

**WATERLOO REGION DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD**

**NOTICE OF SPECIAL MEETING**

A **Special Board Meeting** of the Waterloo Region District School Board will be held via teleconference on **Monday, March 30, 2020, at 7:00 p.m.**

**AGENDA**

**Call to Order**

**Approval of Agenda**

**Consent Agenda\*\***

**Receipt/Approval of Minutes:**

Approve Minutes – Parent Involvement Committee Meeting of December 3, 2019

Approve Minutes – Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting of January 8, 2020

Receive Minutes – Board Meeting of February 24, 2020

Approve Minutes – Committee of the Whole Meeting of March 9, 2020

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51 Durham District School Board to Ministry of Education

**Question Period (10 minutes)**

**Adjournment**

\*\*All matters listed under the Consent Agenda are considered not to require debate by the Board of Trustees and should be approved in one motion in accordance with the recommendation contained in each report.

# Report to Board of Trustees

March 30, 2020

**Subject: Staffing Information –  
Retirements and Resignations**

## **Recommendation**

*This report is provided for information of the Board.*

## **Status**

The employees listed in Appendix A of this report have received acknowledgement of their retirement or resignation.

## **Background**

The board's practice is to receive information regarding staff retirements and resignations at regular monthly board meetings.

## **Financial implications**

Expenses are within the existing approved budget.

## **Communications**

Employees listed in this report have communicated through Human Resource Services.

Prepared by: Michael Weinert, Coordinating Superintendent, Human Resource Services, in consultation with Coordinating Council.

## Appendix A

**Staffing Statistics – Retirements**  
**Current at March 30, 2020**

<b>Retirements: Elementary Teaching Staff</b>				
<b>First</b>	<b>Last</b>	<b>Position/Location</b>	<b>Retirement Date</b>	<b>Years of Service</b>
Deborah	Castle	Teacher, Saginaw PS	March 31, 2020	20
Bernice	Clancy	Teacher, St. Jacobs PS	June 26, 2020	31
Mary Jean	Fleming	Early Literacy Teacher, Howard Robertson PS	June 30, 2020	16
Annemarie	Kruger	Teacher, Sandhills PS	June 30, 2020	31
Alison	Krupicz	Teacher, Sandhills PS	June 30, 2020	21
Josie	Mayo	Teacher, Forest Glen PS	August 31, 2020	31
Carrie-Lynn	Millest	Teacher, Sandhills PS	June 30, 2020	30
Holly	Taylor	Teacher, Laurentian PS	June 30, 2020	26
Jennifer	Tummillo	SERT Teacher, Glencairn PS	March 31, 2020	31
Paul	Witmer	Teacher, Howard Robertson PS	June 30, 2020	23

<b>Retirements: Secondary Teaching Staff</b>				
<b>First</b>	<b>Last</b>	<b>Position/Location</b>	<b>Retirement Date</b>	<b>Years of Service</b>
Jennifer	Goodwin	Teacher, Waterloo Oxford SS	June 30, 2020	22
Craig	Matthews	Teacher, Huron Heights SS	June 30, 2020	32
Erma	Repei	Teacher, Waterloo Oxford SS	June 30, 2020	30
Linda	Ritter	ESL Teacher, Forest Heights SS	June 30, 2020	26
Calvin	Van Eek	Family Studies Department Head, Waterloo Oxford SS	June 30, 2020	21

<b>Retirements: Administrative &amp; Support Staff</b>				
<b>First</b>	<b>Last</b>	<b>Position/Location</b>	<b>Retirement Date</b>	<b>Years of Service</b>
Sandra	Adair	Head Secretary, Chicopee Hills PS	June 29, 2020	8
Linda	Addis	Head Custodian, Smithson PS	May 31, 2020	36
Judith	Stewart	Head Secretary, Lincoln Heights PS	June 30, 2020	25
Jansje	Webster	Library Clerk, Chalmers Street PS	June 30, 2020	20

**Staffing Statistics – Resignations**  
**Current at March 30, 2020**

<b>Permanent Staff Resignations:</b>			
<b>First</b>	<b>Last</b>	<b>Position/Location</b>	<b>Effective Date</b>
Elisabeth	Angus	Educational Assistant, Grand View PS (C)	June 25, 2020
Chad	Keller	Supervisor, Facility Services	March 13, 2020
Sebastian	Cressman	Custodian, Lester B Pearson PS	March 12, 2020
Krista	Harvey	Head Secretary, Pioneer Park PS	March 20, 2020



# Report to Board of Trustees

March 30, 2020

## **Subject: Staffing Recommendations – Appointments**

### **Recommendation**

*That the Waterloo Region District School Board approve the appointments to staff as outlined in the report titled “Staffing Recommendations – Appointments, dated March 30, 2020.*

### **Status**

The staff appointments as noted on Appendix A of this report are effective the dates indicated.

### **Background**

The board’s practice has been to have appointments presented for information at regular monthly board meetings.

### **Financial implications**

Expenses are within the existing approved budget.

### **Communications**

Employees listed in this report have, or will be advised of the appointments.

Prepared by: Michael Weinert, Coordinating Superintendent, Human Resource Services, in consultation with Coordinating Council.

