

OCTOBER 26, 2020

WATERLOO REGION DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

NOTICE OF MEETING

The regular monthly **Board Meeting** of the Waterloo Region District School Board will be held via video conference, on **Monday, October 26, 2020, at 7:00 p.m.**

AGENDA

Call to Order

Territorial Acknowledgement and O Canada

Approval of Agenda

Consent Agenda**

Receipt/Approval of Minutes:

Approve Minutes – Audit Committee Meeting of May 26, 2020

Approve Minutes – Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting of June 10, 2020

Receive Minutes – Board Meeting of September 28, 2020

Approve Minutes – Committee of the Whole Meeting of October 19, 2020

Receipt/Approval of Monthly Reports:

22 Staffing Information – Retirements and Resignations

M. Weinert

26 Staffing Recommendations – Appointments

M. Weinert

Declarations of Pecuniary Interest

Announcements/Celebrating Board Activities

Communications Good News Updates

A. Russell

Delegations

Kelly Deml - Halloween Costumes

Reports

30 Seat Belt Pilot Program

Inclement Weather Process

M. Gerard / B. Bourgault

B. Lemon / A. Russell

33 Motion: Board Agenda Packages

Business and Learning Continuity during COVID-19

Trustee K. Meissner

J. Bryant / L. Read

Board Reports

Student Trustee Presentation

Trustee C. Millar

**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.

Board Communications

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

Other Business

Question Period (10 minutes)

Future Agenda Items (Notices of motion to be referred to Agenda Development Committee)

Adjournment

Report to Board of Trustees

October 26, 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 October 26, 2020

Retirements: Elementary Teaching Staff				
First	Last	Position/Location	Retirement Date	Years of Service
Jackie	Bishop	Teacher, Laurelwood PS	September 11, 2020	30
Alice	Brohman	Teacher, Moffat Creek PS	October 30, 2020	30
Mark	Campbell	Teacher, Chalmers Street PS	October 31, 2020	21
Gordon	Duff	Teacher, Keatsway PS	October 31, 2020	20
Diane	Rodenburg	Teacher, Moffat Creek PS	October 31, 2020	31
Eileen	Tkaczuk	Teacher, Woodland Park PS	September 30, 2020	19
Carol	Watson	Teacher, Stanley Park PS	October 31, 2020	30
Jim	Whattam	Teacher, Avenue Road PS	November 30, 2020	30

Retirements: Secondary Teaching Staff				
First	Last	Position/Location	Retirement Date	Years of Service
Stephen	Clutton	Teacher, Forest Heights CI	November 14, 2020	20
Maureen	Maus	Teacher, Forest Heights CI	September 22, 2020	30
Terri	Radley	Teacher, Elmira District SS	January 31, 2021	28

Staffing Statistics – Retirements
Current at October 26, 2020

Retirements: Administrative & Support Staff				
First	Last	Position/Location	Retirement Date	Years of Service
Ingrid	Caskenette	Educational Assistant, Elizabeth Ziegler PS	October 23, 2020	22
Robert	Collard	Custodian, Waterloo Collegiate Institute	December 31, 2020	24
Karoline	Cooke	Educational Assistant, Centennial PS (W)	October 14, 2020	19
Deborah	Cronin	Educational Assistant, Elgin Street PS	October 30, 2020	19
Diane	Flewelling	Assistant Office Supervisor, Southwood SS	September 30, 2020	30
Don	Golnik	Head Custodian, Linwood PS	October 30, 2020	39
Gregory	Jespersen	Principal, Laurentian PS	October 30, 2020	19
Michael	Martin	Custodian, Meadowlane PS	October 31, 2020	12
Anne	McCourt	Occasional DECE, Various	September 25, 2020	7
Kathleen	Owens	Library Clerk / Secretary, Brigadoon PS	December 31, 2020	29
Sandra	Peters	Head Secretary, Avenue Road PS	December 31, 2020	15
Ronald	Rae	Custodian, Galt Collegiate Institute	September 30, 2020	34
Carole	Reeves	Principal, Lexington PS	November 27, 2020	31
Susan	Schaffert-Campbell	Child Youth Worker, Woodland Park PS	November 12, 2020	23
Jane	Schuett	Educational Assistant, Prueter PS	October 9, 2020	21
Geoff	Suderman-Gladwell	Principal, Southridge PS	January 31, 2021	17

