

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE PUBLIC REPORT

Tuesday, December 8, 2020, 7:00 p.m.

Zoom Meeting

Trustees Present: Lynn Scott, Keith Penny, Christine Boothby, Rob Campbell, Justine Bell, Chris Ellis, Lyra Evans, Mark Fisher, Wendy Hough, Jennifer Jennekens, Sandra Schwartz, Charles Chen (Student Trustee), Joy Liu (Student Trustee)

Staff Present: Camille Williams-Taylor (Director of Education), 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), Petra Duschner (Manager of Mental Health and Critical Services), Stacey Kay (Manager of Learning Support Services), Pamela LeMaistre (Manager of Human Resources), Karyn Carty Ostafichuk (Manager of Planning), 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), Marc Labelle (Planner), Darren Gatley (Board/Committee Coordinator), Michael Guilbault (AV Technician)

Non-Voting Representatives Present: Christine Moulaison (OCASC), Christine Lanos (OCEOC), Steve Spidell (OCSSAN), Brian LeSage (ETFO), Melodie Gondek (OSSTF- ESP), Robert James (OCEOC), Stephanie Kirkey (OSSTF), Adrian Darling (OSSTF-Secondary Occasional Teachers), David Wildman (OCEOTA), Pat Dixon (OCEOTA), Troy Cluff (OSSTF-District 25), Sonia Nadon-Campbell (SEAC), Seema Lamba (ACE)

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

Trustee Fisher called the meeting to order at 7:08 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 Campbell,

THAT the agenda be approved.

Trustee Scott suggested that Report 20-114, Equitable Recruitment and Hiring Policy be moved to item 9.

Moved by Trustee Campbell,

THAT the agenda be approved, as amended.

Carried

3. Briefing from the Chair of the Board

Chair Scott reported that the holidays are fast approaching and we all deserve a break. The District is asking everyone in the community to review public health guidelines as part of their holiday planning as it is important to keep ourselves and loved ones safe as COVID-19 continues to pose a serious threat to the community.

As part of the continuing Indigenous Speaker Series, on 11 December 2020 at 1:30 p.m. the District will feature presenter Kanahus Manuel. She will speak to staff and students in grades 9 to 12 about current events taking place on Indigenous lands in British Columbia. Registration and additional information can be found on the OCDSB website.

The Ontario government is again providing financial support for families. Parents or guardians residing in Ontario can receive a one-time payment of \$200 for each child aged 0 to 12; or \$250 if their child or youth is aged 0 to 21 with special needs. The application process will remain open until 15 January 2021. For additional information, please visit the Ontario Support for Learners web page.

4. Briefing from the Director

Director Williams-Taylor noted that the OCDSB will celebrate “Hour of Code”, from 7 to 13 December 2020. The Hour of Code started as a one-hour introduction to computer science. It was designed to demystify coding, to show that anybody can learn the basics, and broaden participation in the field of computer science. Staff and students are encouraged to share their coding activities with the District on social media.

The District will be hosting a Speaker Series on Resilience with Dr. Robyne Hanley-Dafoe on 9 December 2020 at 7:00 p.m. Dr. Hanley-Dafoe is a multi-award-winning psychology and education instructor who specializes in resiliency,

navigating stress and change, leadership, and personal wellness in the workplace. Further details can be found on the District website.

Director Williams-Taylor noted that the minutes of some advisory committee meetings had not consistently recorded the attendance of Trustee Blackburn. Director Williams-Taylor apologized on behalf of staff for the oversight and noted that the minutes will be amended to ensure Trustee Blackburn's attendance is reflected.

Director Williams-Taylor extended best wishes for peace and joy to all of those in the community celebrating Hanukkah.

5. Delegations

5.1 Anne Boys and Lark Barker, Decoding Dyslexia

Chair of Dyslexia Ontario Ms. Barker, acknowledged the effort teachers and educators make to keep students safe and engaged during COVID-19. Decoding Dyslexia Ontario is a grassroots parent led group that advocates for Ontario public schools to identify dyslexia early and to adopt evidence based curriculum so all students can learn to read.

She noted that dyslexia affects reading, attention, processing speed, certain functioning skills, and may lead to anxiety around many areas of learning. Parents have reported that in addition to adapting to life during the pandemic, their children face barriers to learning such as difficulty accessing accommodations and resources, difficulty accessing support teachers, difficulty keeping up with peers and workload, and trouble accessing technologies and materials designed for online learning, putting heavy weight on parents to support children.

