

**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 January 11, 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, N. Waddell, K. Donkers
- Student Senators
 - S. Luo, A. Paynter, M. McLeod, N. Couzens, G. Melchers, V. Koch, A. Tsetsekas, A. Marchisio, M. Pisters, K. Elka, W. McKinnon, J. Dilgert, B. Whal, S. Nelles, Z. Rehan, N. Gokhale, C. Sweet, O. Judelson-Kelly

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 7:00 p.m.

REVIEW OF AGENDA

Student Trustee R. Barnes reviewed the agenda at 7:01 p.m.

ICEBREAKER/TEAM BUILDING ACTIVITY

Student Trustee R. Barnes led the Senators and attendees through a one truth one lie activity at 7:02 p.m.

GUEST SPEAKERS

1. Superintendent of Business Services and Treasurer of the Board, Matthew Gerard: *Annual Budget Presentation and Questions for Senators*

Superintendent, Business Services M. Gerard gave a presentation to Student Senate on grants and funding, expenditures and influencing factors, and capital projects and programs at 7:12 p.m. M. Gerard also obtained preliminary verbal feedback from Senators and answered questions.

- Budget Overview
 - Funded by the Ministry of Education
 - Many different funds but large reporting requirement
 - Leads Financial Services and Budget Holder teams
 - Annually, about \$700 million in revenue to operate schools
- Sources
 - Student enrolment
 - Two-thirds of GSN is enrolment based

- Growing board, past 62,000 students
 - Year-over-year surplus
 - Investments in Chromebooks and wireless infrastructure
 - One of four boards that continue to grow
 - Accountability and reporting to Trustees
- Average Daily Enrolment (ADE)
 - Two count dates; October 31 and March 31
 - Forecasted 61,314.45 but had over 62,000 on the October count date
 - Students moving from Catholic to Public elementary schools, families moving
 - Syrian newcomers and all immigration help the Board maintain its enrolment numbers
 - Ninth largest Board in the province
 - Working to build new schools near Huron Heights as it is nearing capacity (new builds)
 - New elementary schools as well (Chicopee Hills, Vista Hills, Groh PS)
 - 101 elementary (about 600 per school; large), 16 secondary
- Grant revenues
 - Two-pupil grants
 - Pupil foundation grant (teachers, TAs, ECEs, textbooks, learning materials, etc.)
 - School foundation grant (principal, vice-principal, secretarial staff)
 - Special purpose grants (spec ed., FNMI, language, safe and accepting schools)
- Money that is not spent is carried over
- Almost 3/4 of expenditures is spent on classroom instruction > school administration >
 - Administration and governance capped at 2% by the ministry
- Funding remains stable year-over-year at \$22.86 billion (provincial)
- Priorities: success and well-being of every student, mathematics, capital investments and renewal (\$10 million in July 2016)
- 2016/17 budget highlights
 - \$489,105,542 > \$501,859,566 (classroom instruction)
 - Increases in classroom administration and governance
 - Facility Condition Index
 - Provincial average - 27.5%
 - WRDSB - 19%
 - In general, buildings beyond 50% are prohibitive to repair (closed and rebuilt)
 - School renewal and school improvement grants increased
 - School Operating Budgets
 - Allocated to schools and managed directly by the school administrator and based on enrolment
 - Maintenance work order requests, dedicated special education funds, student assistants' support, some textbooks
 - Capital projects
 - Groh Public School
 - Chicopee Hills Public Schools
 - Wireless network and infrastructure

- Telecommunications and phone systems
- Note: The Ministry will only fund a school once it opens; WRDSB bring on a principal and secretary, desks, technology

Superintendent M. Gerard took questions from Student Senators at 7:50 p.m.

- How do Ministry of Education grants impact AP/IB programs in schools?
 - Grants do not cover these special programs and are covered by student fees instead of Ministry grants
- How does the transportation consortium save costs for both the WRDSB and WCDSB?
 - Consolidated staff and resources, busses run multiple routes, better service to students
- How can a student provide input on school operating budget allocation?
 - Each school has a budget vice principal. Students should find the one at their school and begin a dialogue with them

Student Trustees H. Jamal and R. Barnes introduced the Senator task to be completed before the February meeting at 8:01 p.m.:

- Every Senator should obtain feedback from students at their school using the form available in Appendix A
 - The form in the Appendix is the minimum required to be completed by the February meeting
 - Senators should also talk to FastTrack/AP/IB students, as well as teachers and administrators

Superintendent M. Gerard asked for any final comments or thoughts from Senators on resources that could help improve mathematics, graduation rates, and student well-being at 8:03 p.m.

