

**AUGUST 30, 2021
SPECIAL BOARD MEETING**

The Waterloo Region District School Board held a Special 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 K. Soror and N. Vishkin were in attendance.

The following senior administration members were in attendance: j. chanicka (Director of Education and Secretary), D. Ahluwalia, J. Albrecht, R. DeBoer, E. Dougan-McKenzie, C. Hill, M. Gerard, E. Giannopoulos, P. Kaur, D. Lataille-Herdsman, B. Lemon, D. Liebermann, L. Read and G. Shantz.

Other staff in attendance: M. Delisle, R. Lam and S. Reidel.

CALL TO ORDER

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

MOTIONS FROM IN CAMERA MEETING

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

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

That the agenda of the August 30, 2021, Special In Camera Board Meeting be deemed to meet the legislative requirements for discussion in camera.

-Carried-

B. 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 and during Board Communications.

DELEGATIONS

There were no delegations.

REPORTS

Chairperson J. Weston welcomed everyone back for the new school year and welcomed the new Director Of Education, staff and Student Trustees.

SEPTEMBER SCHOOL REOPENING

Director j. chanicka introduced the September School Reopening presentation. Associate Director L. Read reviewed the current context including the current vaccination numbers for the Region of Waterloo. She also reviewed the continued focus on Human Rights and Equity. Dr. D. Liebermann, Senior Manager of Research and Evidence-Based Practice, shared the results of the June Let's Connect Survey.

Superintendent E. Giannopoulos provided an update on elementary schools for both in person and remote learning. Superintendent R. DeBoer provided an update on secondary schools for both in person and remote learning. He also shared some of the work being done to support student well-being. Superintendent B. Lemon reviewed information regarding student health and safety including existing safety measures, new safety measures, mask accomodation protocol and COVID-19 case management.

Coordinating Superintendent G. Shantz provided information on staff health and safety including mask protocols and immunization disclosure. He also reviewed the work being done to support staff well-being and provided an update on staffing. Coordinating Superintendent G. Shantz also shared updates on device distribution and support for educators. Coordinating Superintendent M. Gerard shared the ventilation strategy and an example ventilation profile. He followed up with a budget update. Director j. chanicka concluded the presentation with an expression of gratitude to all staff and their work to prepare and keep our schools safe.

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

That the Waterloo Region District School Board suspend Bylaw 9.12 allowing trustees to speak without limit on the topic at hand.

-Carried-

Trustees asked questions regarding the possible Ministry direction to allow staff to wear their own masks.

Trustees discussed a motion to send a letter to the Minister of Education on behalf of trustees strongly urging the Ministry to provide an enhanced level of masks.

A recorded vote was requested.

2. Moved by J. Herring, seconded by S. Piatkowski:

That the Waterloo Region District School Board Chairperson send a letter to the Minister of Education on behalf of trustees strongly urging the Ministry to provide an enhanced level of masks, similar to KN95 or N95 masks, for staff and students.

-Carried-

In Favour

J. Herring
K. Meissner
C. Millar
S. Piatkowski
M. Ramsay
K. Smith
L. Tremble
C. Watson
J. Weston
C. Whetham
K. Woodcock
K. Soror*
N. Vishkin*

* Student Trustees votes are recorded for the purpose of public record and for accountability to the student body; however, it is recognized that “a student trustee is not a member of the Board” (Education Act, Section 55 (2))

Trustee C. Millar moved a motion to request that the COVID vaccine be immediately added to the list of mandatory immunizations. Trustees discussed the motion.

Trustee J. Herring called a Point of Order indicating that Trustee C. Watson is stating an opinion and assumption that no consultation occurred but that trustees have been consulting within the community.

A friendly amendment to add “for eligible students” to the motion was accepted.

Trustees continued to discuss the motion including OPSBA’s support of these actions and concerns about students leaving the school system. Superintendent B. Lemon provided trustees with the protocol for existing mandatory vaccinations.

