

WATERLOO REGION DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

STUDENT SENATE MEETING

Minutes

Date: January 6, 2016

Call to Order: 19:10 (7:10 PM)

Adjournment: 21:00 (9:00 PM)

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Speakers

Mr. Graham Shantz, Superintendent of Student Achievement (7:16 PM)

Refugee Reception Update

- Ongoing efforts within the board and across the region
- Background information
 - Waterloo region is one of six refugee resettlement areas in Ontario
 - This means that we have unique and specialized supports in place for refugees in our community
 - While Syrian refugees may be on the news, Waterloo region also accepts refugees from many other countries
- Reception House
 - An independent not-for-profit organization; not part of the WRDSB
 - Purpose is to help incoming refugees which land in Toronto or Montreal and are then resettled to Waterloo region
 - The first stop for many refugees is Reception House
 - Assists refugees with housing, accessing government services, budget planning, and other essentials
- WRDSB and Refugees
 - 1,150 Syrian refugees coming to Waterloo region
 - 800 Government assisted
 - 350 publicly/privately sponsored
 - 400-600 new students entering the board in elementary/secondary (estimated)
 - WRDSB is part of a region-wide strategy to prepare for incoming refugees
 - Involves about 200 people
 - Family/children's services, police, hospitals, education (WRDSB), etc.
 - WRDSB Refugee Reception Task Force
 - Comprised of principals, learning services, board psychologists, communications team, human resources team, student achievement, and enrollment services

- Initially expected refugees to begin arriving by end of December 2015, but the government delay allowed for additional time to prepare resources for refugees
- Priorities for the WRDSB
 - Welcome Centre at Margaret Avenue Public School
 - All incoming students will undergo assessment at the Welcome Centre (typically three hours)
 - Parents will work with settlement workers while students are assessed at the Welcome Centre
 - Settlement Workers help with bus routes, obtaining a social insurance number, etc.
 - Welcome Centre provide support to students as they enter school
 - Priority is to ensure that the Welcome Centre has enough capacity
- Resources for Schools
 - Document provided to school administration
 - Answers questions on staff training, school resources, physical/mental health, and equity and inclusion
 - Assessment on staff requirements
 - Additional teachers, educational assistants (EAs), English as a second language (ESL) teachers, etc.
 - Working to address and stop divisiveness in the community
 - Communications
 - New page on WRDSB website with resources for refugees
 - Information sessions for privately sponsored refugees (well received)
- Region wide actions
 - Syrian Refugee Resettlement Preparedness Plan
 - Meeting between 200 individuals from regional groups (see above)
 - Addressing issues such as housing, integration, health, emergency preparedness, etc.
 - Housing is a challenge; sudden housing needs for ~1,200 people
- Refugees expected to be arriving in the next 3-4 weeks
 - Most will be going to schools with ESL magnet programs
 - Eastwood, Forest Heights, GCI
- Reception House currently at capacity
 - Refugees being transitioned to more permanent housing
- Question/Answer
 - Will more public health nurses be available to assist refugees?
 - No additional nurses will be available
 - Refugees will be directed to primary care (family physicians accepting new patients)
 - Will there be opportunities for students from Senate to be involved?
 - Speak to your school principal about these:
 - Consider planning welcome assemblies if your school is receiving refugees
 - Upcoming board-wide fundraising initiative for refugees
 - Will refugees in their final year of high school be assisted beyond the WRDSB? Post-secondary education?
 - WRDSB is allowed to service students up to age 21

- Most refugees already have prior education
- Main purpose to help with English language acquisition (ELD program at Eastwood)
- Beyond age 21, Conestoga College and the Catholic board offer options for students
- Where can students learn more?
 - There is an 8-9 page background booklet which provides historical details on the conflict, refugees, etc. which may be made available
 - Approach your school's leadership council or administration

Mr. Matthew Gerard, Superintendent of Business & Treasurer of the Board (7:40 PM)

