

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (PUBLIC)
Report No. 20-079

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Plan for Welcoming International Students

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PURPOSE:

1. The purpose of this report is to seek support for the OCDSB Attestation to Receive International Students per federal and provincial requirements as well as a Board resolution affirming our commitment to upholding the requirements. To that end, this report will demonstrate the readiness of the OCDSB and the Ottawa International Education Program to safely welcome international students into our schools and local communities. Requirements of Federal Public Health and the Ontario Ministry of Education will be clarified. The plans and protocols supporting the safe arrival of our international students will be explained.

STRATEGIC LINKS:

2. The Ottawa-Carleton District School Board wants to ensure that our schools are welcoming places for all students to engage, belong, learn, grow, explore and discover. Our job is to develop the characteristics and skills that will help our students to be globally aware:
 - Enhanced student safety;
 - Improved student well-being;
 - Promote collaborative environments which foster innovation and creativity; and
 - Remove barriers to equity of access, opportunity, and outcomes

CONTEXT:

3. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on international education around the world. The economic and psychological impact on families has reduced the level of engagement in international education globally. Travel restrictions related to border closures and reduced flight availability has limited the ability for international students to enter our country. In Canada, borders closed to travel March 18, 2020. International students with Study permits approved prior to March 18 were provided an exemption. Students with permits issued after this date are currently not eligible to enter the country.

Due to the travel uncertainty, less than half of our 400 returning students remained in Canada over the summer. Currently, we have 344 returning students and 26 new students. 92 have elected to participate in the OVH. 260 students have deferred their studies to February and 10 to September. There were 96 cancellations.

The Attestation of Readiness and supporting documentation will be forwarded to the Ministry of Education and reviewed by them jointly with Federal health authorities to determine a list of qualified districts. The intention is to extend the exemption to all international students with valid study permits to approved school districts to enter the country, regardless of the issue date of their permit. This approval would open the border to those students who have deferred their entry to the OCDSB. It would also open the borders to new international students applying to our system.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS:

4. Broadly speaking, the requirements govern public school boards and private schools across Canada. Hence the requirements encompass the readiness of the school board to manage and respond to an outbreak in addition to the management of the international student population.

Overall Requirements:

- Districts have plans in place for robust case management and outbreak response consistent with local and provincial public health guidelines;
- Quarantine strategy for international students and co-arriving family members;
- Protocols for notification of local and provincial health authorities for 14-day quarantine:
 - Quarantine Compliance;
 - Cases of COVID-19 infection; and
- Communication protocols to inform the public of outbreaks.

Key Pre-Arrival Requirements for Institutions:

- Pre-arrival requirements are communicated to international students and co-arriving family members, including:
 - Documentation outlining a clear quarantine strategy and essential nature of their presence for learning;
 - ArriveCAN App; and
- Direct transportation from the point of entry to the quarantine location

Key Requirements for 14-Day Quarantine:

- Quarantine arrangements are in place for arriving international students and co-arriving family members;
- Daily monitoring of symptoms and compliance;
- Communication protocols in place in the event of symptomatic cases or compliance issue;
- Ensure quarantine location provides suitable isolation, does not put vulnerable individuals at risk;
- COVID-19 infection control information and training; and
- COVID-19 Test during quarantine (Ontario Ministry of Ed Requirement).

Post Quarantine Requirements

- Support international students and immediate family members with both mental and physical health, anti-racism and COVID-19 related stigma supports in schools and the community; and
- Mitigation of social barriers to support student compliance with individual COVID-19 infection control practices

Federal Requirements

A board resolution approving an international student program that will meet current federal and provincial requirements for the 2020-21 school year.

Additional Provincial Requirements

- A COVID-19 test administered during the quarantine for both domestic and international students who have entered Canada within two weeks prior to the start of their studies

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

5. International student tuition fees provide additional staffing and funds that support a variety of programs in the district and would be compromised without the board's ongoing commitment to international education and global learning.

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the Board affirms that the OCDSB international student program complies with the travel and readiness guidelines for accepting international and domestic students coming from abroad as established by the Ontario Ministry of Education and the Canadian Federal Government for 2020-2021 school year.

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Programs

Camille Williams-Taylor
Director of Education and
Secretary of the Board

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Ministry Memorandum
Appendix 2 Ottawa International Student Arrival Guide
Appendix 3 Canada Homestay Safe Arrival Guide
Appendix 4 September Orientation Program
Appendix 5 Guide for Welcoming International Students