Staffing Statistics – Resignations
Current at October 26, 2020

Permanent Staff Resignations			
First	Last	Position/Location	Effective Date
Danielle	Cardas	Long Term Occasional Teacher, Edna Staebler PS	September 4, 2020
Rachel	Eales	Supply Educational Assistant, various	October 12, 2020
Valerie	George	Certified Tradesperson, Maintenance	October 30, 2020
Rick	Green	Custodial Maintenance Helper, Galt Collegiate Institute	September 20, 2020
Cindy	Gunn	Custodial Maintenance Helper, Forest Heights CI	October 5, 2020
Jaclyn	Hanna	Occasional DECE, various	September 16, 2020
Emily	McBride	Teacher, Mackenzie King PS	September 11, 2020
Kim	McLean	Library Clerk, Parkway PS	October 5, 2020
Louis	Paleczny	Certified Tradesperson, Maintenance	November 2, 2020
Cheryl	Purdon	Elementary Occasional Teacher, various	October 3, 2020
Amy	Sonnenberg	Occasional DECE, various	October 9, 2020
Amanda	Woodcroft	Elementary Occasional Teacher, various	October 6, 2020



Report to Board of Trustees

October 26, 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 October 26, 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.

Appendix A

Staffing Information – New Appointments
Current at October 26, 2020

New Appointments: Elementary Teaching Staff			
First	Last	School ID / Education Centre	Effective Date
Amanda	Azzopardi-Grafe	Moffat Creek PS	September 1, 2020
Emma	Bowen	Prueter PS	September 1, 2020
Inez-Annette	Bruinsma	Woodland Park PS	October 13, 2020
Jeremy	DeFazio	Avenue Road PS	October 14, 2020
Melissa	Donczyk	Moffat Creek PS	September 1, 2020
Cecila	Dupre	Abraham Erb PS	September 1, 2020
Jamie	Finnie	Meadowlane PS	September 1, 2020
Michael	Gagnon	Tait Street PS	September 1, 2020
Jessica	Gascon	Lester B Pearson PS	September 1, 2020
Alicia	Gee	Stewart Avenue PS	September 1, 2020
Sydney	Helmke	Country Hills PS	September 1, 2020
Heather	Howells-Fellows	Rockway PS	September 1, 2020
Madison	Jewson	Country Hills PS	September 1, 2020
Michael	Koufis	Parkway PS	September 1, 2020
Erin	McCarthy	Floradale PS	September 1, 2020
Marina	Mulligan	Lincoln Heights PS	September 1, 2020
Zachary	Peats-Bond	Preston PS	September 1, 2020
Ashley	Ruffo	Jean Steckle PS	September 1, 2020