She noted that the Ontario Human Rights Right to Read Commission will be coming forward with recommendations in the spring of 2021 and that the Board should research and discuss how this will impact student and teacher training moving forward.

In response to a query from Student Trustee Liu, Ms. Barker noted that a solution could include: ensuring students are provided with effective reading instructions and necessary accommodations. It is important to strengthen relationships between families and educators to help navigate learning during the pandemic, and to give teachers the required training for them to succeed.

Ms. Barker offered to send the Board several articles to help support trustee understanding of the issue around systemic barriers.

6. COVID-19 Update

Director Williams-Taylor reported that as of 8 December 2020, the OCDSB had 36 active student cases of COVID-19, 3 active staff cases, and 2 closed classes. The District had a total of 229 resolved cases. The commitment of families and

staff to follow public health guidelines and school safety precautions have been instrumental in keeping the numbers low in the District.

Director Williams-Taylor shared that Ottawa Public Health (OPH) has reiterated the importance of isolation while household results are pending. OPH review of staff index cases also reinforced the importance of:

- Appropriate and consistent use of all Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) (medical mask + visor) and physical distancing;
- no eating/drinking/carpooling together – staff room limits;
- staying home and getting tested for even mild symptoms;
- Reducing staff working at multiple sites; and
- Keeping a log of times & classes that staff enter;

OPH organized a pop-up test site on 6 December 2020 at Manordale Public School where 230 tests were administered. The results indicated that 226 tests were negative and there was only 1 positive result that proved not to be directly related to the school.

As the winter break begins on 18 December 2020, the District will continue to reinforce OPH messaging around the importance of following safety guidelines. The District understands that efforts to reduce the spread of COVID-19 will require collective commitment to continue good practices and to refrain from gathering with persons from outside of your household. District communications will focus on the importance of a safety first season and ensuring readiness for school reopening in January 2021. Staff are working on messaging and sharing available resources and supports for families in need during the school closure period.

Director Williams-Taylor extended her sincere appreciation to all staff for the tremendous amount of work they have done in keeping schools safe.

In response to questions, the following points were noted:

- Staff has been considering the impacts of COVID-19 that have created different learning conditions for students by examining data and how the quad and octomester structure in secondary schools, as well as the Ottawa Carleton Virtual (OCV) learning, impacts students;
- Staff are seeing positive trends in students securing credits;
- The senior team is meeting on 11 December 2020 to address and assess the different impacts on students to further support the conditions for well-being in elementary and secondary schools;
- Teachers have been creative in reaching students and many students have had a very productive and positive experience while others have experienced some emotional strain at home; and
- There have been no explicit extensions for university applications at this time, however, universities have committed to collaboration with the

District and application deadlines will be presented once dates have been confirmed;

7. Matters for Action:

7.1 Report 20-081, New Half Moon Bay Elementary School Approval of Study, Consultation Plan and Timeline (Carson)

Your committee had before it Report 20-081, seeking Board approval of a consultation process and timeline to establish grade structure, program offerings, and attendance boundaries for a new elementary school located in the Half Moon Bay community of Barrhaven.

Manager Ostafichuk noted that the District received funding from the Ministry of Education for construction of a second elementary school within the Half Moon Bay community. The school will accommodate up to 674 pupils and work is tentatively scheduled to be completed for a September 2022 opening. The District owns the 2.83ha (7 acres) property located at the southwest intersection of Kilbirnie Drive and River Mist Road. Manager Ostafichuk noted that with continuing growth in the community over the next few years, enrolment is no longer sustainable beyond 2022 and the opening of the second school will help alleviate pressure.

The District will be looking to refine recommendations with broad public input. Consultations will be conducted virtually. Staff anticipate that the boundary and grade structure recommendations will be presented to trustees by the end of the school year.

Moved by Trustee Scott,

THAT the Board affirm that a Pupil Accommodation Review (PAR) under Board Policy P.118.PLG is not required for this study; and

THAT the timeline and consultation plan attached as Appendix B and C to Report 20-081, be approved in order to consult with local school communities and the public. (Attached as Appendices A and B)

Carried

7.2 Report 20-103, High Performance Athletic Program (Lehman)

Your committee had before it Report 20-103, presenting the findings on the OCDSB High Performance Athletic Program (HPA) consultation, and seeking approval of recommendations concerning the future of the HPA Program.