Discussion continued and Trustee C. Millar called a Point of Order on Trustee M. Ramsay indicating that his comments are not directed at the motion. Chairperson J. Weston acknowledged the Point of Order and asked that trustees speak to the motion on the table.

Trustee C. Whetham left the meeting at 8:12 p.m.

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3. Moved by C. Watson, seconded by M. Ramsay:

That the Waterloo Region District School Board postpone the motion until consultation with parents, Student Senate and community groups has been completed.

- Postponement Defeated-

Opposed:
J. Herring
K. Meissner
C. Millar
S. Piatkowski
L. Tremble
K. Woodcock
*K. Soror

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Discussion continued on the main motion and a friendly amendment was accepted to include copies of the letter to the Ontario Public School Boards’ Association and the Council of Ontario Directors of Education.

A recorded vote was requested.

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

That the Waterloo Region District School Board write a letter to the Ministry of Education and including the Ontario Medical Officer of Health and local Regional Medical Officer of Health requesting that the COVID vaccine be immediately added to the list of immunizations which are mandatory for eligible students for primary/secondary school attendance, allowing for exemptions for medical or religious reasons according to the Ontario Human Rights Code; and

That copies of the letter be sent to the Ontario Public School Boards’ Association and the Council of Ontario Directors of Education.

-Carried-

In Favour:
J. Herring
K. Meissner
C. Millar
S. Piatkowski
L. Tremble
J. Weston

Opposed:
M. Ramsay
K. Smith

Abstained:
C. Watson

K. Woodcock
K. Soror*
N. Vishkin*

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Trustees continued to ask questions about school reopening including students going home for lunch, case management, breaks in learning for secondary students, working with public health if more students become eligible for vaccination, changing modes of learning and health care consent. Questions were also asked about air quality, extra-curricular activities, use of weight rooms in secondary schools and essential visitors.

Dr. D. Liebermann, Senior Manager of Research and Evidence-Based Practice, agreed to provide information about the student census as part of an upcoming Strategic Plan report.

Trustees continued to ask questions regarding the trauma-informed approach to teaching, Community Use of Schools and unvaccinated staff. Secondary commencement and staggered dismissal were also discussed.

BOARD COMMUNICATIONS

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

That the Waterloo Region District School Board extend the Special Board Meeting of August 30, 2021 by thirty minutes.

-Carried-

The Board received the following communications:

- Halton District School Board to Premier of Ontario and Minister of Education
- Waterloo Region District School Board to Minister of Education
- Halton District School Board to Prime Minister of Canada and Premier of Ontario
- Avon Maitland District School Board to Minister of Education
- Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board to Minister of Education
- Thames Valley District School Board to Minister of Education

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

That the Waterloo Region District School Board write a letter to the Minister of Education and Premier of Ontario in support of Halton District School Board's letter dated June 18, 2021 regarding Indigenous history curriculum materials; and

That copies of the letter be sent to local Members of Provincial Parliament, the Ontario Public School Boards' Association and the Council of Ontario Directors of Education.

-Carried-

Trustees requested and received information regarding the unfunded increases in Canadian Pension Plan and Employment Insurance.

Trustee C. Watson declared a conflict of interest for the motion to write a letter to the Minister of Education requesting they review the benchmarks funding formula adjustment

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

That the Waterloo Region District School Board write a letter to the Minister of Education requesting they review the benchmarks funding formula adjustment to ensure they account for statutory increases such as Canadian Pension Plan, Employment Insurance and Ontario Municipal Employees Retirement System.

That copies of the letter be sent to local Members of Provincial Parliament, the Ontario Public School Boards' Association and the Council of Ontario Directors of Education.

-Carried-

Abstained: C. Watson

ADJOURNMENT

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

That the Special Board Meeting of August 30, 2021, be adjourned.

-Carried-

The meeting adjourned at 9:33 p.m.