Staffing Information – New Appointments

Current at October 26, 2020

New Appointments: Administrative and Support Staff			
First	Last	Position / Location	Effective Date
Taryn	Atfield	Secretary, Brigadoon PS / Queensmount PS	September 14, 2020
Kolten	Barfoot	Custodian, Cedar Creek PS	October 16, 2020
Lynn	Berube	Custodian, WT Townshend PS	October 14, 2020
Amanda	Bourassa	Library Clerk / Secretary, Laurelwood PS / Chicopee Hills PS	August 31, 2020
Vanessa	Buchan	Library Clerk, Centennial (W) PS	October 7, 2020
Delia	Cabason	Custodian, Sir Adam Beck PS	October 15, 2020
Claudia	Calderon	Custodian, Millen Woods PS	October 9, 2020
Lisa	Culham	Custodian, Galt Collegiate Institute	September 16, 2020
Carolina	Czoch	Secretary, Laurentian PS	September 14, 2020
Devon	Da Silva	Secretary, Hillcrest PS / Ryerson PS	August 31, 2020
Veselinka	Djuricic	Custodian, Huron Heights SS	September 14, 2020
Ema	Dutra- Alvernaz	Custodian, Huron Heights SS	August 5, 2020
Stephanie	Festa	Custodian, Elgin Street PS	August 12, 2020
Davis	Fleischer	Accounting Analyst, Finance	September 14, 2020
Barry	Grant	Tradesperson, Maintenance	August 4, 2020
Sarah	Harnack	Head Secretary, Linwood PS	September 14, 2020
Rebeca	Klein	Secretary, Waterloo CI / Williamsburg PS	August 31, 2020
Jennifer	Kuntz	Secretary, Howard Robertson PS	September 30, 2020
Stephanie	McArthur	Library Clerk, Parkway PS	October 2, 2020
Heather	McKinna	Administrative Assistant to the Chairperson of the Board and Trustees	October 13, 2020
Fia	Mohammed	Secretary, Janet Metcalfe PS / Waterloo Oxford DSS	August 31, 2020 / September 6, 2020
Rhonda	Piche	Custodian, Sheppard PS	August 1, 2020
Kristy	Reimer	Operator, FOI Office	August 25, 2020
Jessica	Rodriguez	Secretary, WT Townshend PS	September 23, 2020
Douglas	Sanchez	Custodial Maintenance Helper, Sir John A Macdonald SS	August 26, 2020
Laura	Shaver	Library Clerk, Mary Johnston PS	September 23, 2020
Brad	Simpson	Custodian, Bridgeport PS	July 27, 2020
Amanda	Soares	Custodian, Sandhills PS	August 6, 2020

New Appointments: Administrative and Support Staff Cont'd			
First	Last	Position / Location	Effective Date
Samantha	Thibault	Custodian, Chalmers Street PS	July 27, 2020
Jenna	Thomas	Custodian, Sir John A Macdonald SS	July 27, 2020
Laura	West	Custodian, Trillium PS	September 29, 2020

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

Human Resource Services



Report to the Board

October 26, 2020

Subject:

Recommendation

This report is for the information to the Board.

Status

This report describes Student Transportation Services of Waterloo Region's phased approach to the implementation of seatbelts on large yellow school buses.

Background

A school bus is one of the safest modes of transportation. The school bus provides good protection to its passengers through the use of compartmentalized seats with padded high back, the close proximity of the seat spacing as well as the size and weight of the vehicle. In most scenarios, these safety features provide good protection for the occupants in the event of an accident.

The industry continues to evolve and explore ways to increase safety. Through crash testing, some areas have been identified that may result in increasing the safety of the passengers on a school bus. In the case of side impacts accidents or rollovers, safety of passengers may be increased with the addition of 3 point seat belts. However the industry has been reluctant or slow to adopt the seatbelts mainly due to cost considerations.

The first impact of installation of seat belts would be loss of capacity as seatbelts did not allow for 3 students to a seat. This can be resolved with the improved and flexible design allowing for 2 and 3 students per seat. The height adjustment has been improved to easily adapt to the student size making the seatbelt safe for students from age 3 to 18.

School Boards that have adopted seatbelts are reporting that overall the experience has been very positive noted on multiple aspects. Examples include: improved driver attention to road, reduced student behaviour incidents, good adoption from students, improved safety in crashes, and reduction of injuries.

A phased approach to implementing seatbelts would take approximately 13 years before all school buses would be equipped with seatbelts within the life cycle of vehicles.

We have an opportunity to run a pilot this year with the fleet replacement with around 12 buses. We have opted to limit the pilot to up to 12 buses to ensure the success of this important innovation. This reduced number will ensure we can manage the change properly.

The table below shows the vehicle replacement projected based on vehicle age

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032
big bus	12	5	55	2	33	18	2	13	24	38	16	12	30
mini				1	6	7	49	29					
WC								47					

The table below shows the incremental cost of requesting seatbelts with vehicle replacement

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
WCDSB	\$4,080	\$5,780	\$24,480	\$25,202	\$36,675	\$43,089	\$45,833
WRDSB	\$7,920	\$11,220	\$47,520	\$49,198	\$73,125	\$87,511	\$106,367

	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032
WCDSB	\$53,453	\$61,613	\$74,533	\$79,973	\$84,053	\$94,253
WRDSB	\$142,147	\$157,987	\$183,067	\$193,627	\$201,547	\$221,347