Moved by Trustee Penny,

- A. THAT staff develop a plan to diversify our approach in how we support students in the OCDSB with an elite athlete profile in all schools;

- B. THAT staff be directed to undertake the short term work as outlined in the report; and
- C. THAT staff provide the Board with an update on the work done to develop a community school approach to support high performance athletes across the District in the spring of the 2021-2022 school year;

In response to questions and comments, the following was noted:

- Attendance in the HPA program has declined as John McCrae Secondary School has tightened criteria for entrance into the program;
- Students that successfully enter the program in grade 9 do not have to reapply each year and remain in the program;
- If a student chooses to leave the program, they would return to their home school. Students may also apply for a cross-boundary transfer to other schools should they wish to transfer;
- The research outlined in next steps will be gathered and used to determine if the congregated program is viable;
- Director Williams-Taylor noted that the recommendation is structured to focus on the profile of the student rather than to dissolve the program. The research undertaken to date, with feedback from students and families, was to determine if the program serves the students effectively. She noted that the strategic action plan outlines modernizing and diversifying programs to better serve students and that any decision would come back to trustees for final approval;
- In response to a request from Trustee Scott, Superintendent Lehman noted that he will provide a summary of the feedback from the October Thoughtexchange;
- There is an opportunity to review the secondary program framework and how it is defined/identified across the District;
- The HPA program does not currently serve special needs athletes;
- The responses from the Thoughtexchange was part of the feedback to develop the next steps and recommendations that are reflected in the report;
- Members queried if opening a second location for the HPA program would benefit students who would otherwise have significant transportation barriers;
- The District would need to identify high level athletes not currently enrolled in the HPA program to see how their academic and athletic needs are being met and then determine whether a congregated program, online tools, or a hybrid model would best serve these students rather than creating another site;
- Maintaining the congregated HPA program as it is and offering other students an alternative is not equitable;

- Louis-Riel Secondary Public School has a sports program in the east end of the City and the District is losing students to the Conseil des écoles publiques de l'Est de l'Ontario;
- Trustees were reminded that discussions in 2019 were aimed at dissolving the HPA program and to instead examine how to ensure high level athletes have an opportunity to compete in their sport and succeed in their academics in their own schools across the District;
- Trustee Lyra Evans commented that there is value in the social aspect of the HPA program as these students understand what similar students are going through and can support each other in a congregated setting. Trustee Lyra Evans agreed that building a second site in the east end would be beneficial rather than dissolving the program;
- Equitable access for all students at every school should be the goal and a central coordinator could help oversee a District wide program; and
- Director Williams-Taylor commented that a structural approach would be required to address programming at every school. She asked trustees to consider an inclusive model and not an outsourcing model to ensure accountability and that students' needs are met at their home schools;

Moved by Trustee Penny,

- A. THAT staff develop a plan to diversify our approach in how we support students in the OCDSB with an elite athlete profile in all schools;**
- B. THAT staff be directed to undertake the short term work as outlined in the report; and**
- C. THAT staff provide the Board with an update on the work done to develop a community school approach to support high performance athletes across the District in the spring of the 2021-2022 school year**

Carried

7.3 Report 20-084, Development of a Human Rights Policy (Tanner)

Your committee had before it Report 20-084 seeking approval of the Consultation Plan to develop a human rights policy.

Human Rights and Equity Advisor (HREA) Ms. Tanner provided a PowerPoint presentation to highlight key points of the report.

Moved by Trustee Ellis,

THAT the Consultation Plan for the development of an OCDSB Human Rights policy, attached as Appendix A to Report 20-084.

An amendment moved by Trustee Ellis,

THAT the consultation plan be amended to include School Councils and The Ottawa-Carleton Assembly of School Councils (OCASC) as key stakeholders, friendly

THAT the phase two consultation dates be revised to include “Presenting the draft policy to COW (April 13)”.

Carried-friendly

In response to questions and comments, the following was noted:

- The Ontario Human Rights Code sets the grounds for protecting people from discrimination and does not currently include socioeconomic status but does include those with mental health challenges. Looking at protected grounds of discrimination through the *International Bill of Rights*, it expands the ground of discrimination to included things like nationality, social status, and contains the term “other grounds.” This would indicate that it is not an exhaustive list and it is within the purview of the Board to make a policy decision to expand grounds to include socioeconomic status or otherwise;
- Human Rights and Equity Advisor Tanner acknowledged that consultation fatigue is real but noted concern that it would set a bad precedent to offer remuneration as an incentive and budget constraints would prohibit payment for this activity;
- Incentive to participate in consultation can include stakeholders’ knowledge that their input will have an impact on the policy;
- Feedback from the Advisory Committee on Equity (ACE) suggested that Indigenous groups should be engaged in one-on-one sessions;
- Director Williams-Taylor noted compensating groups monetarily would raise a question around ethics which could be problematic;
- Diversity is not common in rural schools and communities. An effort will be made to engage these communities to raise awareness, educate and promote a culture of diversity;
- Secondary school clubs such as the Rainbow youth or Black Excellence Club could also be consulted. An incentive could include community hours for students;
- The consultation plan does not denote a requirement for consultation with a defined number of individuals or groups;
- Surveys will be used to ensure an opportunity for a variety of voices to be heard and will provide a balance in quantitative and qualitative feedback;
- Certain groups may have more difficulty participating. For example, COVID-19 has affected participation in the 2SLGBTQ+ and Indigenous communities and the District must be sensitive to existing conditions to receive consultation feedback; and

