

**OCTOBER 26, 2020
BOARD MEETING**

The Waterloo Region District School Board held a 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, R. DeBoer, 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: N. Carse, B. Jaklic, K. Penticost, and S. Reidel.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson J. Herring called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

That the agenda of the October 26, 2020, Board Meeting be approved.

-Carried-

CONSENT AGENDA

2. Moved by C. Millar, seconded by J. Weston:

That the consent agenda of the Board Meeting of October 26, 2020, and the actions contained therein, be approved.

-Carried-

MOTIONS FROM IN CAMERA MEETING

Note: The following motions were approved in the In Camera session held earlier this evening.

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

That the agenda of the October 26, 2020, In Camera Board Meeting be deemed to meet the legislative requirements for discussion in camera.

-Carried-

B. Moved by K. Woodcock, seconded by M. Ramsay:

That the consent agenda of the October 26, 2020, In Camera Board Meeting and the actions contained therein, be approved.

-Carried-

C. Moved by K. Smith, seconded by K. Meissner:

That we rise and report in public session.

-Carried-

Note: This concludes the reporting of In Camera motions.

DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST

Trustee C. Watson declared a conflict of interest at the previous in camera meeting.

ANNOUNCEMENTS/CELEBRATING BOARD ACTIVITIES

Chairperson J. Herring provided trustees with a last call - until the end of the day - for expressions of interest to be members on the new ad hoc committees.

Chairperson J. Herring, on behalf of the Board of Trustees, offered congratulations to Jessica Neilson and Jennifer Schaefer for winning the Prime Minister's Certificate of Achievement.

Trustee K. Smith announced that we are anticipating funds from the Canadian Education Exchange.

COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT GOOD NEWS UPDATE

Chief Communications Officer A. Russell presented the update which included an overview on the work done in July through October. The volume of messaging to staff, website traffic, email requests for information, media requests, social media impressions and messages received were all up substantially. The presentation concluded with a video of school reopenings.

DELEGATIONS

The following delegation spoke at the meeting:

- Kelly Deml - Halloween Costumes

Trustees were provided an opportunity to ask questions of clarification.

REPORTS

SEAT BELT PILOT PROGRAM

This report was provided for information.

B. Bourgault, General Manager for Student Transportation Services of Waterloo Region (STSWR), provided trustees with the phased approach to implementing seatbelts on large yellow school buses. He reviewed the related financial information and the pros and cons of seatbelts. The presentation included a video on how the buckles work. He also shared information about the information night provided for families at the pilot schools. STSWR will be reaching out to school communities and drivers for feedback.

Trustees asked questions of clarification regarding the flexibility of the seatbelts and the survey process. They also asked if the Ministry of Education would assist with funding. While this is unlikely, Trustee K. Woodcock offered to bring it to the next meeting of the Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA). Benoit Bourgault agreed to research statistics regarding bus accidents for inclusion in his next presentation. He also provided trustees with a brief update on stop arm cameras.

INCLEMENT WEATHER PROCESS

This presentation was provided for information.

Superintendent B. Lemon reviewed the severe weather process for bus cancellations and school closures. Factors which impact decision making, such as the snow clearing timelines and pedestrian safety, as well as the decision-making process, timelines for communications and example messaging were also provided.

Trustees asked questions of clarification regarding the impact of COVID-19 on the decision-making process and the process for dealing with inappropriate comments received via social media.

MOTION: BOARD AGENDA PACKAGES

Trustee K. Meissner reviewed the contents of the report for trustee consideration.

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

That the Waterloo Region District School Board no longer provide printed meeting packages for trustee or public use at Committee of the Whole or Board Meetings; and

That all WRDSB Committee of the Whole and Board meeting agendas be provided in electronic format; and

That Chromebooks or other suitable technologies are provided for public use during meetings so that printed meeting packages can be completely eliminated; and

That the above recommendations be phased in with a final and full implementation no later than the first meeting, post COVID-19, where the public is invited to attend in person.

-Carried-

Opposed: C. Watson
Abstained: M. Ramsay

BUSINESS AND LEARNING CONTINUITY DURING COVID-19

This presentation was provided for information.

The presentation began with a focus on staff well-being. Associate Director L Read reviewed the context of the extraordinary circumstances being faced and the stages of operation during the pandemic. N. Carse, Manager of Employee Wellness, reviewed insights gathered by the Wellness Department and shared how well-being is being supported. Superintendent S. Miller shared the services being offered by the WRDSB psychological staff. Superintendent E. Ranney reviewed the tools and professional development available to staff and Superintendent E. Giannopoulos reviewed the support provided to administrators. Dr. D. Liebermann, Senior Manager of Research and Evidence-Based Practice, shared how staff will continue to gather feedback from staff, students and families.

Director J. Bryant, with assistance from Superintendents B. Lemon and P. Rubenschuh, reviewed the process behind the decision regarding Halloween in schools. The decision included health and safety concerns as well as equity concerns.

Trustees asked questions of clarification regarding the health and safety measures pertaining to Halloween and future holidays. Staff clarified that schools are able to celebrate Halloween in ways that do not include costumes and the sharing of food.

Trustees noted that the presentation did not speak to the well-being of senior staff and requested staff provide an update at a future meeting. Trustees discussed ways in which they can support senior staff, which included scheduling emails to send during regular business hours.

4. Moved by K. Miessner, seconded by C. Millar:

That the Waterloo Region District School Board extend the October 26, 2020, Committee of the Whole Meeting by thirty minutes.

-Carried-

Trustees continued to ask questions regarding staff well-being. It was the Will of the Board to have Agenda Development Committee schedule an opportunity for staff to provide information on sick day use and costs for the year.

REPORTS FROM BOARD MEMBERS

STUDENT TRUSTEE PRESENTATION

This presentation was provided for information.

Student Trustee R. McDonald shared that he and Student Trustee T. John-Jandles worked with the Communications Department and Trustee Mentors to create a video to inform students about the role of Student Trustee. This video was shared with trustees.

Student Trustee T. John-Jandles commented on the new student trustee Instagram account created to engage with students.

Trustee C. Millar remarked on the unusual circumstances this year's student trustees have been working through and commended their adaptability.

BOARD COMMUNICATIONS

The Board received the following communications:

- Comments - Budget Consultation to the Finance Minister and MPP Mike Harris
- Halton District School Board to the Minister of Education
- WRDSB to Minister of Education - Support for Simcoe DSB
- WRDSB to Minister of Education - Support for Lakehead DSB
- WRDSB to Minister of Education - Support for Upper Grand DSB
- WRDSB to Minister of Education - Support for Halton DSB

It was the Will of the Board to send the Budget Consultation comments to local Mayors, MPPs and the Regional Chair for their information.

QUESTION PERIOD

Trustees did not have any further questions for staff.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

There were no future agenda items.

ADJOURNMENT

5. Moved by K. Smith, seconded by J. Weston:

That the Board Meeting of October 26, 2020, be adjourned.

-Carried-

The meeting adjourned at 9:47 p.m.