

NOVEMBER 29, 2021

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, November 29, 2021, 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 - Parent Involvement Committee Meeting of September 28, 2021

Approve Minutes - Audit Committee Meeting of September 29, 2021

Approve Minutes – Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting of October 13, 2021

Receive Minutes – Board Meeting of October 25, 2021

Approve Minutes – Committee of the Whole Meeting of November 8, 2021

Approve Minutes – Committee of the Whole Meeting of November 15, 2021

Receipt/Approval of Monthly Reports:

- | | | |
|----|--|-----------|
| 33 | Staffing Information – Retirements and Resignations | G. Shantz |
| 37 | Staffing Recommendations – Appointments | G. Shantz |
| 39 | Student Suspension / Expulsion Report, October, 2021 | B. Lemon |

Declarations of Pecuniary Interest

Announcements/Celebrating Board Activities

Communications Good News Update

Delegations

Karen Taylor-Harrison - Proposed Name Change to A.R. Kaufman School

Peter Woolstencroft - Ad Hoc School Naming Review Committee Research Report

Staff Follow Up

Reports

- | | | |
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| 41 | Annual Suspension Report | B. Lemon |
| | COVID-19 Verbal Update | j. chanicka / L. Read |

Board Reports

**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

- 47 Ottawa-Carleton District School Board to Minister of Education & Minister of Labour
- 49 Halton District School Board to Minister of Education - Semester Model
- 51 Avon Maitland District School Board SEAC to Minister of Education
- 52 Upper Grand District School Board to Minister of Education
- 54 Halton District School Board to Minister of Education - Capital Project Funding

Other Business

Return to the Boardroom Update

Chairperson

Question Period (10 minutes)

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

Adjournment



Report to Board of Trustees

November 29, 2021

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: Graham Shantz, Coordinating Superintendent, Human Resources & Equity Services, in consultation with Coordinating Council.

Appendix A

Staffing Statistics – Retirements
Current at November 29, 2021

Retirements: Elementary Teaching Staff				
First	Last	Position/Location	Retirement Date	Years of Service
Maureen	Bartlett	Teacher, Lester B Pearson PS	November 30, 2021	17
Patricia	Coupal	Teacher, Sir Adam Beck PS	December 17, 2021	23
Dominique	Crousset	Teacher, Sir Adam Beck PS	November 30, 2021	8
Joy	Good	Teacher, Glencairn PS	November 19, 2021	25
Glenn	Harper	Teacher, Howard Robertson PS	December 17, 2021	32
Grace	Ribeiro Gregorio	Teacher, Chalmers Street PS	December 31, 2021	28
Heather	Whittington	Teacher, Central PS	November 30, 2021	31

Retirements: Secondary Teaching Staff				
First	Last	Position/Location	Retirement Date	Years of Service
Lori Ann	Davy	Teacher, Jacob Hespeler SS	January 31, 2022	31
Nancy-Lee	Ledgley	Teacher, Grand River CI	December 31, 2021	26
Christine	Packull-McCormick	Math Department Head, Eastwood CI	January 31, 2022	25

Staffing Statistics – Retirements
Current at November 29, 2021

Retirements: Administrative & Support Staff				
First	Last	Position/Location	Retirement Date	Years of Service
Shaon	Beard	Educational Assistant, Silverheights PS	December 31, 2021	18
Sofia	Brock	Principal, Westheights PS	January 31, 2022	16
Bounsy	Chanthalyma	Custodian, Bluevale CI	January 31, 2022	29
Thang	Dong	Custodian, Eastwood CI	April 29, 2022	23
Wilfred	Gerner	Tradesperson, Maintenance	December 31, 2021	32
Melanie	Goodman	Educational Assistant, Sir John A Macdonald SS	December 31, 2021	31
Joanne	Green	Early Childhood Educator, Baden PS	December 31, 2021	19
Kathryn	Haddock	Principal, Mackenzie King PS	December 31, 2021	23
Michael	Sendrea	Principal, Conestogo PS	January 31, 2022	31
Deb	Watson	Support Specialist, ITS	April 29, 2022	21