**Staffing Information – New Appointments**  
**Current at March 30, 2020**

<b>New Appointments: Elementary Teachers</b>			
<b>First</b>	<b>Last</b>	<b>School ID / Education Centre</b>	<b>Effective Date</b>
Serkan	Akgol	Pioneer Park PS	March 2, 2020
Aimee	Deluce	Silverheights PS	March 9, 2020
Katelyn	Lapalme	Westheights PS	March 2, 2020
Bradley	Marquardt	Moffat Creek PS	February 27, 2020
Nastassia	Petersen	Crestview PS	February 18, 2020
Christopher	Price	Centennial PS (W)	March 12, 2020
Jennifer	Schut	Highland PS	March 9, 2020
Tessa	Smits	Franklin PS	February 24, 2020

<b>New Appointments: Administrative and Support Staff</b>			
<b>First</b>	<b>Last</b>	<b>School ID / Education Centre</b>	<b>Effective Date</b>
Christina	Bloemendal	Secretary, Vista Hills Public School	February 10, 2020
Anne	Diegel	Administrative Assistant to Coordinating Superintendent, Business Services	March 11, 2020
Timothy	Huggins	Supervisor, Facility Services	March 30, 2020
Jane	Kains	Supervisor, Facility Services	March 9, 2020
Alex	Ramirez	Supervisor, Facility Services	March 2, 2020
Venkatesh	Thammi	Application Programmer, ITS	March 9, 2020

*New Hires - due to retirements, resignations or leaves and are to replace full or part time vacancies.*

*Human Resource Services*



## Report to Board

March 30, 2020

### Subject: Long Term Fiscal Sustainability and Stability Task Force Quarterly Update

#### Recommendation

*This report is for the information of the Board.*

#### Status

The Long Term Fiscal Sustainability and Stability Task Force (known as Fiscal Task Force) consists of the following members:

- Natalie Waddell, Trustee
- Kathleen Woodcock, Trustee
- Sean Finn, WREA Representative (Feb 2020 – present)
- Sharlene McHolm, WREA Representative
- Krista Tucker Petrick, WREA Representative (Feb 2020 – present)
- Cathy Vollmer-Ashley, SSPA Representative (Sept – Jan 2020)
- Siobhan Watters, SSVPA Representative (Sept 2019 – Jan 2020)
- Siobhan Watters, SSPA Representative (Feb 2020 – present)
- Lila Read, Associate Director
- Matthew Gerard, Coordinating Superintendent, Business Services & Treasurer of the Board

The members in attendance at each meeting are as follows:

#### Members

Member's Name	Oct 1/19	Feb 4/20	Feb 27/20	Mar 9/20
Natalie Waddell, Trustee	X	X	X	X
Kathleen Woodcock, Trustee	X	X	X	X
Sean Finn, WREA	N/A	X		X
Sharlene McHolm, WREA	X	X		X
Krista Tucker Petrick, WREA	N/A	X	X	X
Cathy Vollmer-Ashley, SSPA	X	N/A	N/A	X
Siobhan Watters, SSVPA/SSPA	X		X	X
Lila Read, Associate Director			X	X
Matthew Gerard, Coordinating Superintendent, Business Services & Treasurer	X	X	X	X

X – Present

**Others in Attendance**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Oct 1/19</b>	<b>Feb 4/20</b>	<b>Feb 27/20</b>	<b>Mar 9/20</b>
Dana Liebermann, Manager of Research	X	X	X	X
Myah Robinson, Student Trustee	N/A	X		X
Narein Chenthielvelnathan, Student Trustee	N/A			

X – Present

The committee met in October, twice in February and March to discuss the Board's annual budget survey. The feedback received through the budget survey supports the development of the Board's annual budget. The budget survey will be available from March 23, 2020 to April 9, 2020. These timelines will provide ample opportunity for feedback and time for staff to analyze the information received. The Fiscal Task Force will provide the results of the budget survey to the Committee of the Whole prior to 2020/21 budget discussions.

**March 27, 2020 Update**

In light of the global outbreak of COVID-19 and the efforts our provincial and federal governments have taken to minimize the spread of the virus locally, the Fiscal Task Force has determined that the budget survey will not go forward as planned this year. Unfortunately, we are faced with a prolonged system closure and the needs of our stakeholders have shifted towards managing the spread of COVID-19 and the continuity of learning for students. Further, due to the uncertainty about the length of the closure period, it will be nearly impossible to administer the survey in a time frame that will allow staff to adequately analyze the results and bring forward meaningful information in a timely fashion so as to inform the budget process.

The budget survey is a valuable tool to both Trustees and Staff as we develop a sustainable budget that supports our system to attain high levels of achievement and well-being. The Fiscal Task Force intends to resume administration of the budget survey in our next school year which will inform the 2021/2022 school year budget.

**Background**

By way of a Board motion passed on June 23, 2014, the Fiscal Task Force was established. The mandate of the Fiscal Task Force is to undertake discussions, consider options and solutions to ensure the long term sustainability and stability of the Board. The Fiscal Task Force's Terms of Reference require quarterly updates to the Board of Trustees.



**Financial implications**

No financial implications.

**Communications**

The budget survey was posted on the Board's website in March 2020. Communication Services will assist in raising awareness of the survey.

Prepared by: Matthew Gerard, Coordinating Superintendent,  
Business Services & Treasurer of the Board  
in consultation with Coordinating Council



February 21, 2020

The Honourable Stephen Lecce  
 Minister of Education  
 22nd Floor, Mowat Block  
 900 Bay Street  
 Toronto, ON M7A 1L2

To the Honourable Stephen Lecce, Minister of Education,

On Wednesday, February 19, 2020, the Board of Trustees of the Halton District School Board unanimously directed the Chair to write a letter to the Minister of Education.

The resolution was as follows:

*Be it resolved that the Chair write a letter on behalf of the Board of Trustees to the Minister of Education to draw attention to the impacts and implications of announced education reforms on the Halton District School Board, and ongoing anticipated pressures in the budgeting process for the 2020/2021 school year. The letter will also include a request to refrain from using confusing and divisive rhetoric in the media and to return to the bargaining table in the hopes of focusing on a respectful process and positive outcomes for students that lead to investment in education and to return the education sector to stability.*

Minister Lecce, the Halton District School Board is the fastest growing public board in Ontario. Last year we welcomed just over one thousand additional students to our classrooms. Our secondary student-to-teacher average jumped from 22:1 in the 2018/2019 school year to 24.85:1 in the 2019/2020 school year. This resulted in the loss of over 500 classes in our secondary schools. During the same time period, the number of classes with 35 or more students almost quadrupled. It has been reported by both you and Premier Ford that the class size average increase is moving from 28 to 25. Our board is very close to the 25:1 ratio right now due to the changes last year and it has the potential to surge well beyond 25 for the 2020/2021 school year.

