

MARCH 8, 2021
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING

The Waterloo Region District School Board held a Committee of the Whole 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, S. Miller, C. Newton, L. Read, P. Rubenschuh, G. Shantz and M. Weinert.

Other staff in attendance: B. Jaklic, D. Lane and S. Reidel.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson J. Weston called the meeting to order at 7:13 p.m.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

That the agenda of the March 8, 2021, Committee of the Whole Meeting be approved with the addition of a Student Senate Update under Board Reports.

-Carried-

DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST

Trustee C. Watson had a declaration of pecuniary interest in the previous in camera meeting.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Trustee S. Piatkowski attended a webinar on Sharing Indigenous Resources on February 23, 2021. On February 25, 2021, he attended the OPSBA Speaker Series and Cross Board Check. On February 26, 2021, he attended the State of the Region Address and Black History event. On March 7, 2021, he attended the Waterloo Regional Labour Council's International Women's Day event.

Trustee J. Herring was a speaker at the Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW) International Women's Day event. The CFUW is also a supporter of the Cambridge Poppy Project of which Trustee J. Herring is the Project Coordinator.

POLICY AND GOVERNANCE

**REVIEW OF BOARD POLICY G500 - DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION EXECUTIVE
ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

It was noted that the change to title was at the request of trustees and is in line with other boards.

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

That the Waterloo Region District School Board approve Board Policy G500 - Director of Education Executive Roles and Responsibilities as presented at the March 8, 2021, Committee of the Whole Meeting.

-Carried-

REVIEW OF BOARD POLICY 3000 - TRUSTEE HONORARIA

3. Moved by K. Smith, seconded by L. Tremble:

That the Waterloo Region District School Board approve Board Policy 3000 - Trustee Honoraria as presented at the March 8 , 2021, Committee of the Whole Meeting.

-Carried-

REPORTS

CLASS SIZE AND ROOM UTILIZATION

This report was provided for information.

Human Resource Services, in conjunction with Learning Services, engaged in school staff reorganizations to support the two modes of learning, In-Person and Distance Learning. Subsequent to the September reorganization, two additional reorganizations have occurred during October/November and February/March. Class sizes and school organizations have been fluid throughout the 2020-2021 school year recognizing parental choice of in-person or virtual attendance which has been provided at prescribed times during the school year. In offering two modes of learning, not all of the classroom space within a school would be required to provide programming for students. Classrooms identified as not being required for In-Person learning, were assigned to meet other system needs. In some instances, unassigned (non-classroom) space was designated to store items that were required to be removed from classrooms or used as an isolation space for the school in accordance with the direction provided through the COVID-19 Health and Safety & Employee Wellness Handbook for WRDSB Staff. The remaining unassigned space was identified for use by staff who would be providing Distance Learning. Even after factoring in staff who needed to be accommodated by working remotely, the

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classroom space available was not enough to accommodate additional staff hired to support the Distance Learning Program.

Trustees asked clarifying questions regarding instances where two staff members would share a room, collapsed classes, communication to families and staff with approved restrictions.

STUDENT CENSUS VERBAL UPDATE

After an introduction from Superintendent P. Rubenschuh providing the background for the Student Census, Dr. D. Liebermann, Senior Manager of Research and Evidence-Based Practice, reviewed the purpose of this provincial initiative and who will be responding to the Student Census. D. Lane, Research Strategist, reviewed the methods for completion of the census, available translations and anticipated launch for the end of March. He reviewed the identity information which will be collected in the census and the development and consultation process undertaken for the census. The census was developed in accordance with privacy and best practice protocols. He then reviewed the benefits of the census for the system and the initiatives Student Census data will support. The presentation concluded with next steps for Student Census activity and targeted timelines.

Trustees asked questions regarding the ideal response rate, consultation, the age selected for at school respondents, communication and support for parents.

COVID-19 PANDEMIC UPDATE

Director J. Bryant started the presentation by referring to the recent Ministry of Education announcements and staff's work with Public Health. Associate Director L. Read reviewed the current context and the guiding principles kept at the forefront of decision making. She noted the multiple opportunities to engage all stakeholders to share their feedback. Superintendent E. Giannopoulos provided an update on the Elementary Distance Learning Program and Superintendent R. DeBoer provided an update on the Secondary Distance Learning Program. Superintendent B. Lemon provided a Public Health update on Variants of Concern (VOC) and asymptomatic testing. Interim Chief Communications Officer C. Newton reviewed the many types of communications related to the pandemic and learning over the last year. Coordinating Superintendent M. Gerard provided an update on budget planning for 2021-2022. Director J Bryant concluded the presentation with comments of gratitude.