Considerations for seatbelts

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improves safety in case of collision Eliminates risk of ejection in collision or roll over Eliminates risk of falling off the seats for small students Reduces student behaviour issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School buses are very safe In some very specific cases, seatbelts may not provide additional safety, but hinder evacuation. Risk of injuries in violent collision when not worn properly

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Causes students to seat properly ● Reduces distraction for drivers who can concentrate on the road ● School buses travel on all roads and at high speed from time to time. ● Compartmentalization only protects students when seated properly. ● Lowers risk of concussions ● Seatbelts save lives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Driver is responsible for all students to wear seatbelts ● Additional cost for vehicles ● Seatbelts require enforcement to ensure they are worn ● May take longer to load and unload at first while students learn to buckle up. ● Student Training required to ensure seat belts worn and properly worn
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The State of California has required seat belts on new school buses since 2006. Their experience has been very positive. Several other US States have followed and are requiring seat belts on new vehicles. This approach minimizes cost since a school bus cannot be retrofitted with seat belts after leaving the factory.

Momentum is building. Parent's awareness and experience in other jurisdictions will inevitably cause the Government to make seat belts mandatory on school buses at some point in time in the near future.

According to the Ontario Provincial Police, the 4 most reported causes of fatalities are linked to: distracted driving, speed, alcohol/drug and no seatbelts. Seatbelts on school buses would help reduce driver's distraction as it will keep students in their seat in a proper sitting position.

Financial Implications

The financial implication would be progressive. In the first year the cost would be less than \$7,000. As we continue to implement the proposed phased in process, the cost continues to grow to approximately \$270,000 over a 13 years process.

Prepared by: Matthew Gerard, Coordinating Superintendent of Business Services & Treasurer of the Board
Benoit Bourgault, General Manager, Student Transportation Services Waterloo Region
in consultation with Coordinating Council.



Report to Board

October 26, 2020

Subject: Motion: Paper Board Meeting Agenda Packages

Recommendation

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.

Status

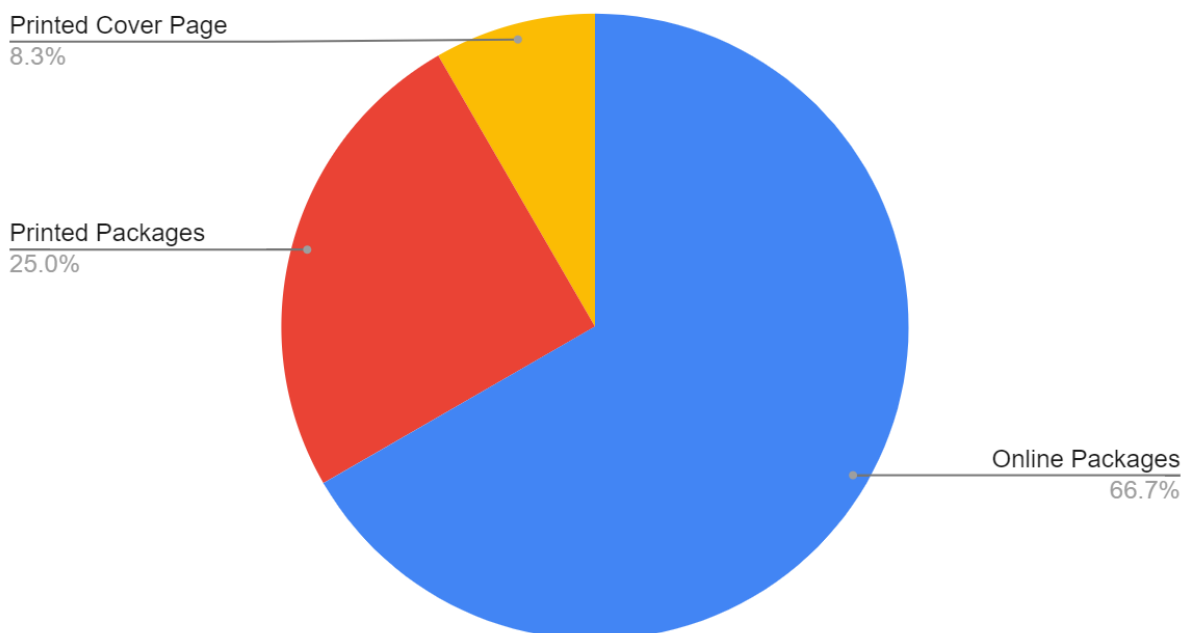
This Notice of Motion was discussed at the October 19, 2020 Committee of the Whole meeting. An amendment was passed to include trustee agenda packages for consideration in addition to agenda packages for the public.