- It will be important to interpret data through identity. Public meetings would require participants to fill anonymous identification forms to collect demographic data. Public meetings for a particular network or group of organizations would help identify larger groups without expressly collecting identity information, however, this method may overlook intersectionality data from participants.

Moved by Trustee Ellis,

THAT the Consultation Plan for the development of an OCDSB Human Rights policy, attached as Appendix A to Report 20-084, as amended. (Attached as Appendix C)

Carried

8. Report from Statutory and Other Committees

8.1 SEAC, 4 November 2020

Moved by Trustee Boothby,

THAT the SEAC Report of 4 November 2020 be approved.

Carried

8.2 PIC, 18 November 2020

Moved by Trustee Hough,

THAT the PIC Report of 18 November 2020 be approved.

Carried

8.3 Audit, 23 November 2020

Moved by Trustee Jennekens,

THAT the Audit Report of 23 November 2020 be approved.

Carried

9. Matters for Discussion

9.1 Report 20-114, Equitable Recruitment and Hiring Policy (McCoy)

Your Committee had before it Report 20-114, providing the draft hiring policy P.105.HR, Equitable Recruitment and Hiring of Teachers.

Superintendent McCoy introduced the report noting that the policy has been developed as part of the requirements of the draft Policy/Program Memorandum (PPM) following the repeal of *Regulation 274, Hiring Practices*, which set specific hiring practices for contract and long term occasional teachers. The draft PPM required school boards to have a policy in place by the end of December 2020.

Currently, the draft policy only addresses the hiring of teaching staff but may be revised to incorporate the hiring of all staff in the future.

During the discussion period, the following points were noted:

- Trustee Campbell requested that the following clauses be added to the policy: the addition of a monitoring process for gaps in representation, as well as being explicit in conferring to staff the authority to invoke the special programs clause as outlined in the PPM;
- In response to a query about a teaching staff diversity census, Superintendent McCoy noted that staff are currently in the process of planning for a survey. Some focus group sessions have taken place recently, led by a third party facilitator, where staff were asked to engage in some conversations around identity and engagement. A third party has been contracted to help launch an equity and engagement survey in early March 2021 that will collect identity-based data from staff, as well as information on staff engagement;
- In the development of the policy and procedure, the Equity team will continue to be involved in the discussions to ensure that staff are reflecting the principles underlying the Roadmap. There has been some discussion already about providing clarity of the term “lived experiences”, for example, supporting and living in different communities, which differs from only considering the traditional Ontario College of Teacher (OCT) qualifications;
- The limited timelines around the release of the PPM and the requirement to develop a policy have created challenges in consulting with various stakeholders, including the Advisory Committee on Equity (ACE). There will be an extension to the policy revision deadline which would permit the opportunity for ACE to provide input, subject to their meeting schedule. Trustee Bell requested that the policy be presented to ACE prior to Board approval;
- Mr. Lesage advised that ETFO is committed to equity, diversity and social justice in all its work. There is concern that revoking *Regulation 274* will lead to a shortage of occasional teachers because the clear path for the employment of occasional teachers has been removed. Mr. Lesage noted that staffing must be governed by a collective agreement and must be bargained. The broader definitions of experience in the policy are concerning to ETFO as this may lead to subjective hiring. He summarized by stating his concern that teachers outside of Ottawa could be given priority over teachers employed in the District due to the language in the policy;
- The policy and procedure are intended to include selection criteria that is broad and extends beyond the technical qualifications as set out in *Regulation 298*. It is intended to broaden what can be considered with a view to addressing barriers that might currently exist to promote diversity within the workforce;
- A gap in the monitoring and evaluation requirement outlined in the policy was identified and staff have committed to a review of this area and to make the necessary amendments before the policy is presented to the Board for approval. The reference to measuring and monitoring will align with the PPM and District policy language;

