



SPECIAL BOARD PUBLIC MINUTES

Tuesday, August 25,
2020
7:00 pm
Zoom Meeting

Trustees Present: Justine Bell, Donna Blackburn, Rob Campbell, Chris Ellis, Lyra Evans, Mark Fisher, Wendy Hough, Jennifer Jennekens, Keith Penny, Lynn Scott, Christine Boothby, Joy Liu (Student Trustee), Charles Chen (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), Michele Giroux (Executive Officer, Corporate Services), Carolyn Tanner (Human Rights and Equity Advisor), 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), Richard Sinclair (Manager of Legal Services and Labour Relations), Sandy Owens (Manager, Business & Learning Technologies), Diane Pernari-Hergert (Manager of Communications & Information Services), Rebecca Grandis (Senior Board Coordinator), Nicole Guthrie (Manager of Board Services), Michael Guilbault (AV Technician)

1. Call to Order -- Chair of the Board

Chair Scott called the public meeting to order at 7:00 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

An amendment moved by Trustee Blackburn, seconded by Trustee Campbell, THAT items 6.1 and 6.2 be moved on the agenda to precede item 5.1.

Carried

Moved by Trustee Campbell, seconded by Trustee Boothby,

THAT the agenda be approved, as amended.

Carried

3. Report from the Special Board (In Camera)

The Board met in Camera earlier this evening and reports and recommends as follows:

Moved by Trustee Blackburn, seconded by Trustee Penny,

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

Carried

The motion was carried on the following division:

FOR: Trustees Boothby, Blackburn, Hough, Ellis, Campbell, Jennekens, Penny, Lyra Evans, Bell, Fisher, (10)

OPPOSED: Nil (0)

ABSTENTION: Trustee Scott (1)

4. Delegations

4.1 Sherien Youssef, Re. International Baccalaureate Program

Ms. Youssef advised that over 189 students in the International Baccalaureate (IB) program are required to attend school in person, as virtual learning is not an option for this cohort. For families with immunocompromised members it creates significant risk. Ms Youssef shared a PowerPoint presentation that included several possible options that would allow IB students to participate in virtual learning. She noted that students should not have to choose between the pursuit of education and their health.

When asked if all system programs should have both options available Ms, Youssef noted that she could not really comment on other programs but thought it would be optimal for all.

Director Williams-Taylor recognized that this is a complex issue. The Ottawa District School Board (OCDSB) has many learning pathways for students and although It would be ideal to deliver a program as close to real as possible, time and resources are limited.

Associate Director Reynolds noted that this was not a situation the District would have chosen for families as it would be ideal to offer remote learning for all. Providing virtual options is possible with larger cohorts.

Staffing becomes very difficult for smaller cohorts and the IB program has strict rules about program delivery.

5. Matters for Discussion

5.1 COVID-19 Update

Director Williams Taylor acknowledged the work of so many to support the reopening of schools. The OCDSB had designed and redesigned the operation of three school systems involving a comprehensive reimagining of all processes and practices, made more complicated in an ever-changing landscape of provincial and health guidance.

Confirmation of Attendance

- Approximately 22 % of families have opted for remote learning; and
- While there is still some work to be completed. staffing must proceed using the information that is currently available.

Request for Change Process

- Many requests for change have been received since the deadline;
- Requests for change are currently being held until after staffing has been completed; and
- Any request for change should now be made at the school level.

Staffing

- All school-based staffing assignments are being reviewed based on enrolment/attendance decisions;
- All expressions of interest for remote learning have been completed and staff are processing requests; and
- Staff will be guided by the usual process to address any surplus and/or vacancies in schools or remote learning.

Virtual Learning:

- Approximately 16,000 students have opted for remote learning;
- There may be up to six elementary virtual schools and 1 secondary virtual school created to accommodate these students;
- Every effort will be made to place students from the same elementary school in the same virtual school; and
- Virtual schools will require administrators, teachers, office staff and

- Workspaces.

Secondary in Person:

- The Ministry has asked boards to revisit the in person model to ensure that contacts do not exceed 100 people;
- Using the quadmester model, students would take two courses at a time and attend school on alternating days;
- Instructional time would remain the same, but in class learning will alternate by subject week-to-week.

Health and Safety:

- Administrators are beginning to put health and safety measures in place in schools;
- In collaboration with the Occupational Joint Health and Safety Committee, resources have been compiled to ensure staff are aware of health and safety practices; and
- The Ministry has advised that all PPE has been shipped.

Re-opening of Administrative Sites:

- Planning for reopening administrative sites is underway; and
- The plans include services and staffing through a combination of in-person, adapted or remote delivery models.