Budget planning for next year has started under a cloud of uncertainty. Trustees were made aware that, while you have said the ratio would be 25:1, there has been no new directive from the Ministry to change the existing 28:1 ratio. Recently, we participated in a budget consultation on cutting red tape and securing efficiencies. Providing this kind of key information BEFORE we invest a great deal of time into budget planning would be a welcome efficiency measure.

Street Address: J.W. Singleton Education Centre • 2050 Guelph Line, Burlington, Ontario L7P 5A8

Mailing Address: J.W. Singleton Education Centre • P.O. Box 5005, Stn. LCD 1, Burlington, Ontario L7R 3Z2

**Phone: 905-335-3663 | 1-877-618-3456 Fax: 905-335-9802**

**[www.hdsb.ca](http://www.hdsb.ca)**

Due to the increased average class size ratio and the reduction of other provincial funding, our board has lost 189 positions, most of which were secondary teaching positions. At a time when mental health issues are a rising concern in our schools, overfilling classrooms with more students, removing course choices for students, and removing caring adults from our buildings (the same caring adults that run extracurriculars in our schools) seems like an illogical plan to combat the problem. Additionally, many of our classrooms cannot physically accommodate the large loads that a 28:1 ratio requires. Many air circulation systems found in schools were not designed for sustained student loads of over 30 students and upgrading these systems is cost-prohibitive.

As a growth board, the higher class size average ratio is devastating and will continue to have harsh implications within our system. Minister Lecce, I invite you to visit our schools and talk with our students. We would be happy to host you and show you what our current class size average of 24.85:1 ratio looks like in our classrooms and feels like for students. This can serve as a glimpse at what is to come for the rest of the province.

As you are aware, the Trustees of the Halton District School Board conducted a consultation in May 2019 following the education reform announcements. The 6853 Halton residents (92% of which were parents) provided their opinions on class size averages and mandatory e-learning. The results were clear:

- 76% of respondents stated that the 22:1 secondary class size ratio was appropriate
- 88% of respondents stated that the 28:1 secondary class size ratio was too high
- 75% of respondents stated that elementary class size change to 24.5:1 was too high
- 1% indicated that e-learning is the best method of learning for all students

The full report is available at <http://HaltonEducationAction.ca>.

OPSBA, in association with Nanos Research, also conducted a poll released in November 2019 that included these results:

- Ontarians are twice as likely to say spending money on public education is more important than eliminating the deficit.
- A majority of Ontarians agree that spending on public education is an investment in the future

The full report is available at <https://www.opsba.org/strong-support-for-public-education-in-ontario>.

The Conference Board of Canada stated that “each dollar of public education spending generates \$1.30 in total economic benefits to Ontario. At the same time, the inverse holds true for each dollar taken from public education.” It seems education has an excellent return on investment and the taxpayers of Ontario would expect the Province to take full advantage of this to benefit the economy and the people of the province.

The Trustees have noted the disparaging and confusing rhetoric in the media during the negotiation process. The comments are divisive and unhelpful in achieving a timely resolution to central bargaining processes. We respectfully request that you lead by example in setting a positive and collaborative tone.

The Trustees of the Halton District School Board appreciate our employees and the work they perform every day for our students to “Learn, Grow and Succeed”, and we value the positive relationships that we have

worked hard to nurture locally. Trustees have noted that central bargaining has been in abeyance with OSSTF for two months and negotiations have stopped with ETFO. Future bargaining dates have not been established for either union. These contracts expired nearly six months ago. We ask that the Province work with the mediator to bring all parties back to the negotiations table as soon as possible. It is time to bring stability back to our schools.

Finally, the Trustees have sent two letters focused on the March 2019 announcements on [May 29, 2019](#) and [June 24, 2019](#) and have yet to receive a response. We are committed to working with you and education partners around the province to support students in our world-class education system. Our focus is on students and as such, I will end this letter with a statement our Student Trustee, Olivia Lau, made during the February 19, 2020 Board Meeting:

*On behalf of myself, Trustee Burnes and Student Senate, we stand behind this letter 100%. This is because even a marginal increase in class sizes can mean reduced pathway choices for students, fewer caring adults to support students' mental health, and less meaningful face to face time with teachers. This will critically decrease the quality of our current world-class education system. Students need everyone at the table to truly treat this education system as an investment in the future of Ontario and we need to see all parties at the bargaining table focus on the students who are feeling the impacts the most.*

We welcome your timely response.

Sincerely,



Andréa Grebenc  
Chair of the Board of Trustees  
Halton District School Board

Cc: Stuart Miller, Director of Education, HDSB  
Ted Arnott, MPP  
Stephen Crawford, MPP  
Parm Gill, MPP  
Jane McKenna, MPP  
Effie, Triantafilopoulos, MPP  
Ontario Public School Board Association  
Ontario Student Trustees' Association  
HDSB Board of Trustees  
HDSB School Councils



# Bluewater District School Board

351 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue North – PO Box 190  
 Chesley ON N0G 1L0  
 Telephone: (519) 363-2014 Fax: (519) 370-2909  
 www.bwdsb.on.ca

February 26, 2020

The Honourable Christine Elliott  
 Minister of Health  
 Ontario Ministry of Health  
 5th Floor  
 777 Bay Street  
 Toronto, Ontario M7A 2J3

Dear Minister Elliott:

On behalf of Bluewater District School Board, we wish to express our support for the letter of January 10, 2020 sent to you by Waterloo Region District School Board regarding concerns around the use of vaping products in our school communities.

