



## COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE PUBLIC REPORT

**Tuesday, November 10, 2020, 7:30 p.m.  
Zoom Meeting**

**Trustees Present:** Justine Bell, Christine Boothby, Rob Campbell, Chris Ellis, Lyra Evans, Mark Fisher, Wendy Hough, Jennifer Jennekens, Keith Penny, 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), Michele Giroux (Executive Officer, Corporate Services), Dorothy Baker (Superintendent of Instruction), Shannon Smith (Superintendent of Instruction), Prince Duah (Superintendent of Instruction), Mary Jane Farrish (Superintendent of Instruction), Eric Hardie (Superintendent of Instruction), Shawn Lehman (Superintendent of Instruction), Peter Symmonds (Superintendent of Learning Support Services), Nadia Towaij (Superintendent of Programming and Learning K-12), Carolyn Tanner (Human Rights and Equity Advisor), Colin Anderson (System Principal of Safe Schools), Stacey Kay (Manager of Learning Support Services), Joan Oracheski (Manager of Research, Evaluation & Analytics Division), Sandra Owens (Manager of Business & Learning Technologies), Diane Pernari-Hergert (Manager of Communications & Information Services), Richard Sinclair (Manager of Legal Services and Labour Relations), Nicole Guthrie (Manager of Board Services), Kathleen Jubenville (Research Officer), Michael Guilbault (AV Technician), Darren Gatley (Board/Committee Coordinator)

**Non-Voting Representatives Present:** Melodie Gondek (OSSTF), Christine Lanos (OCEOC), Steve Spidell (OCSSAN), Susan Gardner (ETFO), Brian LeSage (ETFO), Stephanie Kirkey (OSSTF), Kelly Granum (OSSTF-Secondary Occasional Teachers), David Wildman (OCEOTA), Pat Dixon (OCEOTA), Troy Cluff (OSSTF-District 25), Sonia Nadon-Campbell (SEAC),

1. Call to Order - Vice-Chair of the Board

Vice-Chair Penny called the meeting to order at 8:38 p.m. He 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 Agenda

**Moved by Trustee Evans,**

**THAT the agenda be approved.**

**Carried**

3. Briefing from the Chair of the Board

Chair Scott noted that this week marks National Aboriginal Veterans Day and Remembrance Day. She noted that some members in the school community may have relatives who fought generations ago and that the District also has family members who continue to serve today. She recognized the school board's responsibility to teach students about the past in order to provide hope for the future and that we will be taking some time to reflect on the courage and sacrifice of those who risked so much. She reflected that too many did not return home and many more suffered from physical or mental health challenges long after coming back to Canada. Other soldiers continued to face racism and injustice, despite bravely fighting for this country.

The District will emphasize that it is vital to continue to work towards a more peaceful world. She noted that due to COVID-19 precautions, the OCDSB will be holding a virtual 2020 Remembrance Day Ceremony featuring diverse student artwork and performances from across the District. It is open to all staff, students and families. More information can be found on the OCDSB website.

Chair Scott shared that the class of 2020 has much to celebrate. She noted that these students have persevered and shown much resilience in the face of great uncertainty. Despite the Board's hopes to offer in-person commencement ceremonies this fall, it is clear that this will not be possible due to the continued COVID-19 risk in Ottawa-Carleton and health and safety guidelines are still in place. To ensure that students and families can celebrate together in 2020, the District has developed plans for a safe celebration. On 10 December 2020, secondary schools will stream virtual ceremonies featuring messages for graduates, presentation of diplomas and awards, and valedictorian speeches. Graduates and their families are asked to contact their school for more information.

4. Briefing from the Director

Director Williams-Taylor reported that next week the District will mark Bullying Prevention Week. She noted that regardless if it is physical, verbal, social or cyber bullying - It is an issue that too many students continue to face.

She added that educators can play a key role in teaching and supporting children's healthy relationships. The Board provided training to staff on bullying at the start of the school year and will also continue to work with students to support those affected by bullying as well as those who engage in this behaviour.