Progressive Start

- The Ministry has used the progressive start framework to encourage boards to make adjustments to ensure that proper planning and safety is in place before students arrive;
- The youngest and most vulnerable learners will be privileged with earlier entry;
- All students will be in school by 18 September; and
- A detailed plan for progressive starts will be released next week.

Supporting Parents

- A webinar was held with Dr. David Tranter to help parents prepare their children for the start of school;
- Over 1000 people participated in the webinar; and
- Staff are working on additional video resources to support the District's youngest learners.

Staff continues to work with other districts, the Ministry of Education and Ottawa public health. It is hoped that the update along with the video from Doctor Etches, Medical officer of Health will guide trustees in their discussion on the motions tonight

Ottawa Public Health Update

Dr. Etches, in a video presentation addressed trustee questions on the following:

- The wearing of face masks;
- The use of face shields;
- The role of Ottawa Public Health and school board reopening plans;
- Class sizes and physical distancing;
- Two meter distancing;
- Limiting the movement of staff between schools and contact tracing;
- Training for staff on safety measures;
- Staff and students must use the COVID 19 assessment tool daily; and
- Adults in the school must maintain physical distancing;

Dr. Etches encouraged all to become COVID-Wise:

W - wear a mask,

I - Isolate when you are sick,

S - stay metres two meters apart if possible although 1 meter may be more realistic,

E - exercise proper hand hygiene.

A public health nurse has been assigned to schools to support the principal and staff and students with regular visits, be available to answer questions and manage challenges.

OPH will continue to have open dialogue with school boards and update the website.

Director Williams-Taylor noted that the secondary school in-person model will be updated to indicate that it would be course 1 for a full week and course 2 for a full week.

During the question period the following responses were provided:

- Staff may be deemed surplus to their school but not the system. As teacher resources are reallocated to remote learning, schools may have more teachers than required. Staff would place those surplus teachers elsewhere, possibly in the virtual school. Staff will act quickly to get information to principals so that timetables can be updated as quickly as possible;
- Regarding daily screening procedures, staff are working on the protocols for staff and students. There is a tool available from OPH for employers that can be used. This tool has been used for a month. Staff will be asked to complete the assessment questions in the tool. Should the answer be yes to any of the questions, staff will be asked not to visit OCDSB sites and their supervisor will be contacted. The tool will be posted at all sites;
- There are 300 instructional minutes a day for students who are learning at home. During this time there are synchronous and asynchronous opportunities;
- Teachers are posting work in the classrooms so students have the opportunity to review videos and work on lessons, and attendance will be taken. Staff will ensure there is synchronous connection with students at home and in the classroom. The time at home is accountable and accounted for at all times;
- Superintendent McCoy advised that staff are in the process of constructing messaging for casual teachers and asking them to restrict work in multiple school sites. Information from OPH will be reiterated using the language Dr. Etches provided. The elementary system uses daily occasional teachers (DOTS). The practice of re-deploying DOTS will be limited to reduce contacts. Occasional teachers will be asked to track schools they visit to contact trace, if required;
- Information on the staggered start will be shared with parents at the end of the week;
- If staff cannot maintain one metre distancing in class, action will be taken. Every effort will be made to ensure one metre between students. Superintendent Towajj advised that staff measuring means the distances between students when they are seated. Excess furniture has been removed to provide additional space;
- Regarding the provision for organizing parent voice, the Director noted that establishing a reliable structure that will work across the District from a pedagogical point of view is a priority. Executive Officer Giroux noted that it is not just a school

council question but all communication is built on where a student goes to school, regarding directing students to a remote school has infrastructure issues, getting schools up and running is a priority but staff are aware of other issues.;

- Superintendent Towaij confirmed that smaller class sizes will be implemented in neighbourhoods with greater vulnerabilities as identified by OPH;
- Ownership of the return to school plan is an issue for some staff. Staff will have three days of professional learning. Staggered entry has provided an opportunity to ensure that the structures are in place and teachers will have a better idea of the process. Principals and vice-principals have been mapping out the design with their staff. Progressive entry will provide an advantage for both virtual and bricks and mortar schools to have an opportunity to understand the roll out;
- Associate Director Reynolds advised that lunch will be supervised, additional staff will be deployed, and students eating at their desks will wash or sanitize their hands before and after they eat. Desk shields have been put in place to maintain distancing. This plan is in place across the province and OPH supports this;
- Staff have accounted for 300 instructional minutes. For 225 minutes staff will be at school and assigned to supporting students. For the 75 minutes remaining, staff will be at school. If they have exhausted their instructional minutes, they will have prep time;
- The Director acknowledged that some students will not be attending school until 14 September. OSTA provides presto cards, through OC Transpo, to some students. It is recognized that for some students in remote areas transportation could be a problem. Chief Financial Officer Carson (CFO) confirmed that the Ottawa Student Transportation Authority (OSTA) has been working with OC-Transpo. Not being able to provide transportation will be a problem for some families;
- Regarding extending the school year, the Ministry has not communicated any direction about lengthening the school year. Staff are working to address gaps, anticipating that days can be lost due to weather, etc., and it may be possible to make up the time;