Through discussion trustees asked for information on what other school boards were doing, the cost of devices and any legislative requirements to provide agenda packages.

Best Practices

Twelve (12) Ontario school boards responded to a request last week for information and best practices. Of the twelve boards, three (3) provide at least a few printed full agenda packages for public use and one (1) provides printed copies of the Agenda Cover Page for the public to follow along. Zero (0) boards provide electronic devices for public use.

How Agenda Packages are provided by Ontario School Boards



In speaking with other school boards, some suggested best practices were provided.

1. The Agenda Cover Page could be displayed on the screens in the Boardroom
2. Allow members of the public to request a paper copy if they contact the Manager of Corporate Services in advance of the meeting.
3. Encourage members of the public to bring their own device

Electronic Devices

Information Technology Services (ITS) suggests the use of three iPads in the Boardroom. Securing the devices in the room reduces the possibility of theft. ITS continues to investigate the best way to secure devices. If devices were to be used by the public, the Manager of Corporate Services would be responsible for loading the weekly agenda package for use.

Legislation

The *Education Act 1990* and the *Municipal Act 2001* both require meetings to be open to the public but are silent on agenda packages.

Background

This report contains a Notice of Motion served by Trustee K. Meissner and Student Trustee M. Robinson at the March 9, 2020 Committee of the Whole Meeting and was supported by Trustees C. Millar and J. Weston.

Scheduling this motion for consideration was delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic and related school closure.

The following recitals were included with the motion:

Whereas printed meeting packages for public use are available at every Committee of the Whole and Board Meeting;

Whereas printed meeting packages are intended for single-use and are discarded after each meeting;

Whereas meeting packages are currently available on the WRDSB website and are accessible to the public;

Whereas a significant amount of recyclable material is generated and thrown in the garbage at WRDSB facilities;

Whereas the most effective way of reducing the WRDSB's carbon footprint with respect to paper waste is to reduce the amount of paper used;

Financial implications

The approximate cost of purchasing and securing three iPads in the Boardroom will be between \$1,600-\$2,800 before tax and would be covered by the existing Trustee Budget.

Communications

Process changes will be communicated as needed on the WRDSB website.

Prepared by: Stephanie Reidel, Manager of Corporate Services
for Trustee K. Meissner in consultation with Coordinating Council



Waterloo Region District School Board
51 Ardelt Avenue, Kitchener ON, N2C 2R5
T: 519-570-0003 F: 519-742-1364
wrdsb.ca

Good afternoon, my name is Jayne Herring and I'm the Chairperson of the Waterloo Region District School Board and I thank you for the opportunity to speak this afternoon.

The COVID19 Pandemic has highlighted many issues in our Province. Fighting COVID, stabilizing our economy and safeguarding our institutions must be the top priorities for this government.

Ontario has a world-class publicly funded education system. According to the Global Economic Symposium, "the only thing more expensive than investing in education is not investing in education." The WRDSB is a growing Board and it is a fact that thriving well-funded schools with innovative programs attract families to live and work in the community, which in turn grows the local economy. Sustained and appropriate levels of funding for education will allow us to continue to build more schools, and continue to offer innovative programs and services to our students, which in turn will help the Region thrive.

To keep our schools open, we need access to all types of COVID testing with significantly increased testing sites and shorter result turnaround times. Approved rapid testing options could be a game-changer as it will allow students to return to school and parents to work, quickly.

Also, Boards will require additional funding to sustain the purchase of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). We have no idea how long this pandemic will last and some of our school boards will have difficulty funding PPE on an ongoing basis. Shortages in the supply chain may become an issue and the Ontario Government must be willing to continue to invest in manufacturers who will meet this need.

