

**WATERLOO REGION DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD  
STUDENT SENATE MEETING**

**MEETING MINUTES**

The Waterloo Region District School Board held a Student Senate Meeting on the evening of March 1, 2017 at 7:00 p.m. in the Education Centre Cambridge Room, with the following members in attendance:

- Student Trustees/Meeting Co-Chairs
  - H. Jamal, R. Barnes
- Trustees and Adult Attendees
  - C. Millar
- Student Senators
  - Grace M., Valerie K., Michael P., Katie E., William M., Tom J., Ben W., Nandini G., Sarah B., Oscar J-K.

**RECOGNITION OF ABORIGINAL LAND**

We would like to take a moment to acknowledge the territorial lands of the Haudenosaunee, the Neutrals, and the Anishnabee people and thank them for allowing us to do this good work on their traditional lands.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Student Trustee H. Jamal called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

**REVIEW OF AGENDA**

Student Trustee H. Jamal reviewed the agenda at 7:05 p.m.

**ICEBREAKER/TEAM BUILDING ACTIVITY**

Student Trustee R. Barnes led the Senators and attendees through a minefield activity at 7:07 p.m.

Student Trustee R. Barnes led the Senators and attendees through a school guessing activity at 7:14 p.m.

**GUEST SPEAKERS**

1. Coordinating Superintendent, Business Services & Treasurer of the Board, Matthew Gerard: *Budget Consultation Follow-Up and Budget Survey Presentation*

Coordinating Superintendent, M. Gerard returned to Student Senate to collect feedback from Senators on the budget consultation, announce the budget survey, and answer questions.

- **Single Stream Recycling question**
  - From the February Senate meeting
  - Problems at schools with students no recycling
  - Challenges include contamination and cost from the municipality
  - The Mollusk™ idea for underground storage of all recycling
- **Graduation rates**

- Impact of air conditioning at KCI/WCI on graduation rates
  - Only available in music room and the library at present
  - WCI feasibility study on rebuilding the school or making upgrades to the facilities
  - Budget for this year includes some infrastructure work to upgrade facilities throughout the system
- The Careers course is not very practical on making students aware of jobs and their requirements
- The Civics course should include more practical elements (taxes, voting, how to be an adult)
- Limiting the amount of homework assigned to students or some communication between teachers to ensure that students are not overwhelmed; provide more balance
- More involvement from guidance in helping students apply for college/university, help students realise that they are able to do this; provides support to students during a stressful time
- Starting sooner, not waiting until grade 12 to begin the conversation on their futures, what to do after high school
- Comprehensive involvement of families for ESL students to help them stay engaged
- Extra-curricular component keeps many students at school and is a good support for many; essential
- Softening of the 34 credit policy to make a fifth year more accessible to students; spread out their course load and take a co-op programme
- Making courses/classes more accessible (wait lists for courses needed for a university programme; math courses rarely work well online because they need teacher interaction
  - Some students do not learn well through online courses
- Limiting course conflicts after you have already selected your courses to ensure that students can learn what they're interested in
- **In-school support for mathematics**
  - Dedicated math support room at lunch with a math teacher available to answer questions
  - Having teaching assistants in the classroom to help provide support during a class
  - Desks in small groups to foster collaboration
  - Graphing calculators in class sets instead of requiring that each student purchase their own (class sets generally broken or missing)
  - Paper textbooks have some benefits (easy to flip from question pages to answer)
  - Too great an emphasis on speed (getting through content) over actually learning the material
  - Professional development for teachers surrounding how to help struggling students and inspiring students to enjoy learning mathematics
  - Are we tracking student achievement in e-learning versus traditional classroom performance (eg. accounting) as a Board?
    - What do we do with this information