Our board has been working proactively with our community partners at Grey Bruce Health Unit to raise student awareness and implement school-based cessation initiatives related to vaping and tobacco use. This important work aligns with the goals and evidence-based strategies identified by School Mental Health Ontario to promote student-engaged, developmentally appropriate mental health learning, and ensure schools are equipped with accessible prevention and early intervention services.

We echo the perspectives shared by Waterloo Region District School Board regarding the growing threat posed by vaping to student health and well-being. We also support their request for an increase to the minimum age for the sale of tobacco and vaping products, while prohibiting the sale of flavoured vaping products.

As always, our commitment remains focused on providing a quality education for every student in a safe, accepting, and caring environment.

Sincerely,

Jan Johnstone  
 Chair

Jane Thomson  
 Vice-Chair

cc: The Honourable Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario  
 The Honourable Stephen Lecce, Minister of Education  
 Grey Bruce Health Unit  
 Ontario Public School Boards' Association  
 Chairs of Ontario English Public School Boards

/jp



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March 9, 2020

The Honourable Stephen Lecce  
Minister of Education  
315 Front Street West, 14th Floor  
Toronto, Ontario M7A 0B8

Dear Minister Lecce:

On behalf of Bluewater District School Board, we wish to express our concern over the legislated increases to the average class size in secondary schools. Bluewater District School Board is a rural school board with approximately 17,000 students spread over 8,600 square kilometers. We have nine secondary schools, seven of which are part of grades JK-12 or 7-12 configurations.

Bluewater District School Board recognizes that the debate on class size is a robust one, and the research can support many different scenarios. We would like to focus our comments on the impact of larger class sizes on course options for rural students, and what the reduction in the number of caring adults in schools means for the well-being of our students.

Each week, we poll our local school communities on issues of relevance in public education. Our sample sizes are small but it is an indication of what is important to the students, parents, and staff in Bruce and Grey counties. During the week of January 28, 2019, we asked our stakeholders the following question:

*Do you feel the Ontario government should remove caps on class size limits?*

Based on 141 submissions, 90 percent of the respondents indicated that the caps on class size limits should not be removed, seven percent indicated caps should be removed, and three percent were undecided.

In a Nanos survey commissioned by the Ontario Public School Boards' Association in November 2019 (Submission 2019-1531)<sup>1</sup>, two in three Ontarians oppose (41%) or somewhat oppose (25%) having larger class sizes where there are more students per teacher in order to save money, while 11 percent support, and 19 percent somewhat support this. Four percent are unsure. Intensity of opposition is stronger among women (72% oppose or somewhat oppose) than men (59% oppose or somewhat oppose). In addition, a little more than two in three Ontarians oppose (43%) or somewhat oppose (24%) having less course selection for students in order to save money in the education budget, while six percent support, and 20 percent somewhat support this. Seven percent are unsure.

In the largest public education consultations in Ontario on class sizes, approximately 70 percent of the over 7,000 submissions did not support increase to class size.<sup>2</sup>

The movement from a board class size average of 22 to 28 students per class has had a negative impact on Bluewater District School Board students. To attain a board average, some programs have smaller class sizes, and some have larger ones. Programs designed for our most vulnerable students with special education needs or those who are at risk of not graduating in four or five years, were previously capped at 16 students. These programs will see an increase from 16 students to 23 students with an average cap increase to 28. That represents a 44 percent increase in the class sizes

for our most vulnerable students. This will negatively impact the quality of the academic support they receive, and ultimately, their overall mental health and well-being, which for many students is already compromised. For students in academic programs, we would see increases in class size from 29 to 35 students, which represents an increase of approximately 21 percent.

Bluewater District School Board has faced many years of declining enrolment and has made difficult decisions about staffing and reductions in program options accordingly. We are coming out of that period of decline. Our enrolment is currently increasing, and our local municipalities are experiencing some significant growth. The irony is that we are experiencing enrolment growth at a time when we should be able to add more programming options for our students. Larger class size maximums are being legislated, however, leaving us with the inability to replace qualifications in specialized STE(A)M program areas due to attrition. This creates an ongoing disadvantage for Bluewater District School Board students in terms of equity of access and opportunity.

In 2019-2020, Bluewater District School Board's average class size increased to approximately 24.8 due to a large attrition rate at the end of the last school year. Since we were not able to replace these very experienced and uniquely qualified retiring teachers, program options for the current school year were reduced. As we progress towards the cap of 28, we will see further reductions in program options, and equally important, we will have fewer caring adults in our secondary schools. We have significant concerns about the potential impact on student safety and well-being. The adults in our schools are the eyes, ears, and feet on the ground that keep our schools safe. We estimate that there will be approximately 50 fewer teachers in our secondary schools with a class size cap of 28. This represents a 20 percent decrease in the number of caring adults keeping our students safe and well supervised.

Bluewater District School Board believes spending on public education is an investment in the future, and has based our multi-year strategic vision, mission, and priorities on that belief. Maintaining low class size maximums and ensuring we can replace our retiring teachers will ensure that the quality of the public education we currently provide to our rural students can be maintained. Our students and local stakeholders in Bruce and Grey counties deserve as much.

As always, our commitment remains focused on providing a quality education for every student in a safe, accepting, and caring environment.

