



SPECIAL BOARD PUBLIC MINUTES

**Friday, August 14,
2020
7:00 pm
Zoom Meeting**

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

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), (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), Carolyn Tanner (Human Rights and Equity Advisor), Richard Sinclair (Manager of Legal Services and Labour Relations), Petra Duschner (Manager of Mental Health and Critical Services), Stacey Kay (Manager of Learning Support Services), Pamela LeMaistre (Manager of Human Resources), Sandra Lloyd (Manager of Risk and Supply Chain Management), Karyn Carty Ostafichuk, (Manager of Planning), Joan Oracheski (Manager of Research, Evaluation & Analytics Division), Sandy Owens (Manager of Business & Learning Technologies), Diane Pernari-Hergert (Manager of Communications & Information Services), Rebecca Grandis (Senior Board Coordinator), Nicole Guthrie (Manager of Board Services)

1. Call to Order -- Chair of the Board

Chair Scott called the public meeting to order at 7:01 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 Lyra Evans, seconded by Trustee Ellis

THAT the agenda be approved.

Carried

3. Matters for Discussion

3.1 OCDSB Return to School Plan

Chair Scott noted that this Special Board meeting was called at the request of six trustees, in accordance with a provision in the bylaws.

Director Williams-Taylor acknowledged there are many moving parts and new information continues to be received. She noted that District staff meet regularly with the Ottawa Public Health (OPH) and the coterminous boards in the City to ensure an alignment in planning for the reopening of schools.

Associate Director Reynolds advised that the OCDSB return to school plan will be provided in the form of a presentation by members of senior staff. During the presentation the following points were noted:

- Staff anticipate a progressive entry to the start of school beginning on 3 September 2020. Students will be offered in person elementary, secondary, adapted and remote learning for elementary and secondary;
- Key dates: 30 July 2020, the Ministry released the guide to reopening schools; 10 August the OCDSB released their Return to School Plan; 13 August the Ministry released the requirements for online learning (PPM 164) and 16 August, the confirmation of attendance form is expected to be returned by parents;
- On 13 August 2020, the Ministry announced that school boards can access reserves to address class size, HVAC issues and to secure leased space. Allocation-based funding for staffing was also announced;
- 14 August 2020, the Ministry advises the guide is a baseline and districts can make adaptations that support distancing and health and safety measures provided there are in person classes for elementary five days a week, full instructional hours for all students, optional remote learning for all students, cohorting of students and limiting contacts and adapted secondary delivery for designated boards;
- Remote learning-synchronous learning (teacher actively engaged with students through online learning) and instruction times are mandated;

- Implications of the remote learning regulation will require: dedicated teachers and principals and the creation of virtual schools; remote students will not be connected to their community school; there is reduced fluidity between models and students can only transition between models at the change of semester; and schools will be required to reorganized;
- Funding for additional staffing will be automatically allocated to boards. The OCDSB share of the Provincial amount of \$30.0 million is \$1.3 million;
- Funding to Support Ventilation - staff are awaiting the details of the allocation of funding but between \$1.0 and \$2.0 million is expected. This is supplementary funding to the \$10.0 million annual allocation for HVAC renewal and upgrades;
- Leased space - no additional funding has been provided for lease space. Schools are purpose built and most leased spaces would have to be retrofitted to receive students; and
- Some elements and proposals in the memo will take effect only if certain regulations are made by the Minister of Education or Lieutenant Governor under *the Education Act*, therefore the content of the Minister's memo of 14 August should only be considered, subject to such regulation, if and when made.

Director Williams-Taylor noted that the Minister's memo of 14 August 2020 encapsulates, in writing, that the content of the memo is subject to the regulation being made , The plan being developed by the OCDSB was done with a hope that the regulation will be made and come to support the plan.

The Director outlined the competing requirements including the Ministry of Education Guidelines, Ottawa Public Health, the Ottawa Student Transit Authority and the Union partners, all must be considered in decision making. As staff looks to prioritize the values that inform the plan, the first is safety, then pedagogical soundness, and then operational pieces.