- A break period will occur halfway in the 225 minutes. If a student needs to eat to learn, staff will ensure they have an opportunity;
- Superintendent Hardie advised there are plans to address the COOP program and adjustments have been made to the Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM) program. Certifications can be received online. Staff have looked for opportunities for students to obtain volunteer hours online;
- Staff are not expecting in person clubs to meet in the fall. Students have been coming up with ways to engage using a number of different platforms. There will be no in-person gathering but new opportunities may emerge;
- There may be opportunities to switch from remote to in person at logical breakpoints. Requests would be reviewed on a case by case basis. As we approach mid-year we may be able to make greater changes to accommodate students;
- Director Williams-Taylor acknowledged that coming back to school will be a different process, and classrooms may look very different. Staff need to think differently about how the program is delivered. Staff are trying to finalize the assignments of teachers, recognizing timeframes will be short. Some of this work may coincide with the arrival of students;
- Staff are looking at various modifications to music programs. At the intermediate level we are discontinuing the use of shared instruments but looking at other options to access the music curriculum;
- Staff will try where possible to emphasize smaller class sizes. There will be an effort, subject to the number of students in schools, to maximize the 10% of virtual learning class sizes. Staff will also be looking at class sizes in those areas identified as vulnerable by OPH.
- To reassure the families of kindergarten students, Superintendent Towaj advised that there will be round tables with clear dividers so students can see their classmates. There will be virtual intake meetings to meet with teachers and ECEs. A video is being created to indicate what the classroom will look like. Students can bring a backpack and extra shoes, and store items under their desks;
- In terms of class sizes, 90% of classes would be at 20 or below, 10% would be at 24.5 or below. There would be a hard cap of

23 at primary and above. Staff are working to keep numbers for grades 4 to 8 at no more that 24.5; and

- Regarding the number of virtual schools, staff have not finalized the plan but currently there are six elementary and one secondary virtual school proposed.

Chair Scott advised that during the meeting it was announced that the Federal Government will provide approximately \$2.0 billion dollars in funding to the provinces, proportionate to the number of students in each province.

6. Matters for Action

6.1 Report from Ad Hoc Committee for Board Self Evaluation & the Director Performance Evaluation Process, 12 August 2020

Moved by Jennekens, seconded by Trustee Boothby

THAT the Report from the Ad Hoc Committee for Board Self Evaluation and the Director Performance Evaluation Process, Dated 12 August 2020, be received.

Carried

1. Approval of Recommendation to Defer the Director's Performance Evaluation

THAT the evaluation process and timelines for the 2019-2020 Director of Education Evaluation cycle as outlined in section 3.10 parts B through F of Policy P.051.GOV be delayed by one month.

Trustee Boothby advised that the committee determined that the focus would be on a return to school in September and the Director requires additional time to prepare for the performance evaluation

Moved by Trustee Boothby, seconded by Trustee Jennekens,

THAT the evaluation process and timelines for the 2019-2020 Director of Education Evaluation cycle as outlined in section 3.10 parts B through F of Policy P.051.GOV be delayed by one month.

CARRIED

The motion was carried unanimously by those present.

FOR: Trustees Boothby, Blackburn, Hough, Campbell, Ellis, Jennekens, Penny, Lyra Evans, Bell, Fisher, Scott, (11)

OPPOSED: Nil (0)

ABSTENTIONS: Nil (0)

2. Approval of Recommendation to Defer Board Self Evaluation

Moved by Trustee Boothby, seconded by Trustee Jennekens

THAT the Board's annual reflection process for 2019-2020 as outlined in section 4.4 parts b through c of Policy P.130.GOV be delayed by one month.

Trustee Boothby noted that the committee recommends delaying the work to allow staff to have time to focus on the return to school plans, particularly when it is unknown whether the Ministry would require additional work to prepare for school opening.

Moved by Trustee Boothby, seconded by Trustee Jennekens,

THAT the Board's annual reflection process for 2019-2020 as outlined in section 4.4 parts b through c of Policy P.130.GOV be delayed by one month.

Carried

The motion was carried unanimously by those present.