Sincerely,



Jan Johnstone  
Chair



Jane Thomson  
Vice-Chair

cc: The Honourable Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario  
The Honourable Bill Walker, MPP, Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound  
The Honourable Lisa Thompson, MPP, Huron-Bruce  
The Honourable Jim Wilson, MPP, Simcoe-Grey  
The Honourable Marit Stiles, NDP Education Critic  
Ontario Public School Boards' Association  
Chairs of Ontario English Public School Boards

/am

<sup>1</sup> On behalf of the Ontario Public School Boards' Association, Nanos conducted a representative online survey of 1,005 Ontario residents, 18 years of age or older, between November 8th and 12th, 2019. Participants were administered a survey online. The sample is geographically stratified to be representative to the province of Ontario. No margin of error applies to this research.

<https://secureservercdn.net/198.71.233.47/823.910.myftpupload.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/2019-1531-OPSBA-Populated-report-w-tabs.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.cp24.com/most-people-who-took-part-in-public-consultations-did-not-want-larger-class-sizes-1.4835473>



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March 9, 2020

The Honourable Stephen Lecce  
 Minister of Education  
 315 Front Street West, 14th Floor  
 Toronto, Ontario M7A 0B8

Dear Minister Lecce:

On behalf of Bluewater District School Board, we wish to express our concern over the possibility of mandatory online courses for secondary school students, beginning in 2024. Bluewater District School Board is a rural school board with approximately 17,000 students spread over 8,600 square kilometers. We have nine secondary schools, seven of which are part of grades JK-12 or 7-12 configurations.

Our board has been utilizing Ontario's Virtual Learning Environment (vLE) for the delivery of eLearning courses and blended learning opportunities for our students for many years. Given our complex geography in Bluewater District School Board, we have been a proponent of eLearning opportunities for our students as an alternative curriculum delivery model, to ensure our students have equitable access to a variety of programs. Our eLearning programs are taken voluntarily by students and taught voluntarily by our teachers.

When the eLearning student achievement data for our students from the past six years was reviewed, it was clear that when students chose to take an Ontario credit course through an online or blended learning model, they were more successful in completing the course and less likely to leave (i.e. 'drop') part way through. When students could not get the classroom delivered course in their own school and/or the credit was mandatory for graduation, students were less likely to pass and more likely to leave or 'drop' the eLearning course. In other words, 92 percent<sup>1</sup> of our students successfully completed the eLearning courses when they voluntarily completed the program, whereas 46 percent of students were not successful or did not complete the course when it was not their choice, or the online delivery method did not suit their learning needs. We echo the concerns shared by other school boards regarding the shift to a mandatory requirement for all students to take online courses by the end of high school.

We support the Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA) position that teaching and learning in the digital age requires<sup>2</sup>,

*....a purposeful cultural shift in our education system that focuses on engaging and inspiring our students, that fosters creative and innovative minds and embraces the enabling role of technology in expanding how, when and where learning takes place.*

We, however, do not support legislated mandatory online learning graduation requirements for students. Our multi-year strategic vision is *Learning Today, Leading Tomorrow*, and our priorities of student and staff well-being, quality instruction, community engagement, and responsible stewardship of resources are founded on the principles of equity of access and equity of opportunity. We further support OPSBA's vision that "schools are more than a collection of buildings – they represent a system of learning and a culture where learning and teaching reciprocally drive the use of technology."<sup>3</sup> Living in rural Ontario means, for many families, that they have precarious or limited access to high speed reliable internet at home. In a recent eLearning student survey completed by the Ontario Student Trustees' Association in May-June 2019, approximately five percent of students who responded indicated they were not able to take eLearning courses because they did not have access to technology required to complete online courses. This is also true in rural Bruce and Grey counties. This would



create an equity of access and opportunity issue for us in Bluewater District School Board if online courses were mandatory for all students to graduate.

Bluewater District School Board's mission is to provide a quality education for every student in a safe, accepting, and caring environment. We aim to ensure our students graduate with the qualities of resilience, self-direction, adaptability, innovation, and advocacy. We acknowledge that our students need to be able to compete in a global environment. We agree with the Canadian Council of Ministers of Education that "a clear and relevant definition of global competencies for students in the pan-Canadian context is absolutely essential to support future discussions on fostering and measuring these competencies across provincial and territorial education systems."<sup>4</sup> As with the ministers, we endorse the six pan-Canadian global competencies:

- critical thinking and problem solving
- innovation, creativity, and entrepreneurship
- learning to learn/self-awareness and self-direction
- collaboration
- communication
- global citizenship and sustainability

We think that these global competencies are best developed in students through positive and flexible learning models that are responsive to the differentiated needs of learners, and where one size does not fit all.

In conclusion, we appreciate the government's intention to introduce all students to technology-enabled learning as an essential skill in today's world but strongly oppose a mandatory one size fits all approach to online credit requirements for graduation. Our local student data clearly shows to us that, when given the choice, students prefer to be in a classroom with a teacher they know and trust supporting their learning, and not forced into a learning model that is only accessible and successful for some but not for all.

As always, our commitment remains focused on providing a quality education for every student in a safe, accepting, and caring environment.

Sincerely,



Jan Johnstone  
Chair



Jane Thomson  
Vice-Chair

cc: The Honourable Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario  
The Honourable Bill Walker, MPP, Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound  
The Honourable Lisa Thompson, MPP, Huron-Bruce  
The Honourable Jim Wilson, MPP, Simcoe-Grey  
The Honourable Marit Stiles, NDP Education Critic  
Ontario Public School Boards' Association  
Chairs of Ontario English Public School Boards

/am

<sup>1</sup> OPSBA's paper [A Vision for Learning and Teaching in a Digital Age](#), February 2013, p2.

<sup>2</sup> Weighted average over 6 years of data.

<sup>3</sup> OPSBA's paper [A Vision for Learning and Teaching in a Digital Age](#), February 2013, p2.

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.cmec.ca/682/Global\\_Competencies.html](https://www.cmec.ca/682/Global_Competencies.html).