Bullying prevention requires a whole-school approach between educators, students and families. She noted that together, we can create a safe, caring and inclusive environment, built on celebration of diversity, respect, and empathy.

Director Williams-Taylor noted that on 14 November 2020, members of the school community will be celebrating Diwali. She wished happiness, joy, peace and prosperity to families marking the festival of lights.

Report cards will be available to families on 20 November 2020 for elementary students and 25 November 2020 for secondary students through the online Report Card Portal. Those who have not already done so, can register on the portal. Staff have sent emails to families with more information.

As the District approaches the end of the first quadmester or octomester for secondary school students, there are a few quick reminders for secondary families:

- Community service hours for graduating students has been reduced this year from 40 hours to 20;
- The Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT) graduation requirement will be waived for all students graduating during the 2020-21 school year; and
- A reminder to all secondary students, that there will be no final exams or summatives this year to focus on in-class instructional time.

## 5. Delegations

### 5.1 R. Maxine Adwella, Mental Health and Black, Indigenous and People of Colour ( BIPOC) Students

Ms. Adwella, the Executive Director of National Collaboration for Youth Mental Health (NCYMH) presented her delegation and noted the importance of student mental health. She noted that Black, Indigenous and other minoritized students may particularly feel the stresses of the COVID-19 pandemic. She suggested that schools provide an ideal environment and natural opportunity to address issues of mental health. She noted that educators can play an important role by delivering accurate and comprehensive information by challenging the stereotypes about mental illness held by the general community. She added that OCDSB cannot address the issue alone and that the NCYMH is looking forward to working closely with the OCDSB to further collaborate on an action plan that will assist the OCDSB in reaching its goal of student success and well-being for all.

## 6. COVID-19 Update

### 6.1 Case Management Update

Executive Officer Giroux provided the case management update via a PowerPoint presentation.

During the presentation the following points were noted:

- Associate Director Reynolds noted that OCDSB has seen lower levels of COVID-19 than other districts;
- COVID-19 cases peaked around the Thanksgiving holiday;
- Ministry guidelines for case management have been recently updated;
- Case management is time consuming for staff but the process is being refined; and
- There have only been two partial outbreaks within OCDSB to date and with few to no high risk contacts. This can be attributed to the compliance of students and staff to self-assess and stay home if feeling unwell or symptomatic;

In response to a query from Trustee Campbell, Executive Officer Giroux noted that currently all COVID-19 cases are reported on the dashboard and classes/schools are notified when there is an outbreak. She added that the District has confirmed the reporting practice with Ottawa Public Health (OPH) on several occasions to ensure full compliance.

In response to a query from Trustee Campbell, Associate Director Reynolds noted that even if all students in a class are asked to self-isolate, it would not be a class closure as teachers are there to receive students and it is usually a matter of days before students begin to return as the OPH investigation proceeds. He added that this complies with provincial direction and OPH guidelines.

Executive Officer Giroux noted that multiple COVID-19 cases in schools are often sibling related. She noted that each circumstance is unique, (i.e., certain events in a particular community), and OPH is working to identify communities with higher transmission rates. She added that the highest number of cases in one school has been under 25.

In response to a query from Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) representative Ms. Nadon-Campbell, Superintendent Symmonds noted that itinerant teachers ensure that deaf and hard of hearing students are supplied with Special Equipment Amount (SEA) equipment for accessing curriculum. He noted that itinerant teachers would report any issues regarding a lack of equipment that would then be resolved.

Executive Officer Giroux noted that OPH defines an outbreak as two or more cases connected through a school. Partial outbreaks may only affect a small cohort or class.

## 6.2 Staffing and Enrolment

Your committee had before it Memo 20-144, to provide an update to the Committee of the Whole on student enrolment and staffing.

Superintendent McCoy presented the Staffing and Enrolment update.

In response to a query from Trustee Campbell, Superintendent McCoy noted that staffing adjustments are made through an equity lens with a focus on schools with a high Resource Allocation Index based on Socioeconomics (RAISE) index. She noted that adjustments to Extended Day Program (EDP) and early learning assistant (ELA) staff have been prepared to account for the reduced uptake in the EDP.

