

**DECEMBER 14, 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. Weston (Chairperson), J. Herring, K. Meissner, C. Millar, S. Piatkowski, M. Ramsay, K. Smith, L. Tremble, C. Watson, C. Whetham and K. Woodcock.

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, C. Newton, L. Read, P. Rubenschuh, A. Russell, G. Shantz and M. Weinert.

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

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson J. Weston called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

1. Moved by L. Tremble, seconded by C Whetham:

That the agenda of the December 14, 2020, Board Meeting be approved with the addition of a Student Senate Update and an Equity and Inclusion Advisory Group Update under Board Reports.

-Carried-

CONSENT AGENDA

2. Moved by S. Piatkowski, seconded by K. Smith:

That the consent agenda of the Board Meeting of December 14, 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 J. Herring, seconded by K. Meissner:

That the agenda of the December 14, 2020, In Camera Board Meeting be deemed to meet the legislative requirements for discussion in camera, with the addition of the ETFO Letter to Public Health under Other Business and Education Credit Union to Property Matters.

-Carried-

B. Moved by K. Woodcock, seconded by J. Herring:

That the consent agenda of the December 14, 2020, In Camera Board Meeting and the actions contained therein, be approved.

-Carried-

C. Moved by K. Smith, seconded by J. Herring:

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 for the previous In Camera meeting.

ANNOUNCEMENTS/CELEBRATING BOARD ACTIVITIES

Chairperson J. Weston shared regrets from Trustee C. Millar.

Trustee K. Meissner took a moment to recognize the work of the Outdoor Education staff and the launch of the Winter Bird Count.

Director J. Bryant acknowledged that it was Chief Communications Officer A. Russell's last meeting before her leave begins. J. Bryant welcomed Caroline Newton who will take over as the Interim Chief Communications Officer.

REPORTS

STRATEGIC PLAN - OPERATIONAL PLAN FOR 2020-2021

This report was provided for information.

Director J. Bryant started the presentation by reviewing the current context and global events affecting this school year and that staff continue to be guided by the strategic priorities.

Dr. D. Liebermann provided information on Exchanging Ideas and the Let's Connect survey. Associate Director L. Read reviewed the commitment to the Operational Goals and the Four Disciplines of Execution. She shared the operational plan and priorities for the 2020-2021 school year and explained the revised implementation dashboard and timelines contained in the report. Director J. Bryant thanked staff, students and families for their hard work.

Trustees asked clarifying questions about the presentation and report. Questions pertained to student representation, the survey results, policy review, credit recovery and graduation, staffing for the Distance Learning Program and student achievement.

2020-21 REVISED ESTIMATES SUBMISSION

This report was provided for information.

Since the Board of Trustees approved the Waterloo Region District School Board's (WRDSB) budget on August 10, 2020, the financial landscape of the WRDSB has changed. During the past three (3) months, the Ministry of Education (Ministry) has provided additional funding to the sector and staff now have a better understanding of the cost of operating schools during the COVID-19 pandemic. The forecast provided was based on current information, is highly variable and subject to change. As of the date of this report, the WRDSB's forecasted in-year deficit is approximately \$12.59M or 1.78% of the WRDSB's projected 2020-21 operating allocation.

Trustee C. Millar joined the meeting at 8:14 p.m.

Trustees asked questions regarding the deficit and Ministry approval. It was noted that trustees will continue to receive updates through the Quarterly Interim Financial Report and Forecast and that the report provided explains the process for the deficit recovery plan as COVID-19 related costs are non-operational extenuating costs.

CLASS SIZE AND USE OF CLASSROOMS VERBAL UPDATE

Coordinating Superintendent M. Weinert provided a verbal update on class sizes and use of classrooms. He reviewed the reorganization process and noted that class sizes are generally lower than the requirements. He confirmed that classrooms not being used for in-person learning are being used by Distance Learning Program teachers or as isolation rooms for symptomatic students. There are no empty classrooms to repurpose further. Another reorganization will occur after the winter break. Staffing numbers are based on enrolment.

Trustees asked questions of clarification regarding the upcoming written report to be received after the next reorganization is completed and the related parent deadlines for the reorganization.

REPORTED STUDENT AGGRESSION QUARTERLY DATA

This report was provided for information.

The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in an unforeseen and unplanned disruption to the education system. As a result, there has been a migration to distance learning as well as significant changes to how learning takes place in the classroom. These changes have resulted in a significant reduction of the student aggression numbers which were trending upwards prior to COVID-19. At this time, due to the highly ambiguous nature of this pandemic, it is difficult to forecast future student aggression levels.

In an effort to be proactive and reduce incidents of student aggression, the Board has added two Behaviour Management Systems (BMS) liaisons to provide direct support to complex and unique student aggression “hot spots” within the system.

Trustees asked questions of clarification regarding cyber bullying.

2021 TRUSTEE COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Chairperson J. Weston advised trustees of the process taken for assigning trustees to the committees and provided an opportunity for discussion.

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

That the Waterloo Region District School Board approves the 2021 Board Committee Membership Structure as outlined in Appendix A of the report titled “2021 Board Committee Memberships” dated December 14, 2020.

