic gaps, as well as those without the proper number of credits, may also be offered full-time in person learning;
- Outdoor spaces will be maximized for learning opportunities;
- Director Williams-Taylor noted that the District will continue its partnership with the Ottawa Network for Education (ONFE) to reduce food insecurity. The partnership has successfully generated innovative solutions to distribute food. On 6 August 2020, staff will meet with ONFE to explore new approaches for the breakfast program;
- In response to a query regarding why the District has not approached the Ministry with a fully costed plan outlining all financial obligations, Director Williams-Taylor responded by highlighting that a blueprint cannot be created without clarity on the final direction. The District is aware of the general safety standard required but it is evident to the Ministry and other boards, that a line by line costing cannot be created given the numerous variables;
- Trustee Lyra Evans expressed the opinion that the Board should reject the proposal owing to a lack of information and stated she was not in favour of the motion;
- Chief Financial Officer Carson advised that if an outbreak occurs in a school the legal liability may be placed on the District and the province;

Trustee Schwartz assumed the role of chair.

- Trustee Scott highlighted the fact that in many cases there are no answers. She encouraged fellow trustees to remain focused on the end goal of providing students with a safe learning environment.

Trustee Scott resumed the role of chair.

In wrap up Trustee Campbell highlighted that student registration will be determined by the public's trust in the District.

Moved by Trustee Campbell, seconded by Trustee Blackburn,

THAT the Board approve the high-level plans for the delivery of public education during the 2020-2021 school year as outlined in OCDSB Planning for September 2020, attached as Appendix B to Report 20-065, developed in accordance with guidance from the Ministry of Education and the guiding principles established by the Board on July 9, 2020. (Attached as Appendix A)

Carried

A recorded vote was held by those present and the motion was carried on the following division:

FOR: Trustee Boothby, Blackburn, Hough, Campbell, Jennekens, Bell, Scott, (7)

AGAINST: Trustee Lyra Evans, Ellis (2)

ABSTENTION: Trustee Fisher, Schwartz (2)

5. Matters for Information

5.1 Letter from Mayor Watson, Thanking Educators

A letter from City of Ottawa Mayor, Jim Watson thanking educators was included for information.

6. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11:37 pm.

Lynn Scott, Chair of the Board