Funding for class size has continued to be an issue of importance. Many believe that had School Boards received additional funding to create smaller class sizes, it would have provided parents with the confidence to permit their children to participate in in-class learning rather than distance learning, resulting in more women in the workforce and a direct impact on our economy.

Through investments in the Ontario Youth Apprentice Program and Co-op Programs, the government is addressing Canada's upcoming skilled labour shortage.

Unfortunately, funding for these programs decreased this year and we encourage the government to re-invest in these programs, which will have a direct impact on the number of people going into trades.

In this time of heightened stress, I urge the government to pay close attention to, and additional funding for, mental health initiatives. This pandemic has taken a toll on the mental health of many - our staff, students and their families will require additional support in the days to come.

Our government should spare no expense in order to ensure that all citizens are able to weather the storm that is this pandemic. This includes funding for healthcare, mental health, testing and a strong public education system that can keep our economy moving.

Thank you again for this opportunity to speak.



October 14, 2020

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

Re: Electronic Meetings Regulation 463/97

To the Honourable Stephen Lecce, Minister of Education,

At the October 7, 2020 Regular Board Meeting of the Halton District School Board, a motion was approved by the Board of Trustees to write a letter to the Minister of Education “to request a review and update of Ontario Regulation 463/97 (Electronic Meetings and Meeting Attendance), as it does not take into account extraordinary circumstances that could warrant fully digital meetings, and noting that technology is readily available to allow for productive, open and publicly transparent electronic meetings.”

This regulation was originally enacted in 1997 and does not reflect the immense strides in technology that have taken place since its inception over 20 years ago. When Emergency Orders were enacted in the spring, the Halton District School Board was able to pivot quickly and effectively to a transparent and accessible online environment for its regular and special board meetings. With the expiration of the Emergency Orders on August 31, 2020, it has come to light that O. Reg. 463/97 may hinder the Board of Trustees in meeting should the Chair, Vice Chair and members of the Board have to isolate for health or public health reasons, if there is an issue with regard to the weather or a local emergency.

Meeting in person is the ideal scenario but, this may not always be possible or advisable. Expanding the provisions to include electronic meetings under certain conditions, while maintaining productive, openly transparent and accessible electronic meetings would allow the Board flexibility to continue unencumbered by extraordinary reasons that may make physical attendance in the boardroom unadvisable or impossible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andréa Grebenc', written over a horizontal line.

Andréa Grebenc
 Chair of the Board of Trustees

Cc: Cathy Abraham, OPSBA President
 Ontario School Board Chairs (English Public, English Catholic, French Public, French Catholic)

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

October 23, 2020

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

Dear Minister Lecce,

I am writing to you today to express my support for the letter that the Simcoe District School Board shared with you on August 31, 2020, by asking the Ministry of Education to join boards across the province in acknowledging the existence of systemic racism in society.

We believe that a Ministry review of curriculum documents through an equity lens and the necessary updates are required as society moves through a world-wide awakening of the realities of systemic racism and social-justice.

We can no longer ignore the importance of addressing racism, hate and oppression, and its correlation with our students' achievement and well-being. The resources and texts used to teach our students must represent them and their lived experiences.

Recently, your government showed work in this area, releasing the new Mathematics curriculum, which now emphasizes Human Rights and Equity and Inclusion in mathematics. This is a great start and a step in the right direction. We must keep moving forward and make these changes in all areas of study.

We support the Simcoe District School Board in their call to have the Ministry review and update curriculum documents through an equity lens. The well-being of all students in Ontario will benefit from seeing themselves represented and valued in their classroom work.

Sincerely,



Jayne Herring
 Chairperson of the Board of Trustees
 Waterloo Region District School Board

CC:
 OPSBA
 Ontario Public School Boards



51 Ardelet Avenue
 Kitchener, ON N2C 2R5
 T: 519-570-0003
 F: 519-742-1364
 wrdsb.ca



October 23, 2020

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

Dear Minister Lecce,

I am writing to you today to express my support for the letter that the Lakehead District School Board shared with you on September 9, 2020, requesting more funding for schools during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Since March, your government has indicated that our students' and staff's health and safety are your main priority when creating a return to school plans.