-Carried-

2021 OPSBA DIRECTOR AND VOTING DELEGATE

Trustees confirmed or appointed trustees to positions within the Ontario Public School Boards’ Association (OPSBA) for the 2021 year and in preparation for the Association’s Annual General Meeting (AGM) scheduled for June 10-12, 2021.

Chairperson J. Weston requested that Vice-Chair S. Piatkowski chair this portion of the meeting.

Voting Delegate

Trustee J. Herring nominated Chairperson J. Weston for the position of Voting Delegate for the 2021 OPSBA Annual General Meeting.

4. Moved by J. Herring, seconded by K. Woodcock:

That nominations for the position of OPSBA Voting Delegate be closed.

-Carried-

Chairperson J. Weston accepted the nomination.

There were no other candidates for the position and Chairperson J. Weston was acclaimed as the Voting Delegate.

Chairperson J. Weston resumed chairing the meeting.

Director

Trustee K. Woodcock nominated Trustee L. Tremble for the position of OPSBA Director for 2021.

Trustee K. Meissner nominated Trustee S. Piatkowski for the position of OPSBA Director for 2021.

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

That nominations for the position of OPSBA Director be closed.

-Carried-

Trustee L. Tremble accepted the nomination.

Trustee S. Piatkowski accepted the nomination.

Both nominees spoke to their nominations.

Trustees voted by secret ballot. Trustee L. Tremble was elected as OPSBA Director for 2021.

Alternate Voting Delegate

Trustee K. Woodcock nominated Trustee L. Tremble for the position of Alternate Voting Delegate for the 2021 OPSBA Annual General Meeting.

Trustee K. Meissner nominated Trustee S. Piatkowski for the position of Alternate Voting Delegate for the 2021 OPSBA Annual General Meeting.

6. Moved by K. Smith, seconded by J. Herring:

That nominations for the position of OPSBA Alternate Voting Delegate be closed.

-Carried-

Trustee L. Tremble accepted the nomination.

Trustee S. Piatkowski declined the nomination.

There were no other candidates for the position and Trustee L. Tremble was acclaimed as the Alternate Voting Delegate.

Chairperson J. Weston requested that Vice-Chair S. Piatkowski chair this portion of the meeting.

Alternate Director

Trustee J. Herring nominated Chairperson J. Weston for the position of OPSBA Alternate Director for 2021.

7. Moved by K. Meissner, seconded by J. Herring:

That nominations for the position of OPSBA Alternate Director be closed.

-Carried-

Chairperson J. Weston accepted the nomination.

There were no other candidates for the position and Chairperson J. Weston was acclaimed as OPSBA Alternate Director for 2021.

Chairperson J. Weston resumed chairing the meeting.

REPORTS FROM BOARD MEMBERS

EQUITY AND INCLUSION ADVISORY GROUP (EIAG) UPDATE

Trustee K. Meissner provided an update from the EIAG. The most recent meeting included follow up work from the Indigenous, Human Rights and Equity staff such as Secret Path week, student census, staff professional development, a new Human Rights Policy and policy review tool.

STUDENT SENATE UPDATE

Student Trustee T. John-Jandles and R. McDonald shared an update on the Student Senate and work being done to update roles within the Senate and ways to continue to engage students.

BOARD COMMUNICATIONS

The Board received the following communication:

- Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board to the Ministry of Education

Trustees asked for some clarification and it was noted that the Waterloo Region District School Board has not experienced the same issues as Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board.

Trustee K. Woodcock requested that Trustees direct the Chair to write a letter in support of the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board's request for an effective transportation funding model. This request was not the Will of the Board so a letter will not be written.

QUESTION PERIOD

Trustee S. Piatkowski asked about the registration processes for Kindergarten and French Immersion this year. Kindergarten registration remains online, as in past years, and will open in January. A number of departments are working together to encourage registration and additional supports are in place. French Immersion (FI) registration will also start after the winter break. Registration will occur online and will continue to be overseen by the planning department. This year, French Immersion information sessions will be provided as a pre-recorded online webinar. Trustees were advised attracting qualified French teachers continues to be a challenge. We may find it difficult to find teachers to start new French Immersion programs in any additional schools.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

The following Notice of Motion was served by Trustee J. Herring with support from Trustees C. Millar and K. Woodcock:

Whereas it is a responsibility of Trustees to establish and monitor Board Policies; and

Whereas a Policy Working Group was discussed and recommended by Trustees during our Bylaw Review process.

Be it resolved:

That the WRDSB Board of Trustees strike a Policy Working Group, in order to maintain, revise and create Board Policy; and

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That the Policy Working Group review the process currently in place in order to encourage and ensure ongoing input from the Parent Involvement Committee, Special Education Advisory Committee, Student Senate and the Equity and Inclusion Advisory Group and other members of the community prior to final approval by Trustees.

This Notice of Motion will be scheduled at the next Agenda Development Committee meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

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

That the Board Meeting of December 14, 2020, be adjourned.

-Carried-

The meeting adjourned at 9:25 p.m.