## UPPER GRAND DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

February 26, 2020

The Honourable Stephen Lecce  
Minister of Education  
Ministry of Education  
5th Floor  
438 University Avenue  
Toronto, ON M5G 2K8

Dear Minister Lecce,

At the February 25, 2020, meeting of the Upper Grand District School Board, the Board of Trustees passed a motion to write a letter to the province, advocating for our students and for a strong, publicly-funded education system.

As a Board, student well-being and achievement are the focus of everything we do.

We continue to advocate for stable and predictable funding, in order to continue to provide the world-class education system that we have developed here in Ontario. We take great pride in our education system and, based on the communication that we have received from our staff, we know that they also share this pride and the desire to make "Achieving Excellence" something that is within reach for all students. We have concerns that if funding is cut, this will no longer be a goal toward which we can strive. We also have concerns that it will mean our highest needs students will not be supported properly and will have greater difficulty being successful.

We are advocating for the restoration of the Local Priorities Fund, which we used to hire additional staff to support students with special needs, unique learning needs, and mental health issues, all of which worry our hardworking teachers and support staff. Trustees also believe that our staff deserve fair compensation in line with the cost of living.

We have serious concerns regarding the increase in class size ratios. In the Upper Grand DSB, we have already seen an impact on our students and schools as a result of higher class sizes. Moving from a local class size ratio in secondary of 21.4:1 to 23.18:1 has already resulted in cancelled programs and fewer course options for our secondary students. Any further increase in class sizes would continue to limit course options for our students and strain our secondary schools. Our local secondary collective agreement has class size caps, which we must adhere to. We need to ensure sufficient funding in order to prevent further program and course cancellations.

### Upper Grand District School Board

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• Martha MacNeil; Chair	• Mark Bailey	• Jolly Bedi	• Linda Busuttill	• Gail Campbell
• Barbara Lustgarten Evoy; Vice-Chair	• Jen Edwards	• Mike Foley	• Robin Ross	• Lynn Topping

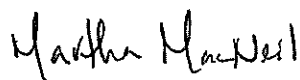
We know that the government has committed to the current Full Day Kindergarten model with one full time teacher and one early childhood educator working together, and we support this decision.

We are in support of the concept of e-learning as we know it is an important part of curriculum delivery in our province today. We also recognize the changing world we are living in and the need for students to have familiarity with learning in an online environment. However, the Board is not in support of mandatory e-learning without important changes to the delivery. We believe strongly in the value of a blended style of teaching that would include both an in-person component with an Ontario certified teacher as well as an online component, supported by the teacher. We also believe that any mandatory e-learning will need to be accompanied by a generous exemption policy to allow for students with learning styles that aren't suited to e-learning, as well as students who do not have access to technology and Internet connection due to location and/or family priorities.

A recent poll from the Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA) revealed that the majority of Ontarians agree that spending in public education is an investment in the future and that spending on public education is more important than eliminating the provincial deficit. We agree that a predictable and sustained funding model is essential to the future of our province.

As a member of OPSBA, we will continue to advocate on behalf of our staff, students, and families. We will continue to put the achievement and well-being of our students at the centre of everything we do. Through the work of the Board and all of the highly skilled staff it employs, we will continue to advocate for a strong, publicly-funded education system that supports the success of our students and staff and retains its status as being among the best in the world.

Sincerely,



Martha MacNeil  
Chairperson  
Upper Grand District School Board

cc: Premier Doug Ford  
Ted Arnott, MPP Wellington-Halton Hills  
Sylvia Jones, MPP Dufferin-Caledon  
Mike Schreiner, MPP Guelph  
Randy Pettapiece, MPP Perth-Wellington  
OSSTF District 18 and Upper Grand ETFO  
T. J. Goertz, Senior Communications and Policy Officer, OSBA  
All Public Board Chairs  
Ontario Public School Boards' Association  
UGDSB Board of Trustees  
Martha Rogers, Director of Education, UGDSB

**Upper Grand District School Board**

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• Martha MacNeil; Chair	• Mark Bailey	• Jolly Bedi	• Linda Busuttill	• Gail Campbell
• Barbara Lustgarten Evoy; Vice-Chair	• Jen Edwards	• Mike Foley	• Robin Ross	• Lynn Topping

February 28, 2019

The Honourable Stephen Lecce  
Minister of Education  
22nd Floor, Mowat Block  
900 Bay Street  
Toronto, ON M7A 1L2

To the Honourable Stephen Lecce:

Re: Bargaining to better education

At the February 25, 2020 regular board meeting, the Avon Maitland District School Board directed the Chair to write a letter to the Minister of Education on behalf of the Board addressing the following motion:

*Resolved that, the Avon Maitland District School Board direct the Chair write a letter on behalf of the Board of Trustees to the Minister of Education to draw attention to the impacts and implications of announced education reforms on the Avon Maitland District School Board, and ongoing anticipated pressures in the budgeting process for the 2020/2021 school year. The letter will also include a request to refrain from using confusing and divisive rhetoric in the media and to return to the bargaining table in the hopes of focusing on a respectful process and positive outcomes for students that lead to investment in education and to return the education sector to stability.*

In April of last year, we sent the then Minister of Education, Lisa Thompson, a letter outlining our concerns about the hopefully unintended consequences of your government's proposals to "find efficiencies" by increasing secondary class size averages, mandating e-learning, and cutting educational supports. The government claimed then, and continues to claim, that you are increasing your investment in education but we are not seeing that at our board.

Last year's budgeting process was extremely challenging as we dealt with a 7.1 million dollar decline in funding from the previous year. And while there has been a much-touted release of funds to ameliorate the loss of teaching jobs, our purported four-year funding will be completely depleted by the end of this second year. Which will, in turn, increase our budget challenges. The statement that no individual teacher's job would be lost is also not accurate as we, for example, have 39 secondary school teachers who were employed and put on the redundancy list in the spring of 2019 but are no longer employed – not by their choice but because of the funding changes.

