

**FEBRUARY 22, 2021
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, S. Miller, C. Newton, L. Read, P. Rubenschuh, G. Shantz, and M. Weinert.

Other staff in attendance: L. Agar, B. Jaklic 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 K. Woodcock, seconded by C. Millar:

That the agenda of the February 22, 2021, Board Meeting be approved.

-Carried-

CONSENT AGENDA

2. Moved by J. Herring, seconded by L. Tremble:

That the consent agenda of the Board Meeting of February 22, 2021, 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 S. Piatkowski, seconded by L. Tremble:

That the agenda of the February 22, 2021, In Camera Board Meeting be deemed to meet the legislative requirements for discussion in camera.

-Carried-

B. Moved by L. Tremble, seconded by C. Millar:

That the consent agenda of the February 22, 2021, In Camera Board Meeting and the actions contained therein, be approved.

-Carried-

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

That the Waterloo Region District School Board select Joan M. Green & Associates (JMG) to perform the Director of Education search.

-Carried-

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

That the Waterloo Region District School Board extend Director J. Bryant's contract until June 30, 2021.

-Carried-

E. Moved by C. Whetham, 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 during the previous in camera meeting.

ANNOUNCEMENTS/CELEBRATING BOARD ACTIVITIES

Trustee L. Tremble attended the February 11, 2021, OPSBA Lunch Speaker series. The next OPSBA Lunch Speaker series will be February 25, 2021.

Chairperson J. Weston represented the Board as a delegate for the 2021 Provincial Budget. She also reached out to local MPPs for meetings during constituency week.

Trustee K. Woodcock attended the Central West OPSBA Regional meeting with Trustees L. Tremble, J. Weston and S. Piatkowski.

Trustee C. Millar attended the February 17, 2021, Osgoode Human Rights training for Education Professionals with Trustees J. Weston, S. Piatkowski, K. Woodcock, K. Meissner and J. Herring.

COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT GOOD NEWS UPDATE

C. Newton, Interim Chief Communications Officer, presented her first Communications Good News Update. The update provided information on Black History Month and Bell Let's Talk Day. She reviewed traditional and social media coverage from December through February and the top website page views.

REPORTS

QUARTERLY STUDENT AGGRESSION REPORT

This report was provided for information.

Coordinating Superintendent M. Weinert noted that due to COVID-19, staff continue to see a reduction in incidents and that staff continue to be supported.

ANNUAL FRENCH IMMERSION ENROLMENT STATUS UPDATE

This report was provided for information.

L. Agar, Manager of Planning, provided trustees with a presentation which reviewed the French Program pathways, changes for this year and the application process. She shared that 42 elementary schools will offer Grade 1 French Immersion for September 2021. She listed the schools which have limited enrolment and cannot accept out of boundary applications. The presentation concluded with next steps including the waiting-list process.

Trustees asked questions regarding the pandemic's effect on French Immersion students, limited enrolment schools, the French Immersion Review and the waiting list.

CAMBRIDGE JOINT USE CAMPUS FEASIBILITY STUDY

This report was provided for information.

Maureen O'Shaughnessy, Principal at CS&P Architects, shared the Vision and Guiding Principles for the Joint Use Campus Steering Committee. She reviewed the Site Evaluation and photos of the site and the program components which include the City of Cambridge Recreation Complex, Idea Exchange (Library), a WRDSB Elementary School and a Waterloo Catholic District School Board (WCDSB) Elementary School. She reviewed the outdoor amenities for parking, pick up/drop off, play and social space. She showed the program components in respect to the space available and spoke to the joint-use conceptual approach and where there were joint-use opportunities. She reviewed the different concept plans and the criteria used to assess

them. The study concluded that Concept 4 was the best option and the benefits were reviewed. The next steps for the project include: negotiation of agreements, development approvals followed by design and construction.

Trustee asked questions regarding the community park, active transportation, security and timelines.

TARGETED TESTING VERBAL UPDATE

This report was provided for information.

Superintendent B. Lemon provided an overview of requirements for targeted COVID-19 testing in schools. He reviewed the criteria for the school selection process, the administration of tests and the testing plan. This was followed by the upcoming planning and communication responsibilities. The vendor will be providing staff with reporting on tests undertaken. Superintendent B. Lemon also reviewed the pharmacy testing information for asymptomatic school staff. In addition to the asymptomatic testing, the school screener has been updated to direct staff or students to remain at home with one symptom. This will also include their family members.

Trustees asked questions regarding the criteria for asymptomatic testing school selection, walk-up testing, Ministry of Education funding, timing and vendor responsibilities. Trustees also inquired about the vendor's use of the least invasive test and expressed concern that asymptomatic families may not want to volunteer for nasal tests.

Motion to Extend:

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

That the Board Meeting be extended by an additional thirty minutes.

-Carried-

BOARD COMMUNICATIONS

The Board received the following communications:

- Ottawa-Carlton District School Board to Minister of Education
- Renfrew County District School Board to Minister of Education
- Toronto District School Board to Minister of Education et al.
- Waterloo Region District School Board to Premier of Ontario
- Waterloo Region District School Board to Minister of Education - COVID-19 Command Table
- Waterloo Region District School Board to Minister of Education - Education Funding
- Waterloo Region District School Board to Minister of Education - Rural High Speed Internet

QUESTION PERIOD

Trustee S. Piatkowski asked if Weather-Impacted Distance Learning Days are temporary during the pandemic and if WRDSB will return to traditional snow days in the future. Superintendent S. Miller confirmed that once pandemic safety measures are no longer required, schools not dependent on transportation would remain open, but that staff will be looking at the possibility of distance learning opportunities for students remaining home due to weather.

Trustee M. Ramsay shared some comments of push back he received regarding the snow days declared this month. Superintendent S. Miller reiterated that the decision is made early in the morning and that staff rely on STSWR to determine if buses can safely run.

Trustee K. Woodcock asked if new Kindergarten students in the Carriage Crossing neighbourhood can be accommodated at a school closer to them. Coordinating Superintendent M. Gerard shared that no feasible solution has been found. There are no plans for changes in September 2021. Further updates will be provided as part of the Planning department's annual report in May.

Trustee C. Watson received complaints regarding the snow days from families without devices at home. Superintendent S. Miller reminded trustees that due to the pandemic safety protocols around cohorts, schools will be closed when transportation is cancelled. This will be revisited after the pandemic.

Trustee K. Meissner asked when students can expect to receive the 3-ply masks. Coordinating Superintendent M. Gerard confirmed that masks have arrived centrally and that staff are working to distribute the masks to schools. He noted that schools do have other masks available if needed.

ADJOURNMENT

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

That the Board Meeting of February 22, 2021, be adjourned.

-Carried-

The meeting adjourned at 9:38 p.m.