In response to a query from Trustee Bell, Director Williams-Taylor indicated that the District is currently not in a position to break down COVID-19 case data by grade, but is looking how to gather that data due to growing interest. She noted that the District is working with principals in order to engage students to return by reaching out school-by-school and class-by-class. She provided a recent example where 80 students have not returned as part of the enrolment count and the principal discovered 79 of the 80 students decided on homeschooling or another choice instead of returning. She added that progress continues to be made in locating and discovering the choices students and families have made. Staff have been engaging students about their possible return and there has been uptake in the secondary level with independent learning modules that the District can provide.

In response to a query from Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO) Representative Mr. LeSage, Superintendent McCoy agreed that the success of reduced COVID-19 levels are largely in part due to staff. She noted that the changes being considered will not create large class sizes beyond safe and manageable levels and that readjustments would not occur until at least January 2021.

ETFO Representative Mr. LeSage stressed that collapsing classes and rearranging pupils will have a negative impact on students and the relationships they have made.

Superintendent McCoy, noted that there are approximately 10 elementary teachers expected to retire in January 2021.

### 6.3 Financial Update

Your committee had before it Memo 20-134 to advise trustees that the Ministry of Education announced a number of new Priorities and Partnerships Fund (PPF) grants to support school reopening plans following the COVID-19 closures. PPF grants provide funding to school districts to address specific priorities identified by the Ministry.

Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Carson presented the financial update.

During the presentation, the following points were noted:

- The reduction in enrolment is not unique to OCDSB. The Toronto District School Board (TDSB) has a reduced enrolment of 5,000-6,000 students that are unaccounted for and believes that there will be provincial action to address the funding shortfalls;
- The lower enrolment has created a \$24 million revenue shortfall;
- Other school boards have not seen a significant increase of enrolment;
- Superintendents and Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA) are investigating school-by-school to understand why reductions are occurring across each grade;
- The Ministry has provided funding amounting to approximately \$17.8 million in PPF grants; two thirds of which have been committed to staffing;
- Stability has been an imperative factor in decision making and staff is working to continue stabilizing schools in the District;
- A report on COVID-19 expenditures will be presented later in November 2020;
- \$4.5 million has been allocated as a local provision, however, it is too early in the school year to indicate how much of these funds will be used;
- The District is anticipating additional funding from the province and staff have been speaking to and encouraging the Minister to provide more details on the second half of the funding as quickly as possible. The District needs to know the amount of funding that may be forthcoming and what restrictions will be in place;
- Financial statements for the year are close to being completed and the deficit is projected to be significantly lower than the expected \$7,000,000. This will allow for more flexibility as the District goes into next years' financial planning;
- The Ministry of Education has identified that school boards in Ontario will be eligible to apply for \$700 million in funding to improve infrastructure (i.e., ventilation and technology updates). The deadline for applications is 18 November 2020 and announcements and approvals will come from the federal government in January 2021. Part of the requirements is that the majority of the work must be completed by 31 December 2021 to receive funding. Staff have been evaluating projects by school and aim to complete work by August 2021 in order to minimize disruption to students and meet the completion requirement;

- The expected funds will also allow the Board to move forward on other projects previously identified. This means that facility renewal funds and school condition index funds that otherwise may have been spent, will be deferred and available in a future year;
- Challenges of these projects include the availability of qualified contractors and supply chain for materials; and
- The 2019/2020 financial statement will be presented to the Audit Committee later in November 2020 and an update will be presented to the Board later this month;

In response to a query from Trustee Evans, CFO Carson noted that although he expects relief to come from the province, he does not expect that it will cover 100% of the lost funds from reduced enrolment.

CFO Carson noted that the \$24 million would put the District into an accumulated deficit that would impact the 2021-2022 budget.

CFO Carson noted that school boards are taking the position that the province should be supporting close to 100 percent of the funds that school boards have projected in their enrolments. He also noted that \$24 million beyond what was identified could not be recovered in one fiscal year and would be recovered over multiple years.