As a small rural board, the higher class size average ratio is devastating to our programming options and will continue to have harsh implications within our system. Minister Lecce, I invite you to contact the student organization OSTA/AECO and have an honest conversation with the primary stakeholders of this situation – the students. And, if you have any further questions come to our board and we will show you the difficulties small rural schools face in trying to offer a slate of course offerings to fulfill our commitment to honour all pathways – including your government's focus on science and trades. Huron and Perth Counties currently have a shortage of employees in our region which will be exacerbated if students have to leave to get courses such as technology, business, social sciences, and the arts. Giving additional funding to colleges to support the trades is laudable but (a) once they leave many young people don't return to their rural roots

and (b) a direct path to the trades into work is preferred by many and would be possible if secondary schools could ensure course availability.

OPSBA, in association with Nanos Research, conducted a poll released in November 2019 that included the following sampling of results:

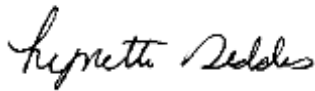
- Ontarians are twice as likely to say spending money on public education is more important than eliminating the deficit.
- A majority of Ontarians agree that spending on public education is an investment in the future

The full report is available at <https://www.opsba.org/strong-support-for-public-education-in-ontario>. The Conference Board of Canada stated that “each dollar of public education spending generates \$1.30 in total economic benefits to Ontario. At the same time, the inverse holds true for each dollar taken from public education.” It seems education has an excellent return on investment and the taxpayers of Ontario would expect the Province to take full advantage of this to benefit the economy and the people of the province over the long term.

Trustees and the administrative team of the Avon Maitland District School Board have worked hard **in conjunction** with our union partners to nurture and support positive relationships knowing that this collaboration is in the best interests of our students and our communities. The lack of respectful and collaborative attitudes at the provincial level is noted and unacceptable. The province needs to step back from their preemptive legislated cuts and go back to the bargaining table with a starting position of conditions that existed when you took power. Bargaining in good faith is a key principle in any negotiation process.

So, in this week that schools across Ontario observed Pink Shirt Day to end bullying, we respectfully request that you lead by example in setting a positive and collaborative tone.

Sincerely,



Lynette Geddes  
Chair, Avon Maitland District School Board

cc Randy Pettapiece, MPP Perth-Wellington  
Lisa Thompson, MPP Huron-Bruce  
Mayors in Huron and Perth Counties  
Ontario Public School Board Association  
Ontario Student Trustee Association

March 3, 2020

The Honourable Stephen Lecce  
Minister of Education  
22<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Mowat Block  
900 Bay Street  
Toronto, ON M7A 1L2

Dear Minister Lecce,

I am writing on behalf of the Durham District School Board (DDSB) to express our concern that the changes currently proposed by your government will profoundly reduce the levels of service and the quality of education that make this province and the DDSB a model of success for inclusion, innovation and opportunity.

Our Board previously wrote to you on December 2 (attached) to express several items of concern. We are writing once again to express that your government's proposals will profoundly impact the quality of public education and the commitments we have made in our Multi-Year Strategic Plan, *Ignite Learning*.

- Compulsory eLearning courses continue to raise significant concerns for our communities, our educators, and our children. Many issues of technology, access, equity, and delivery remain to be resolved.
- Larger class sizes invariably result in reduced attention to the needs and goals of our increasingly diverse students and have a cumulative impact of severely limiting course offerings.
- The funding formula for special education needs to be sufficient to support students who rightly deserve access to appropriate services and supports.
- Appropriate investment in the early years promotes lifelong success. Kindergarten children deserve to enter a system that is safe, nurturing, and fully staffed with Early Childhood Educators and qualified Ontario teachers.

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[www.youtube.com/DurhamDSB](http://www.youtube.com/DurhamDSB)

- Consideration given to increased access to mental health supports alongside proactive strategies to promote well-being for both students and staff.

As elected officials, we share the common obligation to find a solution that will bring closure and calm to the current situation for students and parents alike. On behalf of our students and their parents, we urge you and your staff to return to the negotiating table with the resolve to achieve a fair and reasonable settlement as soon as possible. Our students deserve no less.

Sincerely,



Chris Braney, Chair  
Durham District School Board

cc: DDSB Trustees  
Norah Marsh, Acting Director of Education  
Eva Kyriakides, Chair, SEAC  
Tiffany Sherwood, Co-Chair, PIC  
Valrie Estridge, Co-Chair, PIC  
Chairs, Ontario Public School Boards  
Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario  
Cathy Abraham, President, OPSBA  
Local MPP's  
Local Unions



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[www.youtube.com/DurhamDSB](http://www.youtube.com/DurhamDSB)

December 2, 2019

Doug Ford  
Premier of Ontario  
Legislative Building  
Queen's Park  
Toronto, ON M7A 1A1

Stephen Lecce  
Minister of Education  
438 University Avenue  
5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Toronto, ON M5G 2K8

Recently, our student trustees and Student Senate, comprised of student representatives from each of our Durham District School Board secondary schools, met to discuss their concerns with the new government eLearning program. DDSB student voice plays an integral role not only in public education in Ontario, but also in the DDSB.

Our students have outlined major concerns with the mandatory eLearning credits which the government is now requiring of all Ontario secondary students. Our DDSB student trustees and secondary students have articulated many concerns regarding this mandatory government initiative. They have outlined their concerns in the attached appendix.

Specifically, DDSB secondary students are concerned and have requested communication, rationale and answers to areas related to:

1. Reasoning and evidence behind mandatory eLearning.
2. Course selection challenges.
3. Exceptions and accommodations for students with special needs.
4. Supervision of eLearning
5. Lack of consultation by the government with students regarding eLearning.
6. Access to technology and WIFI.
7. Accommodation of different student learning styles.