FOR: Trustees Boothby, Blackburn, Hough, Campbell, Ellis, Jennekens, Penny, Lyra Evans, Bell, Fisher, Scott, (11)

OPPOSED: Nil (0)

ABSTENTIONS: Nil (0)

6.2 Notice of Motion, Re: Facial Coverings, Trustee Lyra

Moved by Trustee Lyra Evans, seconded by Trustee Blackburn,

THAT the Board requires the wearing of facial coverings at school for students in Grades K-3 whenever reasonable, exempting those students with medical or other conditions that would contraindicate such a covering.

Trustee Lyra Evans noted that she agrees with Toronto Public Health and the Canadian Nurses Association who have acknowledged that masks are likely to be beneficial for students in kindergarten to grade 3. Young learners may have difficulty wearing masks, but if others around them wear masks, they are likely to model their behaviour. She urged her colleagues to support the motion to protect the immunocompromised, vulnerable members of families.

Trustee Blackburn supported the motion, but with an amendment, to include, after the word covering, recognizing that some students may not be developmentally or emotionally ready to manage facial coverings.

An amendment moved by Trustee Blackburn, seconded by Trustee Jennekens,

THAT “recognizing that some students may not be developmentally or emotionally ready to manage facial coverings” be added at the end of the recommendation.

Trustee Blackburn submitted that the amendment was straightforward and provided clarity to parents who may be concerned that some children who cannot wear masks may be asked to leave school.

In response to a query from Trustee Campbell with respect to who would determine the ability of a student to wear a mask, Director Williams-Taylor advised that it may be challenging to determine readiness to wear a mask and to enforce compliance. Staff may suggest a child attend a virtual school. She added that suspension and exclusion is not permitted in grades 3 and under. Should a child refuse virtual learning and a suspension cannot be imposed then it may be isolation in the classroom.

Trustee Lyra Evans noted that the original motion was intended to require masks anytime there wasn't an exceptionality or a medical reason or in a case where staff determined it was not possible. The amendment shifts the decision making from staff to parents. It was her intention that staff make the determination.

Trustee Jennekens noted her concern for students with special needs who rely on facial expressions and some students who do not have the ability to manage a mask.

Trustee Ellis expressed the opinion that the original motion covers this issue and that the amendment is not necessary.

Trustee Blackburn submitted that parents know their children better than staff.

An amendment moved by Trustee Blackburn, seconded by Trustee Jennekens,

THAT “recognizing that some students may not be developmentally or emotionally ready to manage facial coverings” be added at the end of the recommendation.

Carried

Trustee Bell requested that staff develop a protocol, in consultation OPH, that would define “reasonable”. Director Williams-Taylor advised that if

students are required to wear masks in primary grades, it would be necessary to develop a policy for all grades.

Associate Reynolds advised that OPH strongly encourages mask wearing; however, it is not mandated at this time. He suggested it would be better to encourage and educate. He added that there are provisions in *the Education Act* to manage compliance for safety reasons.

Trustee Campbell indicated that OPH is not recommending mandatory mask wearing, and staff should not have to be in a position to enforce the wearing of masks.

Trustee Penny expressed the opinion that if OPH cannot quantify the protection a mask would provide, there is no basis for the motion.

An amendment moved by Trustee Jennekens, seconded by Trustee Campbell,

THAT the words “strongly recommend” replace the word “require”.

Trustee Fisher agreed that this amendment is more in line with OPH recommendations.

Trustee Ellis noted that it is important to include the word “required” to send a message to the community.

An amendment moved by Trustee Jennekens, seconded by Trustee Campbell,

THAT the words “strongly recommend” replace the word “require”.

Carried

Trustee Boothby noted the teacher's concerns about the management of masks and the lack of evidence that they will be used effectively. She added that the Sickkids Hospital does not endorse the mandatory wearing of masks.

An amendment moved by Trustee Boothby, seconded by Trustee Campbell,

THAT all words following “students in Grades K-3 whenever reasonable” be deleted.

Carried, friendly

An amendment moved by Trustee Hough, seconded by Trustee Campbell,

THAT “masks” replace “facial coverings”.

Carried, friendly

An amendment moved by Trustee Hough, ,

THAT "strongly recommends" be replaced with "encourage".

The amendment failed for lack of a seconder.

Trustee Ellis noted, for the record, that he indicated to the community that he would support the original motion; however, the amendments have now made the motion meaningless in his opinion.

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

Trustee Lyra Evans expressed the view that saying there is no evidence does not mean there have been no studies. Toronto Public Health and the Canadian Nurses Association support the requirement for masks to reduce the spread of the virus.

Student Trustee Liu requested a non-binding vote.