- **Online support for mathematics**
  - Students do not just want the answers but are looking for something to teach them how to do problems/find answers like Wolfram Alpha (step-by-step solutions, not just final answers)
  - Online textbooks may be preferable but math classes typically rarely use any technology
  - Encouraging math departments to use Desmos on Chromebooks or mobile devices instead of purchasing graphing calculators
  - Touch or stylus enabled devices instead of Chromebooks so students can write answers without being limited to the capabilities of Google Docs for typing formulas or equations
  - Increase the availability of online homework help (<https://homeworkhelp.ilc.org/>) to all grades instead of limiting the service to grades nine and ten only
- **Student/Staff Well-Being**
  - Ensuring that each course uses all paper or all electronic; stressful to manage and balance
  - Later start times to help student achievement as the academic research indicates that this is more beneficial for students to start later and elementary start earlier; switch elementary and secondary start times
  - Teachers should aim to not assign homework, assignments, or projects during the winter break, march break
  - Mindfulness minutes at the start of each day to help students prepare and at the end to help students decompress; Plasticity company beginning research at local schools (Vista Hills)
  - Being more aware of mental health and having guidance counsellors talk to students about where to find supports
  - Include well-being (destress, take time for self) in civics and careers since they are already mandatory
  - Students do not know where to go for what problem; where do I go if I'm having a panic attack, where do I go if I don't feel safe, etc.?, and making this known to parents; clearly communicating \*all\* available resources to students
  - Senior students mentors or buddies to provide some peer tutoring/counselling in cases when it may be necessary
  - Accessible teaching materials (videos with subtitles to help those who may be hard of hearing)
  - Accessibility of buildings (WCI) and ensuring that students with physical disabilities or injuries can travel the building

## **POLICIES AND GOVERNANCE**

Student Trustee H. Jamal opened the floor to policy and governance information to discuss Student Trustee elections at 8:30 p.m.

- Brief outline of the roles and responsibilities of a Student Trustee
  - Review agenda packages and attend Public and In Camera sessions of the Board and Committee of the Whole, as well as other committee meetings
  - Participate in public discussions of the Board.

- Have his/her vote recorded for the purpose of public record and for accountability to the student body
- Prepare motions or amendments to motions to be submitted by a trustee on their behalf.
- Act with the decorum and expectations of all elected trustees.
- Provide co-chair leadership throughout the year to the Board’s Student Senate including calling meetings at least monthly, including the meeting to elect student trustees for the following term of office.
- Application requirements/steps
  - A detailed resume including level of completed education and relevant experiences (2 pages max.)
  - A current transcript of completed courses
  - A record of school attendance for the current year
  - A letter of intent (understanding and objectives in the role)
  - A letter of recommendation from the student’s current principal or a teacher
  - A letter of recommendation from a community member
  - A letter of parental permission for applicants under the age of 18
  - Candidates are to mail all of the above in a single envelope to the Education Centre (51 Ardelt Avenue, Kitchener) or they may deliver them in-person
  - Envelopes must be received no later than April 26 by end-of-day
  - Envelopes should be addressed to Jayne Herring: Manager, Corporate Services
- More more details: <https://www.wrdsb.ca/board-meetings/student-trustees/becoming-a-student-trustee/>

**ISSUES AND DISCUSSION**

Student Trustee R. Barnes opened the floor to concerns from Senators at 8:50 p.m.

- Issue raised concerning bussing from Jacob Hespeler Secondary School and Huron Heights Secondary School
  - Student Trustees will follow up with staff and get back to Student Senate in April

**CELEBRATING SCHOOL ACTIVITIES**

Student Trustee R. Barnes opened the floor for upcoming school activities at 8:55 p.m.

Event	Description	Date/Time	School
KWMUN	Model UN simulation (\$10): <a href="http://kwmun.ca">kwmun.ca</a>	April 1, 9-4	CHCI
Coffee House	Celebrating world water conservation day	Mar. 22	GPSS
Arts and Cultural Festival	Drama, visual arts, music, dance performances over two days	End of March	WCI
Night of a Thousand Dinners	Silent auction, multicultural food experiences, open to the community \$15	Marc. 3, 6:00 PM	CHCI
Coffee House	Musicians and other performances to support rebuilding cities in Syria	Mar. 29, TBD	CHCI
Leadership Dance	A non semi formal dance for leadership students in the region	Mar. 2, 7:10 PM	HHSS

**ADJOURNMENT**

Student Trustee R. Barnes adjourned the meeting at 9:03 p.m.