Director Williams-Taylor noted that there is not enough time in the next two weeks to conduct broad consultation or hold public meetings prior to the reopening of school. Staff must move quickly to implement a plan. The District has been given permission in writing for a progressive start. The deadline for the confirmation of registration cannot cannot be delayed as there are many plans to put in place and classes to organize.

Moved by Trustee Fisher, seconded by Trustee Lyra Evans

That Board move to adopt rules of Committee

Carried.

Trustees raised a number of questions for staff and responses are noted below:

Ottawa Public Health (OPH) and Safety Issues

- OPH, in working with staff with has been cooperative and supportive will full understanding of the complexities of a school board;
- There are safety standards to consider in different areas, student safety and occupational health and safety for employees;
- All school-based staff will be provided with medical grade masks and face shields, gowns and gloves will also be provided where appropriate;
- Staff are in daily contact with OPH staff to ensure alignment with their priorities;
- The role of OPH is to provide feedback based on data and medical knowledge; and
- Staff are awaiting direction from the Ministry regarding managing an outbreak and procedures for closing schools. In the event that an outbreak occurs, OPH would be responsible for an investigation and reaching out to contacts;

The Ottawa Student Transportation Authority (OSTA) and Transportation

- Transportation is a challenge, the OCDSB must align with the Ottawa Catholic School Board (OCSB);
- Transportation for students may not be available on 3 September 2020 when students return to schools;
- OSTA is looking at revised full day models that would link elementary and secondary routes, savings could be recognized;
- OSTA is working with OCTranspo to look at special midday routes to transport students;
- OC Transpo has strict safety measures in place, passengers must wear masks and cleaning is enhanced, physical distancing on public transit must be observed;
- OSTA will be providing an update on transportation once they have confirmed their plans; and
- Additional safety measures have been put in place to address increased traffic around the schools in the absence of school buses in September as parents will be driving their children to school;

HVAC Systems and Air Quality in Schools

- Staff commenced looking at ventilation systems in buildings in the spring to see where modifications are required;
- Systems will be monitored on an ongoing basis;
- There may be a requirement to install windows that open to bring in fresh air;
- A combination of fresh air and air exchangers will be important;
- HVAC standards are developed through the American Society of Heating, Refrigeration and and Air Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE);
- Not all building can be moved to the most up-to-date standards; and
- Where principals have had concerns about ventilation, staff have looked to see how this might be impacted by COVID 19.

Communications Strategies

- Communication to staff teams has occurred on a regular basis, managers and principals are the leaders that share information with their staff;
- It is important that staff receive information from someone they trust;
- Work has begun on communication of what the new classroom will look like, a video is being prepared (in several languages) for distribution;
- There is communication with three main audiences, students, families and staff;
- Communication has been based on what decisions must be made next;
- OPH will be providing a presentation;
- The Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario (CHEO) will be producing information for parents;
- Frequently asked questions (FAQs) for parents and staff are updated and available on the District website;
- An introduction to kindergarten video is planned;
- Tailored communication is planned for families of special education students; and
- Communication from the District and from principals is intended to build a school level connection.

Human Resources and Labour Relations:

- There are challenges associated with collective agreements related to preparation time, requirements for the lunch period, as well as assigned and unassigned time. Staff have been in conversation with the federations to stress the need for flexibility around remote learning;
- Many requests for leaves and accommodations have been received and Human Resources staff are working through the list;
- Human Resources staff have been recruiting casual staff and monitoring the casual staff pool to mitigate potential staff shortages;
- Resources such as deploying central staff to schools has been contemplated;
- Staff are currently in discussion with the federations regarding access to work for occasional teachers (OT);
- The Daily Occasional Teacher (DOT) program, currently deployed at the elementary level is being contemplated for secondary to limit the number of schools an OT would visit;
- OTs will have a full day of health and safety training, will rely on the self assessment tool and will be provided with appropriate PPE;
- Casual custodians are generally used for evening cleaning and are not in contact with students. Appropriate PPE will also be provided to all cleaning staff; and
- Professional development will continue for staff with a focus on health and safety, anti-racism and the new math curriculum.