Follow up to previous presentation on the budget

- Reminder that there is a procedure in place for budget approval by the trustees
- Follow up to the five questions asked
 - What programs are essential to learning?
 - Basic mathematic skills (taxes, etc.) for use after high school
 - Arts program at Eastwood
 - Core compulsory subjects (English, mathematics, science)
 - English because of its universal applicability and wide uses
 - What programs are essential to wellbeing?
 - Music department
 - Sports teams
 - Student activities
 - Guidance
 - Breakfast club
 - Sexual health nurse (only available one day per week; better accessibility/frequency)
 - Child and youth worker (only available two days per week; better accessibility/frequency)
 - Gay-Straight Alliance / Gender Sexuality Awareness (GSA) clubs
 - Physical education
 - Designated prayer rooms/quiet rooms for students
 - What resources used in the classroom are useful for learning?
 - Textbooks are essential (newer textbooks would be appreciated)
 - Ceiling mounted projectors instead of mobile projector workstations (COWs)
 - More chromebooks
 - Allows for independent research/reading
 - Some teachers require PowerPoint; not available on Chromebooks
 - Teachers may plan lessons for a certain period but are then able to get the Chromebooks with the resources only being available online
 - Full transition to virtual resources
 - Catholic board uses iPads for textbooks
 - Not enough print credits when some teachers require that students print course materials
 - 200 pages for biology, French worksheets, etc.
 - Student choice between electronic and physical textbooks

- Option for students to pay once at the start of the year and buy all required handouts from teachers to supplement limited print credits
 - Purchase double sided printers to save paper
 - Teachers having to purchase class sets of textbooks is unfair
 - Manufacturing and Computer Technologies; students waste supplies (no course fee)
 - Where can the board save costs/increase efficiency?
 - Double sided printing
 - Bursaries and grants through the eco-schools program
 - Dyson hand dryers as opposed to paper towels, student-run recycling/composting programs
 - Reduce automatic timer on lights to save electricity (10 minutes instead of 15)
 - Electronic waste recycling
 - Remove IT redundancies (Moodle; self-hosted)
 - Some students upset over the funding of the WRDSB boardroom instead of money being spent on schools
 - Inter-school resource swap portal/site (e.g. Eastwood has speaker system which Forest Heights needs for event. The speaker system can be loaned between schools rather than being rented commercially)
- *Note: Most of the following questions should be forwarded to your leadership council, leadership council teacher, and/or school administration*
 - Club funding and preference for certain clubs (DECA, etc.)
 - Where does the money from student cards go?
 - It's unfair to have teachers pay for clubs to operate
 - Some clubs are offered funding and others are not
 - Funding for social programs (Nutrition for Learning, Charity Begins at Home)
 - Class sizes and not enough space/seats available
 - No reimbursement provided for school decorating
 - Standardized reimbursement forms
 - Club Funding Proposals
 - Club eligibility for Waterloo Education Foundation Inc. (WEFI)
 - Ask your principal
 - About the Forest Heights Innovate Magnet Program
 - Broken promises on more technology, more trips, and sofas
 - No student fees for the Innovate Program as a potential reason
 - Approach your principal
- Question/Answer
 - Did changing start times and the bussing schedule save costs?
 - Overall, yes
 - Fuel costs were going up, but holding steady now
 - Minimum wage increasing
 - Capital costs (busses)
 - Review by the Auditor General on transportation
 - There are systems in place to counter inefficient routes
 - Are there other ways for Senators to participate?

- Upcoming budget consultation in February

Policies, Governance, and Updates (8:50 PM)

- Policies being reviewed this month:
 - First Nations, Metis, and Inuit (FNMI) Voluntary Identification Policy
 - Freedom of Information and Records Management
 - Environmental Values Trustee Honoraria
 - Staff Dress Code
 - Pupil Accommodation Review (Consolidation or Closure) Early Learning and Care Travel, Meals, Hospitality- Trustees
 - Expressions of Sympathy
 - Employment and Placement of Relatives
- Mr. Mark Carbone, the WRDSB's Chief Information Officer, will be attending our next meeting
 - Come up with some questions related to Waterworks, Chromebooks, IT, etc.
 - Ask your friends
- Remember to send someone on your behalf if you cannot attend

Activity Updates (8:51 PM)

Event	Cause/Description	Date/Time	Location
Black History Week	Observance of Black History Month	February	ECI
Bubble Wrap on Walls	Exam relaxation/stress reduction	-	-
Puppies in Schools	Exam stress relief	January	KCI
Carnations (regional)	St. Mary's Cardiac Care Fund	February 12...	BCI
Quarters for Charity	Free the Children; Water (\$250 goal)	Wednesdays	Glenview
Love Yourself	Promoting mental health awareness	After Valentine's	ECI
AURA: DeStress Fest	Yoga and meditation before exams	January 12	CHCI