Trustees asked questions regarding current protective health and safety measures and the related costs. They also received clarification on asymptomatic testing, the elementary transition between modes of learning, secondary grades, graduation rates and vaccinations for teachers. Additional information regarding secondary co-operative education and the International Baccalaureate program was also provided.

MOTION: LETTER REGARDING STOP ARM CAMERAS

This Notice of Motion was served by Trustee C. Whetham at the February 8, 2021, Committee of the Whole meeting with support from Trustee K. Woodcock. As part of her remarks, Trustee C. Whetham asked that the motion include the addition of a copy of the letter being sent to the Waterloo Catholic District School Board. A request to send copies to local MPPs was also made.

Trustees discussed the motion's purpose and the recipients of the letters. It was suggested that the letter also reference examples of local incidents.

4. Moved by C. Whetham, seconded by K. Woodcock:

That the Waterloo Region District School Board Chair write a letter to the Mayors' offices of our 3 cities, our multiple townships and regional council, asking them to advocate to the province to speed up the process for installation of stop arm cameras to improve the safety of our students while using the transportation provided by us; and

That copies of the letter be sent to the Waterloo Catholic District School Board and local MPPs.

-Carried-

Opposed: K. Smith

STAFF AND BOARD REPORTS

AD HOC SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER REVIEW COMMITTEE UPDATE

Trustee K. Meissner shared the committee has had their first meeting to review the mandate and Terms of Reference. It provided the members an opportunity to connect virtually.

OPSBA BOARD OF DIRECTORS' UPDATE

Trustee M. Ramsay left the meeting at 9:13 p.m.

Trustee L. Tremble recently attended the OPSBA Central West Regional meeting and the OPSBA Board of Directors meeting on February 27, 2021. The next OPSBA Speaker Series event is March 11, 2021. She informed trustees that the OPSBA Annual General Meeting (AGM) is June 12, 2021 and that Constitution and By-Law Amendments and Policy Resolution Submissions will be due soon.

Trustee J. Herring left the meeting at 9:17 p.m.

STUDENT SENATE UPDATE

Student Trustees T. John-Jandles and R. McDonald provided an update on the two recent Student Senate meetings. Activities included discussions on the anonymous reporting tool, social justice awareness, mental health awareness, the Let's Connect survey and a presentation from Senator M. Deacon.

QUESTION PERIOD

Trustee C. Watson asked what communications and supports have been put in place for families regarding internet content filtering at home. Superintendent G. Shantz shared that families have been reminded that filtering at home is the responsibility of the parents/guardians. Recently, some additional communications on filtering processes and digital citizenship have been provided to assist families in making those decisions.

Trustee L. Tremble asked about our pilot project of offering Grade 11 Indigenous English classes in secondary schools, including the results of the pilot project and what the plan is for next year. Superintendent P. Rubenschuh shared that this course aligns with the Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the course mentioned is called Contemporary Aboriginal Voices. He provided some background on the course offering and shared that 297 students from five secondary schools have chosen the course for next year. Securing resources and providing fulsome professional development during the pandemic has been difficult.

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

That the Committee of the Whole Meeting be extended an additional thirty minutes.

-Carried-

Student Trustee T. John-Jandles asked if colleges and universities would be able to see Quadmester 4 mid-term marks in time for May Admissions. Superintendent R. DeBoer shared that Quadmester 4 marks will not be available until June as there is no mid-term reporting in quadmesters. Grades for Qadmester 3 will be submitted in April. Universities and Colleges have been accommodating as boards navigate the pandemic. Students are encouraged to work with their guidance counsellors if college or university admissions require additional information.

Trustee K. Woodcock asked if trustees could receive copies of the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action Booklets. Superintendent P. Rubenschuh agreed to procure copies for trustees.

ADJOURNMENT

6. Moved by C. Whetham, seconded by K. Meissner:

That the Committee of the Whole Meeting of March 8, 2021, be adjourned.

-Carried-

The meeting adjourned at 9:32 p.m.