In August, three weeks before the start of school, you announced that Boards across the province would have access to \$500 million, unlocked from board reserves. For families across the province, this announcement was welcome news. An extra \$500 million is a great deal of money. However, the reality is that this announcement created inequities in funding as available reserve funding looks different for each Board in the province.

For years, our finance staff at the Waterloo Region District School Board have been diligent in their financial planning, ensuring that we are in a strong financial position with some funds in reserves. As OPSBA President Cathy Abraham pointed out in her statement, "... in many circumstances, these reserves have already been designated for other high-priority initiatives or unanticipated expenses." The global COVID-19 pandemic is not the type of unanticipated expense these funds were intended for.

School boards across the province have shown their commitment to their students and staff by creating a safe return to school based on thoughtful planning, leadership, and funding. We are still waiting for your government to do the same.

I join Lakehead District School Board and other Boards across the province to ask you and your government for more funding to ensure staff and students have access to PPE, increased ventilation in buildings and fully-funded smaller class sizes to ensure proper physical distancing.

Minister, it is time to stand behind your claims of sparing no expense when it comes to keeping schools in Ontario safe. Now is the time to provide the necessary funds that we and all other Boards in the province require and are requesting.

Sincerely,



Jayne Herring
Chairperson of the Board of Trustees
Waterloo Region District School Board

CC:
OPSBA
Ontario Public School Boards



51 Ardelt Avenue
Kitchener, ON N2C 2R5
T: 519-570-0003
F: 519-742-1364
wrdsb.ca



October 23, 2020

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

Dear Minister Lecce,

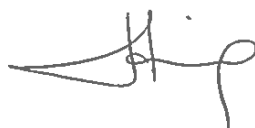
I am writing to you today to support a letter you received from the Upper Grand District School Board on September 15, 2020.

The Ministry of Education must provide critical funding to school boards to ensure student and staff's safety. This includes smaller class sizes to increase physical distancing, hiring more staff and ensuring personal protective equipment is available to everyone who needs it.

We mustn't forget that the safety protocols extend beyond our classrooms and schools and include our students who rely on student transportation. We support the UGDSB and their request for funding to have bus monitors on every bus route. Bus monitors will ensure that students are wearing their masks and staying in their assigned seats while drivers are focused on driving safely.

Please consider the funding request of the UGDSB. Their students and staff are counting on your support.

Sincerely,



Jayne Herring
Chairperson of the Board of Trustees
Waterloo Region District School Board

CC:
OPSBA
Ontario Public School Boards



51 Ardelt Avenue
Kitchener, ON N2C 2R5
T: 519-570-0003
F: 519-742-1364
wrdsb.ca



October 23, 2020

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

Dear Minister Lecce,

I am writing today to support the letter you received from the Halton District School Board regarding the need for rapid COVID-19 testing.

Increased testing and rapid results are vital to keeping COVID-19 from spreading in our schools and broader communities. Families need to be able to access a testing facility and their results quicker than the current timelines.

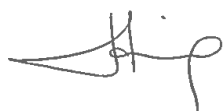
Last month, in Waterloo Region, our drive-through testing facility reached capacity by 7:30 am. Families started to line up in the middle of the night to get tested. The demand for testing was so high our local hospital had to close the testing centre because the staff were experiencing harassment and threatening behaviour.

Recent changes to priorities on who should receive testing have helped with our local testing capacity. However, families are still waiting for extended periods of time for results. This lag in receiving results can extend the time spent away from the classroom and for parents or guardians out of the workplace while they wait for results.

Convenient and easy access to rapid testing would alleviate these issues in our community and across the province. We must work together to keep our students in schools and give families the ability to go to work. Please consider the Waterloo Region District School Board if any pilot programs for rapid testing are in need of participants.

Trustees of the Waterloo Region District School Board and the Halton District School Board urge you to make rapid COVID-19 testing a priority in Ontario.

Sincerely,



Jayne Herring
 Chairperson of the Board of Trustees
 Waterloo Region District School Board

CC:
 OPSBA
 Ontario Public School Boards



51 Ardelet Avenue
 Kitchener, ON N2C 2R5
 T: 519-570-0003
 F: 519-742-1364
 wrdsb.ca