Staffing Statistics – Resignations
Current at November 29, 2021

Permanent Staff Resignations			
First	Last	Position/Location	Effective Date
Jessica	Bauman	Early Childhood Educator, John Mahood PS	February 28, 2022
Kim	Bigelow	Teacher, Sandhills PS	November 12, 2021
Lori	Climpson	Secretary, Elementary Remote School 1	November 25, 2021
John	Forte	Auditor, Regional Internal Audit Department	December 3, 2021
Tara	Glachan	Educational Assistant, Cedar Creek PS	October 27, 2021
Robert	Gordon	In School Technician, Forest Heights CI	November 11, 2021
Matthew	Hurley	HR Officer, Human Resource Services	December 31, 2021
Heejin	Jeon	Educational Assistant, Laurelwood PS	October 22, 2021
Jane	Kains	Supervisor, Facility Services	November 11, 2021
Laura	Marek	Educational Assistant, Sandhills PS	December 3, 2021
Timothy	Schleich	Child Youth Worker, Waterloo Oxford DSS	January 2, 2022
Kate	Shantz	Educational Assistant, Sir John A Macdonald SS	December 3, 2021
Jaclyn	Walker	Teacher, Huron Heights SS	November 18, 2021



Report to Board of Trustees

November 29, 2021

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 November 29, 2021.

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: Graham Shantz, Coordinating Superintendent, Human Resources & Equity Services, in consultation with Coordinating Council.

Appendix A

Staffing Information – New Appointments
Current at November 29, 2021

New Appointments: Elementary Teacher Staff			
First	Last	Location	Effective Date
Linda	Berkel	Hespeler Public School	October 25, 2021
Andrea	Martinescu-Moon	Blair Road Public School	November 8, 2021

New Appointments: Administrative and Support Staff			
First	Last	Position / Location	Effective Date
Maisaa	Ahmed	Procurement Clerk, Finance	November 9, 2021
James	Denhart	Custodian, Waterloo CI	November 15, 2021
Susan	Durnford	Secretary, Avenue Road PS	November 15, 2021
Gabriel	Gutierrez-Venegas	Custodian, Grand River CI	November 24, 2021
Tracey	Hutchison	Library Clerk, Trillium PS	November 1, 2021
Brandon	Lynch	Custodian, Laurelwood PS	November 23, 2021
Jennifer	Reid	Custodian, Parkway PS	November 22, 2021
Meaghan	Smith	Secretary, Forest Heights CI	October 27, 2021

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

Human Resources & Equity Services



Report to Board of Trustees

November 29, 2020

Subject: Student Suspension/Expulsion Report October, 2021

Recommendation

This report is provided for the Waterloo Region District School Board with information regarding monthly and year-to-date suspension/expulsion data.

Status

Comparing year to date from October 2020 and October 2021, elementary suspensions have increased by 128 and secondary suspensions have increased by 271.

Comparing year to date from October 2020 and October 2021, school expulsions have remained the same and board expulsions have increased by 1.

The most recent month's suspension and expulsion data is included below. The data is accurate up to, and including, the date of collection.

Data from 2020/2021 were collected during a school year where students were engaged in learning in three modes: in-person, adaptive hybrid and distance learning.

Suspensions

- Total elementary school suspensions in October 2020 - 55, year to date - 74
- Total elementary school suspensions in October 2021 - 146, year to date - 202
- Total secondary school suspensions in October 2020 - 13, year to date - 18
- Total secondary school suspensions in October 2021 - 190, year to date - 289

Expulsions

- Total school expulsions in October 2020 - 0, Year to Date 0
- Total school expulsions in October 2021 - 0, Year to Date 0
- Total board expulsions in October 2020 - 0, Year to Date 0
- Total board expulsions in October 2021 - 1, Year to Date 1

Violent Incidents

The term violent incident is defined as the occurrence of any of the following or the occurrence of a combination of any of the following; possessing a weapon, including possessing a firearm, physical assault causing bodily harm requiring medical attention,

sexual assault, robbery, using a weapon to cause or to threaten bodily harm to another person, extortion, hate and/or bias-motivated occurrences.

- Total elementary/secondary violent incidents in October 2020 - 1, year to date 1
- Total elementary/secondary violent incidents in October 2021 - 5, year to date 10

Background

As requested by the Board, suspension/expulsion data will be presented at the Board meeting each month.

Financial implications

There are no financial implications.

Communications

Upon request, suspension/expulsion data is communicated to the Ministry of Education for statistical purposes.

Prepared by: Bill Lemon, Superintendent, Student Achievement & Well-Being,
Joe Bell, System Administrator, Learning Support Services, and
in consultation with Coordinating Council



Report to Board of Trustees

November 29, 2021

Subject: Suspension/Expulsion Annual Report

Recommendation

This report is for the information of the Board.