## 7. Reports from Statutory and Other Committees

### 7.1 ACE, 24 September 2020

**Moved by Trustee Ellis,**

**THAT the ACE Report of 24 September 2020 be received.**

**Carried**

### 7.2 SEAC, 7 October 2020

**Moved by Trustee Evans,**

**THAT the SEAC Report of 07 October 2020 be received.**

**Carried**

### 7.3 PIC, 14 October 2020

Moved by Trustee Hough,

THAT the PIC Report of 14 October 2020 be received.

Note: the motion contains the following amendment:

*Trustee Bell noted that Dr. Etches' response to a query from Trustee Bell includes transmission rates by grade.*

*Trustee Hough noted that the second paragraph in section 5.a “cold” needs to be replaced with “could”*

**Moved by Trustee Hough,**

**THAT the PIC Report of 14 October 2020 be received.**

**Carried**

7.4 Audit Committee, 21 October 2020

**Moved by Trustee Fisher,**

**THAT the Audit Committee Report of 21 October 2020 be received.**

**Carried**

7.5 IEAC, 22 October 2020

**Moved by Trustee Evans,**

**THAT the IEAC Report of 22 October 2020 be received.**

**Carried**

8. Matters for Discussion:

8.1 Report 20-085, Annual Report on Student Suspensions (2019-2020) (M. Giroux)

Your committee had before it Report 20-085 to report on student suspensions, including findings from analyses undertaken on 2019-2020 OCDSB student suspension data in conjunction with *Valuing Voices – Identity Matters! Student Survey* data to identify:

- groups of students who may be over/underrepresented in the suspension data based on their Indigenous identity, race, gender identity, and disability; and
- differences in student suspension rates across groups of students (disparity) based on these same demographic characteristics.

Director Williams-Taylor introduced the report. She noted that collecting identity data is used to understand students' experiences and realities to help inform Board decisions. She added that this project gives validity by triangulating what the numbers, people, and the research narrative identifies. This data seeks to answer the following question: does identity correlate with students' experiences pertaining to discipline, particularly suspension?

Executive Officer Giroux noted that it was important to not report the data independently, but rather integrate the data for analysis in order to have a better understanding.



During the PowerPoint presentation, the following points were noted:

- The previous school year suspension data set was incomplete, however, the historical overview was examined from September to March Break for comparison and to reflect the difference;
- The Ministry has removed the authority to issue discretionary suspensions for students in kindergarten to grade three and is looking at alternatives for addressing unacceptable behaviour;
- Disproportionality reflects the likelihood that a student from a specific group will experience a certain outcome relative to that group's representation in the population, whereas disparity compares the risk of suspension for a specific groups of students relative to another group; and
- A more technical suspension data report will be provided at a later date;

Executive Officer Giroux noted that this information is used to be thorough in understanding, to determine where to best use resources, and to develop strategies for change.

\*\*\* The vote to continue the meeting past 10:30 p.m. received the required two-third's majority to continue. \*\*\*

In response to a query from Trustee Campbell, Manager of Research, Evaluation & Analytics Division (READ) Ms. Oracheski noted that the reports will focus on race, Indigenous identity, gender identity, and disability. She noted that a question regarding the income levels and number of individuals in households were included in the parent survey for JK to grade 6, but not in the grade 7-12 survey. Part of the support from the Ministry of Education did not require a Special Education/Student Services (SES) question if the Board had other means of collecting that information. She added that part of the work and intent moving forward will be how SES is identified by using the information from the JK to grade 6 survey to examine the comparability.

Executive Officer Giroux noted that Superintendent Duah is currently working on poverty in terms of next steps of how it will be identified and any other implications and will report at a later time.

In response to a query from Trustee Campbell, Director Williams-Taylor agreed that adjustments to the approach that administrators take are needed as discretion leads to levels of inconsistency as there are many influencing factors (i.e., circumstance, context, and situation). She noted there is an educational piece that aims to help change the perspective that administrators and teachers have regarding discipline. She also noted that there is a need to create conditions to engage and empower students in

order to improve behaviors. When students act out, it is the responsibility of educators to engage and create the conditions for student success.