- Superintendent McCoy noted that she will review the language in the policy around lived experience to ensure clarity;
- Ms. Pat Dixon, representing the Ottawa-Carleton Elementary Occasional Teachers' Association (OCEOTA), noted that *Regulation 274*, was a superior process to ensure that hiring was not biased, as seniority based hiring ensured hiring was objective and based on merit, whereas the draft PPM encourages subjective hiring. Ms. Dixon summarized by saying that OCEOTA would like to work with the Board to develop a fair and bias free hiring process, noting that the current group of occasional teachers have worked to move up the ranks to become contract teachers and that may be undermined as applicants from outside the Ottawa area may take precedence;
- Superintendent McCoy advised the procedure will provide clarification on the lived experience qualification by providing a definition. A framework or parameters would be provided to hiring managers or principals for guidance to ensure that all criteria being used are consistent with the position they are seeking to fill;
- The policy must ensure that the possibility exists that individuals relocating to the area can be granted an interview without having to meet any additional criteria or stipulations. *Regulation 274* did restrict mobility and this provision is intended to address that restriction. Trustee Scott suggested that the language in this section be clarified as it suggests that an interview is guaranteed and there would be no discretion on the part of staff;
- There will continue to be a list of occasional teachers at the elementary and secondary panels, but the long term occasional teacher (LTO) roster will no longer be maintained. Teachers on the LTO roster, which was created under *Regulation 274*, will be able to apply to vacancies that arise in both permanent and long term occasional teaching positions, depending on their qualifications. The restrictions will no longer be in place that required principals to only consider the five most senior applicants; any qualified applicant will be able to apply and be eligible for consideration. The maintenance of the LTO list is not part of the draft PPM;
- When considering hiring applicants, the requirement to consider the most senior applicant is part of the interim hiring process, but is not part of the PPM. Some current collective agreements require a minimum number of applicants that need to be considered or interviewed. Those requirements will continue to be adhered to;
- There is nothing that precludes the District from "grandparenting" the LTO list but there would be no reason to retain the list unless it was to provide priority consideration to those on the list, which is not provided for within the PPM;
- The absence of *Regulation 274* and its specific requirements does not mean that those on the LTO list will not be hired for positions as their experience would continue to be valued in the hiring process. The difference is that under *Regulation 274*, only the technical Ontario College of Teachers requirements could be considered. Boards have always had concerns on hiring that was solely based on seniority;

- Director Williams-Taylor advised that the removal of *Regulation 274* is not intended to disadvantage a group of people, but to open up a space that allows the Board to be able to better serve students. Students have asked about representation and having teachers that represent their reality, in particular with Black and Indigenous students. The question has been asked repeatedly about what the District is doing to address students concerns. The repeal of *Regulation 274* is intended to provide some latitude to be able to serve specific groups of students;

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

- Trustee Lyra Evans noted her concern about removing seniority-based hiring leading to unconscious bias in the selection process. If precautions are taken to hire certain minoritized groups and bring back opinion-based hiring that could lead to the members of other groups being underrepresented; and
- Mr. LeSage cautioned that the District needs to value the service of the staff members who qualified for and were placed on the LTO list. He fears that if the LTO list is not retained, the members on the list will leave the District out of frustration. Mr. Lesage urged the Board to consider a grandfather clause for the staff members on the current LTO list.

10. Information Items:

10.1 Report from OPSBA (if required)

Trustee Boothby advised that the minutes of the 28 November 2020 OPSBA meeting were sent to trustees and highlighted the following:

- Changes to the retired teacher's pension rules will allow retired teachers to be re-deployed by the District for up to 95 days, an increase from the previous amount of 50 days;
- Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) is continuing with the digitization of the testing, however, this may be an issue for some students. This should be a topic of discussion at the Parent Involvement Committee (PIC), the Advisory Committee on Equity (ACE), and the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC).
- OPSBA passed a motion to hire an external third party to conduct an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Audit to determine the best approach to combat systemic racism and oppressive practices within the organization; and
- The Public Education Symposium (PES) will proceed on 28 January 2021 in a virtual format. There is no charge, however those interested will have to register in advance. The PES will be recorded for those who cannot attend;

10.2 New Ministry Initiatives Update (if required)

There were no new Ministry updates.

10.3 OSTA Update (if required)

Trustee Jennekens noted that the Ottawa-Student Transportation Authority held its Annual General Meeting on 7 December 2020 and that she was elected to the role of vice-chair.

11. New Business - Information and Inquiries

There was no new business.

12. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 10:43 p.m.

Keith Penny, Chair