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8. Effect of eLearning on student mental and physical health.
9. Tracking and monitoring student independence.

The DDSB students have provided both a list of questions for the government and ministry, as well as their outlined concerns in the attached appendix. Student voice is critical for a fair and equitable public education system.

On behalf of the DDSB students, we are sending this correspondence, student questions and student concerns to provide you with student voice and a request for more information and answers to support their request.

Yours sincerely,



Lisa Millar  
Director of Education & Secretary/Treasurer  
Durham District School Board



Michael Barrett  
Chair  
Durham District School Board

cc: Jennifer French, MPP, Oshawa  
Lorne Coe, MPP, Whitby  
Rod Phillips, MPP Ajax  
Lindsey Park, MPP, Durham  
Peter Bethlenfalvy, MPP, Pickering/Uxbridge  
Laurie Scott, MPP, Haliburton/Kawartha/Brock  
OPSBA



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[www.youtube.com/DurhamDSB](http://www.youtube.com/DurhamDSB)

Below is the raw feedback recorded from our eLearning discussion in Student Senate meeting of November 4th, 2019:

### List of Student Questions

#### Reasoning

- What is the purpose and implications of this eLearning mandate?
- Is there a plan in place for the e-learning mandate?

#### Course Selection

- What types of courses will be included?

#### Exceptions/Accommodation

- Will there be extra help/exceptions for students with IEPs?
- How will IEPs be accommodated?
- What's the process/system in place for elearning? What type of screening will be run to accommodate the mandate?

#### Supervision/Area to Work

- Who will supervise students while they are completing their e-learning courses?
- Will teachers be paid for supervising students?
- Who is monitoring/supervising students doing e-learning?
- Where will students go when doing e-learning and will there be spaces to accommodate these students?

#### Level of Consultation

- Has the government consulted with students on the current state of E-Learning courses and the implications on eLearning if it is broadly mandated?

#### Access to Technology and Wifi

- How will all students be guaranteed access to wifi and technology?
- How will schools/school boards deal with technical issues and security related to e-learning?
- How will students who don't have wifi either in their school or at home complete their e-learning courses without being put at a disadvantage?
- How will e-learning be supported in schools outside of the DDSB that don't necessarily have access to chromebooks?

#### Accommodation of Different Learning Styles

- How will different learning styles being accommodated?
- Is e-learning beneficial for visual, kinesthetic and/or auditory learners?
- How will students get extra help?

#### Effect on Mental and Physical Health

- As a DDSB pillar, how does elearning support mental and physical health?

#### Teaching/Monitoring Students Independence

- How will the distractions from independent work be monitored?

- How will students without the work ethic required for e-learning be expected to work independently?
- How will students be supported in developing the work ethic required for e-learning?
- How can independence for e-learning be learned from pre-high school?
- How will students who have difficulty focusing be able to complete an extremely independent task such as e-learning?
- How will students stay focused with a lack of consistent encouragement from teachers to stay on task?

### Student Concerns

#### Reasoning

- Students do not know all the information about what is happening with e-learning
- Students often either succeed very well or fail
- Mandatory e-learning may cause graduating rates to drop

#### Course Selection

- If only certain courses are available via e-learning, it may cause students difficulty getting the prerequisite courses for their future and may affect their careers

#### Exceptions/Accommodation

- The structure of e-learning impacts accessibility negatively

#### Supervision/Area to Work

- Students will skip class more if e-learning is introduced because there will be less monitoring of them
- There may be a concern for the amount of space we have to allocate to students who are taking e-learning and spares (who would supervise them and would it be chaotic to have so many leaving classes, could encourage skipping)

#### Access to Technology and Wifi

- Chromebooks in Durham are advantageous but not helpful in other boards
- There are wifi barriers present in some schools and homes that will make it very difficult if not impossible to do e-learning for some students
- Unable to sign in for things/laptop doesn't work concerns

#### Accommodation of Different Learning Styles

- E-learning does not accommodate different learning styles
- E-learning does not accommodate learning challenges

#### Effect on Physical and Mental Health

- E-learning may have a negative impact on the mental health of students
- There may be a concern that future assignments are posted in advance, so it may cause anxiety in students to see the whole course outline laid out at once

### Effect on Social Interaction

- There are a lack of personal relationships formed when students are doing e-learning and it is difficult to connect with both teachers and other students
- E-learning does not allow students to fully engage in their educational environment and develop necessary social and conflict resolution skills

### Teaching/Monitoring Student Independence

- It is difficult to enforce/create a productive environment when students are doing e-learning because they are 'on spare' and will be forced to be extremely independent
- It will be very difficult for students with a lesser work ethic to succeed in an e-learning course
- E-learning does not work for students who have difficulty managing their time and does not support them as much as a traditional classroom would

### Issues with E-learning Classroom Environment

- It can be difficult to ask for extensions when doing e-learning
- E-learning does not mimic real-life classrooms enough for topics such as classroom discussions
- Each kid gets less attention when doing e-learning courses
- There are a lack of resources available to support elearning
- Teachers will be in different schools from students making it difficult to communicate with them
- Students make an attempt to avoid e-learning as is
- It can be more difficult to retain information in e-learning courses
- Students tend to find it tempting to skip ahead in elearning courses without properly learning content
- E-learning is structured in a way that encourages passive learning
- Many students have struggles contacting teachers in e-learning courses and there is no instant response
- Unable to get in contact with teachers (This especially applies to questions that would ideally be immediately answered in a normal classroom environment)
- E-learning can be difficult due to a lack of verbal explanations
- E-learning courses are not individualized or personal

### E-learning Impact on Students entering High School

- E-learning will be very difficult for grade 9 students because this will add another unfamiliar aspect of high school and add to the difficulty of the transition