Chair Scott clarified that the "All Students (Trillium)" table on page 5 of Appendix A to report 20-085, was relative to all of the suspension data of the past year. She also clarified that the Valuing Voices piece looked at all the suspension data of the students that identified themselves compared to all other students that replied to the Valuing Voices survey.

Chair Scott commented that one of the biggest issues is not if a suspension is discretionary or mandatory, but rather that the decision to suspend is subjective. She noted that decisions around suspensions such as swearing and bullying are typically subjective decisions as there is inconsistency. When looking at discretionary suspensions, she contemplated how many were serious such as possessing a weapon, but the majority of cases were subjective of an individual.

Superintendent Farrish noted that the next steps are to build capacity in staff with the guidance of the Indigenous, Equity and Human Rights Roadmap for specific actions. She noted that this work will see change in interpretation, perspective, and goals in understanding students. The Ministry also requires staff to mitigate the factors for Bias Free Progressive Discipline. She noted that it is about relationships and knowing students that initiates the desired change. She noted that an audit for accountability is also something that will help with consistency as well as reviewing policies and procedures.

Trustee Ellis queried if the raw suspension data will be presented in a spreadsheet as it was in previous years. He referenced Report 16-080 as an example. He commented that he has been part of SEAC for 10 years and noted that having examined the data, that the gap for suspensions for special education students and all other students looks virtually the same for almost a decade. He expressed his concern that he has not seen a strategy for reducing suspensions or working with students that have been suspended, especially in the behavioral exceptionalities.

Director Williams-Taylor agreed that the number of special education student suspensions are disproportionately high and that the corrective measures are different and need to be included in the plan.

ETFO Representative Mr. LeSage noted that teachers identified that a progressive discipline plan in each school is a critical gap that will not see the desired change until these plans are implemented. He queried whether the process outlined in the report is going to connect to the understanding that the District and Union have in the joint committee regarding Safe Schools and Bias Free Progressive Discipline. He noted that this will be a critical mechanism to create the progressive disciplinary plans in each school. He added that there has been minimal planning with

administrators in how to engage teachers and staff in schools to have the key conversation in implementing real change.

Superintendent Farrish noted that surveys help to engage with all staff in schools. This helps with the School Improvement planning process for achievement and well-being. She noted that potential for increased collaboration is the Board's goal and that mechanisms through the Safe and Accepting Schools Team in every school allow staff to play a vital role in the establishment of safe school cultures. She added that these teams collaborate to discuss code of conduct, bullying prevention, and support the implementation of progressive discipline in schools. There are also District wide approaches such as the Third Path and work in repairing community damage to create safer conditions for students.

In response to a query from Student Trustee Liu, Superintendent Baker noted that staff training has already begun such as the Foundations and Unconscious Bias modules that were implemented in the previous year to all principals, vice-principal, senior staff, elementary and secondary teachers, elementary educational assistants, and custodial staff. She added that staff is working to close gaps with staff that have not yet completed the mandatory training. The development of additional modules regarding anti-racism, anti-bias, and Indigenous knowledge is being completed as outlined in the Roadmap. She added that the Cultural Responsive and Relevant Pedagogy team have been engaged in this work and there are 30 new members being trained.

In response to a query from Student Trustee Liu, Executive Officer Giroux noted that the District collects suspension and identity based data. She noted that the cycle of collection will be evaluated once the complexity of data is better understood.

9. Information Items:

9.1 Report from OPSBA (if required)

There was no report from the OPSBA representatives.

9.2 New Ministry Initiatives Update (if required)

There were no new Ministry updates.

9.3 OSTA Update (if required)

There was no OSTA update.

10. New Business - Information and Inquiries

There was no new business.

11. Adjournment

The 11:00 p.m. vote did not receive the required unanimous vote and the meeting was adjourned.

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Keith Penny, Chair