

**AUGUST 17, 2020
SPECIAL BOARD MEETING**

The Waterloo Region District School Board held a Special Board Meeting this evening at 7:00 p.m., via video conference, with the following members in attendance: J. Herring (Chairperson), K. Meissner, C. Millar, S. Piatkowski, M. Ramsay, K. Smith, L. Tremble, C. Watson, J. Weston and K. Woodcock.

Trustee C. Whetham was unable to attend this evening's meeting.

Student Trustees T. John-Jandles and R. McDonald were in attendance.

The following senior administration members were in attendance: J. Bryant (Director of Education and Secretary), D. Ahluwalia, J. Brown, R. DeBoer, I. Gaudet, M. Gerard, E. Giannopoulos, B. Lemon, D. Liebermann, A. Mercier, S. Miller, E. Ranney, L. Read, P. Rubenschuh, A. Russell, G. Shantz and M. Weinert.

Other staff in attendance: B. Jacklic and S. Reidel.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson J. Herring called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

1. Moved by K. Woodcock, seconded by L. Tremble:

That the agenda of the August 17, 2020, Special Board Meeting be approved.

-Carried-

DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST

There were no declarations of pecuniary interest.

ANNOUNCEMENTS/CELEBRATING BOARD ACTIVITIES

Chairperson J. Herring shared regrets from Trustee C. Whetham.

Trustee S. Piatkowski noted that on July 17, 2020, he attended the first raising of the Pride flag in Wilmot Township at Castle Kilbride.

2. Moved by J. Weston, seconded by K Meissner:

That the Waterloo Region District School Board suspend Bylaw 6.1.7, allowing trustees to speak without limit on the School Reopening Plan.

-Carried-

REPORTS

SCHOOL REOPENING PLAN

Director J. Bryant introduced the presentation. He referred to the Guide for Families and reviewed the options for elementary and secondary students. Associate Director L. Read shared a statement from the Region of Waterloo Public Health. She also noted that staff are still waiting on Public Health and the Ministry of Education to provide direction on outbreak protocol. Dr. D. Liebermann, Senior Manager of Research and Evidence-Based Practice, reviewed the results of the Confirmation of Attendance in Person Form for Students and the Confirmation of Attendance in Person Form for Staff. Coordinating Superintendent M Weinert reviewed the deadlines for new registrants and the process for transitioning between modes of learning. Superintendent B. Lemon reviewed the layered strategy for student health and safety. J. Brown, Senior Manager of Human Resources, reviewed employee health and safety protocols including the new Health, Safety and Wellness Handbook. Staff continue to wait on clarification from the Ministry of Education and Public Health on a number of processes.

Coordinating Superintendent M. Gerard shared that on Friday, August 14, 2020, the Ministry of Education provided additional funding details described in the memo “Additional Guidance and Funding for School Reopening.” He reviewed the available information, but noted that we do not have all of the details of the announcement and there are only fifteen business days remaining before the first day of school. He reviewed the Accumulated Surplus Balances and the financial implications of reopening. Controller of Facility Services I. Gaudet reviewed additional details regarding HVAC and school reopening.

Trustees asked questions of staff regarding the Confirmation of Attendance Form and the potential for parents to change their minds.

Trustees spoke in support of Trustee C. Millar’s motion regarding masks in schools.

3. Moved by C. Millar, seconded by K. Smith:

That the Waterloo Region District School Board require masks be worn indoors for all students, staff and visitors, allowing for appropriate medical exemptions; and

That school staff will explore alternatives such as face shields for students unable to wear masks; and

That staff work and approach compliance with younger students in JK - 3 with compassion and a focus on education; and

That there be no disciplinary action for students having difficulty complying.

-Carried-

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Trustees discussed Trustee C. Watson's motion regarding the feasibility of temperature checking in schools. A feasibility study should include financial implications, advantages, disadvantages and impacts on staff and labour agreements

4. Moved by C. Watson, seconded by M. Ramsay:

That the Waterloo Region District School Board explore the proactive measure of taking temperatures of students and staff during the school day; and

That staff provides a feasibility report to trustees concerning temperature taking before the start of the school year.

-Carried-

Trustees continued to ask questions regarding distance learning, the Confirmation of Attendance Form, secondary course availability, technical supports for distance learning, French Immersion, supply teachers, bell times, programming from community partners, masks, absenteeism, the hybrid/adaptive secondary model and teacher planning time. Staff confirmed that they are still waiting on Public Health and the Ministry of Education to provide direction on outbreak protocol.

At 8:46 p.m. trustees took a 10 minutes recess.

Trustees continued to ask questions regarding future Board meetings, funding for nurses, staggered movement, health and safety of students and staff, barriers, distance learning scheduled and washroom use.

Trustees discussed Trustee S. Piatkowski's motion to write a letter to the Minister of Education.

5. Moved by S. Piatkowski, seconded by J. Weston:

That the Waterloo Region District School Board direct the Chair to write an open letter to the Minister of Education, copied to the five MPPs representing Waterloo Region, calling for the following:

- **Providing additional Provincial funding to school boards to cover the full amount of the anticipated budget shortfall caused by COVID-19, rather than requiring them to repurpose their reserves;**
- **Providing additional Provincial funding to school boards to allow them to cap elementary classes at 20, to hire additional teachers and support staff, and to rent and outfit community space as necessary; and**

That the Chair send a copy of this letter to all other public school boards in the Province, the coterminous school board serving the Region of Waterloo and the Ontario

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Public School Boards Association for their information and any action that they may deem appropriate.

-Carried-

Opposed
M. Ramsay
* T. John-Jandles

* Student Trustees votes are recorded for the purpose of public record and for accountability to the student body; however, it is recognized that “a student trustee is not a member of the Board” (Education Act, Section 55 (2))

Trustees continued to ask questions of staff.

6. Moved by K. Woodcock, seconded by K. Smith:

That the Waterloo Region District School Board extend the end time of the Special Board Meeting of August 17, 2020, to 10:00 p.m.

-Carried-

Trustees continued to ask questions regarding access to classrooms for teachers, masks, cohorts, and various other parent questions. Staff confirmed that they are still waiting on Public Health and the Ministry of Education to provide direction on outbreak protocol. Staff are prepared to quickly and meaningfully operationalize the protocol once received.

7. Moved by C. Watson, seconded by L. Tremble:

That the Waterloo Region District School Board extend the end time of the Special Board Meeting of August 17, 2020, to 10:30 p.m.

-Carried-

Trustees continued to ask questions regarding health and safety of students, synchronous learning, mental health supports, assessments and exams, school supplies, school amenities and French Immersion.

8. Moved by C. Watson, seconded by C. Millar:

That the Waterloo Region District School Board extend the end time of the Special Board Meeting of August 17, 2020, to 11:00 p.m.

-Carried Unanimously-

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Trustees continued to ask questions regarding health and safety of staff and students, distance learning, extra-curriculars, access to guidance staff, play-based learning and bell times.

ADJOURNMENT

9. Moved by L. Tremble, seconded by J. Weston:

That the Board Meeting of August 17, 2020, be adjourned.

-Carried-

The meeting adjourned at 10:57 p.m.