Virtual Learning:

- Policy/Program Memorandum (PPM) 164 was shared with the community, it contains information on the guidance around the nature of the engagement and timing of virtual learning. The document contains details on content and delivery to help families make a decision on which model to chose;
- Staff have contemplated building virtual classrooms considering friend and family groups and geographic areas;
- Should there be a return to remote learning, new measures have been put in place to ensure an enhanced experience. These include: teachers trained in synchronous learning, school work posted online for students; virtual classrooms, and a requirement for google classrooms or a virtual learning environment (VLE) that is updated weekly;

- All learning models are designed to return to remote learning if required;
- There would be a schedule for synchronous and asynchronous learning based on the required number of instructional minutes for each grade;
- Instructional coaches are available to support teachers and parents;
- If a child is away for three or more days, synchronous learning will be provided;
- Several schools have received wireless upgrades to manage the demand for broadband;
- Ethernet adapters have been purchased to assist educators with connectivity; and
- Students in virtual learning continue to be funded in the same way as students in the classroom.

Space Concerns and the Use of Community Facilities

- Not all spaces (community spaces etc.) are well suited to students;
- Retrofitting a building to receive students is challenging;
- Transporting students to community buildings would be a challenge;
- Plans to maximize learning spaces within the district have been evaluated;
- Barriers have been installed on classroom tables to create distancing;
- Desk shields will be provided to students in open concept schools and for the youngest learners where masks are not part of the guidance document;
- All school spaces will be evaluated and repurposed for alternate use (i.e., gymnasiums used for eating areas) and
- Outdoor space will be utilized for both instruction and recess.

Secondary School

- When contemplating the secondary school day, staff reviewed a 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. model which is a typical workday for staff;
- Students with a spare(s) are considered full time;
- The Youth Services Bureau and the alternate sites will be running but operating on a different schedule;

- Secondary school will have a staggered entry to allow grade 9 students to get acclimatized to the the schools prior to the arrival of the senior grades The staggered entry will also allow teachers the time to become accustomed to new procedures;
- An optional online support period is scheduled after lunch and affords students with 75 minutes to travel home from the morning session;
- Octomestering is recommended for the International Baccalaureate (IB) sites. Although not ideal, it provides students with greater opportunity to be with teachers for the requisite amount of time;
- Ottawa Technical High School (OTSS) has a maximum class size of 17 students;
- Safety protocols for the performing arts programs have yet to be developed;
- Half days at secondary were designed with safety in mind to limit contacts; and
- Staff are reviewing a full time model at secondary but synchronous learning as well as the collective agreements need to be considered;
- Hands on learning programs (e.g., labs and Specialist High Skill Major (SHSMs) will need to be modified as equipment must be cleaned prior to each use;
- Advanced placement (AP) IB and gifted classes. It is anticipated that virtual learning will not be an option for advanced placement (AP) IB and gifted classes; and
- Cohorts at secondary were developed by grouping students alphabetically.

Special Education

- Students with special needs will be a priority and all Individual Education Plans (IEPs) will remain in place; and
- If the requirement in the IEP cannot be met, staff will look at alternatives.

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

Chair Scott noted that there are still many unknowns at the Ministry level and that should the trustees indicate a strong preference, she would write a letter to the Minister expressing concern and seeking clarification. She added that should any trustees be contemplating additional motions, they

should provide notice and a meeting maybe arranged to address the motion(s).

Trustee Bell inquired if the Board could write a letter to Dr. Vera Etches, Medical Officer of Health, asking her about the efficacy of masks and face coverings for younger children. Trustee Bell noted that Toronto Public Health has strongly recommended masks for students in kindergarten to grade 3. Board members, by a show of hands, expressed their approval for the Chair to write a letter to Dr. Etches.

Trustee Campbell requested that Dr. Etches be invited to an upcoming meeting.

4. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11:10 p.m

Lynn Scott, Chair of the Board