- Mathematics
 - Provide graphing calculators in math classes that need them as students are currently required to purchase them; expensive
 - Providing extra help to students who are struggling (assistant teachers to help with review and questions, lunch help, etc.)
- Graduation rates
 - Guidance counsellors and departments being better equipped to handle requests and questions from students on post-secondary pathways, more contact before grade 12, specific help in completing university applications, academic supports
- Student Well-being
 - Extra curricular activities and assist in subsidizing these costs as they promote student community and wellness overall

DISCUSSION ON STUDENT WELLNESS AND WELL-BEING

Student Trustee H. Jamal and R. Barnes opened the discussion on Student Wellness and Well-being in the following format at 8:10 p.m.:

1. Senators were given 20 minutes in focus groups to formulate responses to prompts and questions on chart paper:
 - a. Define, in words or in a picture, a healthy school
 - b. What supports and resources do you have at your school for student well-being?

- c. How can we make students aware about supports and resources in their school (beyond social media and morning announcements)?
- d. What is the role of administrators/board staff/school staff/teachers/students in promoting well-being?

General themes that emerged from the discussion (detailed responses from chart paper included in Appendix B):

- Students who are feeling anxious or stressed typically do not know who to talk to
- Well-being is not discussed in assemblies; agree that it should be in every assembly
 - E.g. if you are feeling stressed or anxious, please go talk to x
- Two main problems:
 - Awareness: Students are not aware of what specific programs and services exist at each school for each issue (stress, anxiety, academic difficulties, etc.)
 - Accessibility: Students do not feel comfortable going to a guidance counsellor for other issues as they are very busy and are unsure if they are the right person to ask for help
- School administration (principals and vice-principals) needs to be more visible in the hallways, classrooms, etc. making connections with students
- School staff (teachers and guidance counsellors) need more and improved professional development on developing relationships with their students, on how to identify students who are struggling (stress, relationships, home)
- Guidance counsellors are too busy and it is difficult to see them
 - Academic issues seems to be their priority
 - Generally not enough guidance counsellors to support students academically and as developing individuals
- Students identified their peers as often their first contact when they need help
 - How can we educate/train/update so that there are peer helpers or peer mentors?
- Programs are sporadic, not at every school, and depend on the administration
 - There needs to be some unity/standard on certain programs that every school offers and a greater emphasis needs to be placed on promoting these programs

CELEBRATING SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

- Student Trustee H. Jamal opened the floor for past and upcoming school activities from Senators at 8:50 p.m.

Event	Description	School	Date
KWMUN	Kitchener-Waterloo Model United Nations: kwmun.ca	CHCI	Apr. 1
Save the Evidence	Fundraiser for the Mohawk Institute (former residential school in need of repairs)	CHCI	Jan. 13
Stress Buster Night	Evening event to help students unwind before exams and assessments	HHSS	Jan. 13
Empty Stocking	Fundraiser to purchase Christmas presents for	CHCI	Past

Fund	families in the community		
Carnation Sales	All school Carnation Committees should contact Connor Sweet to coordinate delivery and ordering of Carnations before February	BCI	February

ADJOURNMENT

Student Trustees R. Barnes adjourned the meeting at 9:00 p.m.

What Resources Would Best Help You in The Following Areas?

	Mathematics	Graduation Rates	Student Well-being
Grade 9 Applied Male			
Grade 9 Applied Female			
Grade 10 Applied Male			
Grade 10 Applied Female			
Grade 11 Applied Male			
Grade 11 Applied Female			
Grade 12 Applied Male			
Grade 12 Applied Female			
Grade 9 Academic Male			
Grade 9 Academic Female			
Grade 10 Academic Male			
Grade 10 Academic Female			
Grade 11 Academic Male			
Grade 11 Academic Female			
Grade 12 Academic Male			
Grade 12 Academic Female			

APPENDIX B

- A. Define, in words or in a picture, a healthy school
 - a. Positive, engaging, collaborative, inclusive, friendly, responsive, safe, caring
- B. What supports and resources do you have at your school for student well-being?
 - a. Guidance counsellors though not very effective
 - b. Child/youth workers but unsure what services they provide/where they are/when to go to them
 - c. Nurses for reproductive health concerns
 - d. Student success rooms though does not exist in all schools/unsure of where they are/what services they provide
 - e. MISSING: an obvious and single point-of-contact for stress, anxiety, depression for all problems (stress/exam anxiety, general depression, etc.)
 - i. Note: Students are aware of mindfulness/meditation clubs but are unsure of where to go if they feel they need professional/adult help to manage the issue (large workload, feel as though they are drowning, etc.)
- C. How can we make students aware about supports and resources in their school (beyond social media and morning announcements)?
 - a. Posters in washrooms, at the start and end of every spirit assembly in every secondary school in the Board, morning announcements every day (Board memo may be required to tell schools to do this)
 - b. Word of mouth is most effective, but student leaders need to be made aware of all supports and programs first, then information will diffuse out
- D. What is the role of administrators/board staff/school staff/teachers/students in promoting well-being?
 - a. Unsure of a role for Board or school administrators/staff
 - b. Teachers should actively promote well-being initiatives in their classrooms
 - c. Students spread and share information
- E. Suggestions
 - a. Mindfulness moments every day (before start of day or at the end of the school day); guided by a teacher in the classroom
 - b. Clear direction to resources when needed without students having to wonder
 - c. Other as above or discussed in themes