Moved by Trustee Lyra Evans, seconded by Trustee Blackburn,

THAT the Board strongly recommends the wearing of masks at school for students in Grades K-3 whenever reasonable.

Carried

On the non-binding vote, the motion was carried on the following division:

FOR: Trustees Boothby, Blackburn, Hough, Campbell, Jennekens, Penny, Bell, Fisher, Scott (9)

OPPOSED: Trustees Ellis, Lyra Evans, Chen, Liu (4)

ABSTENTIONS: Nil (0)

On the binding vote, the motion was carried on the following division:

FOR: Trustees Boothby, Blackburn, Hough, Campbell, Jennekens, Penny, Bell, Fisher, Scott (9)

OPPOSED: Trustees Ellis, Lyra Evans (2)

ABSTENTIONS: Nil (0)

6.3 Notice of Motion, Re: Delay Student Return to School Date, Trustee Blackburn

Moved by Trustee Blackburn, seconded by Trustee Jennekens,

THAT the Board delay the student return to school date until 14 September 2020 for the 2020-2021 school year.

Trustee Blackburn submitted that many teachers will not be ready for the proposed start of the school year. OSTA has announced a delay in the provision of school bus transportation. She expressed the view that by 14 September things may be more normalized, staff will have additional time to prepare, and principals will have time to go through the personal protective equipment (PPE). Trustee Blackburn added that other school boards have delayed their start time, and she encouraged her colleagues to consider the motion.

Trustee Bell submitted that this is an equity issue for marginalized students, and staggered start dates are important to "get it right."

An amendment moved by Trustee Bell, seconded by Trustee Fisher, THAT "8 September" replace "14 September."

Director Williams-Taylor noted that start means starting with a staggered entry. While a later date to receive students provides more time for staff, it is an issue for families depending on schools to meet their needs. All students arriving at the same time jeopardizes a safe entry.

Associate Director Reynolds advised there is a lot to do in very little time, and there is a firm end date to the school year. A later staggered date would impact instructional time. AS trustees have noted there are challenges with an earlier start date but staff want to deliver the best instructional program possible.

Trustee Bell noted that giving teachers and principals additional time would be beneficial. She encouraged her colleagues to provide a bit of additional time but not so much that it further impacts marginalized communities.

Trustee Fisher advised that trustees are requesting a delay to ensure that staff have enough operational time to proceed. Director Williams Taylor advised a staggered entry is necessary to ensure schools are ready to receive students.

Director Williams-Taylor confirmed that she preferred the 8 September start date with a staggered start as opposed to 3 September with a staggered start.

Trustee Blackburn reminded trustees that some racialized students would not have transportation until September 16. She expressed concern that those students who cannot get to school will fall behind,

Trustee Penny assumed the chair

Chair Scott inquired whether secondary students could utilize virtual learning if school were to start on 8 September and transportation was not available. Director Williams Taylor noted that staff recognize that a start on

8 September will be a problem for rural students. It may be possible to utilize virtual learning at the secondary level.

Chair Scott resumed the chair.

Trustee Jennekens expressed her concern about students in rural areas not having transportation.

***** The 11:00 p.m. voted achieved unanimous consent to continue the meeting past 11:00 p.m.*****

An amendment moved by Trustee Bell, seconded by Trustee Fisher, THAT "8 September" replace "14 September."

Carried

Trustee Bell inquired whether staff could consider alternatives to transporting students to school in the first week in lieu of yellow buses. Director Williams-Taylor noted that this has not been contemplated as student transportation is OSTA's responsibility.

CFO Carson advised that OSTA is looking for opportunities for transporting students to school. Staff will provide updates when they are available.

Moved by Trustee Fisher, seconded by Trustee Boothby,

That the debate be closed.

Carried

Moved by Trustee Blackburn, seconded by Trustee Jennekens,

THAT the Board delay the student return to school date until 8 September 2020 for the 2020-2021 school year.

Carried

The motion was carried on the following division:

FOR: Trustees Boothby, Blackburn, Hough, Campbell, Ellis, ,Jennekens, Penny, Lyra Evans, Bell, Fisher, Scott (0)

OPPOSED: Nil (0)

ABSTENSIONS: Nil (0)

Agenda items 6.4 and 6.5 will be moved to a future meeting.

- 6.4 Notice of Motion, Re: Request to the Province for the Provision of Health and Safety Precautions, Trustee Scott

To be dealt with at a future meeting.

6.5 Notice of Motion, Re: Return to In Person Board Meetings, Trustee Blackburn

To be dealt with at a future meeting.

7. New Business -- Information and Inquiries

There was no new business or inquiries.

8. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11:10 p.m

Lynn Scott, Chair of the Board