Status

To provide the Waterloo Region District School Board with an annual report concerning suspension, expulsion and violent incident data for the 2020-21 school year.

This report supports the strategic priority of Our Students are First – Each and Every One. The WRDSB continues to support students in alternative programs that support their success. Suspension and expulsion data is helpful in supporting schools as inclusive and caring communities.

Using the previous annual report as a model, staff worked to provide an in-depth analysis of suspension, expulsion and violent incident data. These data were collected with schools operating adapted learning programs including: distance learning, in-person learning and the secondary adapted hybrid model.

In Appendix A:

Suspension/expulsion data is analyzed by:

- Percentage of Students Suspended by Enrollment
- Number of Students Expelled
- Violent Incident Reports
- Suspension Analysis by Gender
- Suspension Analysis by Grade
- Analysis by Length of Suspension
- Suspension/Expulsion Analysis by Category
- Suspension Analysis by Location

Background

On May 26, 2008, the Board requested an analysis of annual suspension/expulsion/violent incident data, including statistics on violent incidents.

Financial implications

No financial implications.

Communications

Upon request, suspension/expulsion data is communicated to the Ministry of Education for statistical purposes.

Prepared by: Bill Lemon, Superintendent, Student Achievement & Well-Being
Joe Bell, System Administrator, Learning Support Services
in consultation with Coordinating Council

SUSPENSION/EXPULSION ANALYSIS

September 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021

Percentage of Students Suspended by Enrollment:

Category	Male	Female	Total
Enrollment	34 675	32 797	64 472
# of suspensions	302	71	373
% of suspensions by enrollment	0.8%	0.2%	0.57%

Number of Students Expelled:

Male	Female	Total
0	1	1

Number of Violent Incident Reports: 2**Suspension Analysis by Gender:**

- 81% of all suspensions were given to males.
- 19% of all suspensions were given to females

Suspension data was collected for students using more inclusive categories, however the numbers in these categories are not reportable to protect student privacy.

Grade	Male	Female
JK/SK	0	0
1	1	0
2	0	0
3	8	0
4	14	2
5	21	6
6	16	6
7	77	22
8	107	18
9	13	0
10	20	5
11	14	5
12	11	7
Total	302	71

Suspension Analysis by Length of Suspension:

- 341 91% of all suspensions were three days in length or less
- 16 4 % of all suspensions were long-term (six days or longer)

Length of Suspension	Number of Suspensions
1	217
2	67
3	57
4	2
5	14
6	2
7	1
8	1
9	0
10	3
11	0
12	0
13	1
14	0
15	0
16	0
17	0
18	0

19	0
20	8
Total	373

Suspension/Expulsion Analysis by Category:

Code	Category Description	Suspensions
S1	Uttering a threat to inflict serious bodily harm on another person	31
S2	Possessing alcohol or illegal drugs	0
S3	Being under the influence of alcohol or drugs	5
S4	Swearing at a teacher or at another person in a position of authority	19
S5	Committing an act of vandalism that causes extensive damage to school property at the pupil's school or to property located on the premises of the pupil's school	7
S7	Bullying	20
S8	Medical/Immunization	0
S9	Possessing cannabis unless the pupil is a medical cannabis user	2
S10	Being under the influence of cannabis, unless the pupil is a medical cannabis user	0
S11	Possessing alcohol or illegal drugs (except cannabis)	5
Board	Code of Conduct Violation	198
Board	Fighting/Violence	64
Board	Habitual Neglect of Duty	
Board	Opposition to Authority	27
Board	Profanity/Swearing	27

S - Suspension

* The number of suspensions for each reason code will appear higher, as one suspension may have had two or more reason codes and therefore counted multiple times. This chart should be used to review the reasons for a suspension, not a total number of suspensions.

Code	Category Description	Suspensions Pending Expulsion
E1	Possessing a weapon, including possessing a firearm.	7
E2	Using a weapon to cause or to threaten bodily harm to another person.	5
E3	Committing physical assault on another person that causes bodily harm requiring treatment by a medical practitioner.	1
E4	Committing sexual assault.	2
E5	Trafficking in weapons or in illegal drugs.	0
E6	Committing robbery.	0
E7	Giving alcohol to a minor.	0
E8	Any activity listed under Suspensions that is motivated by bias, prejudice or hate based on race, national or ethnic origin, language, colour, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability, sexual	0

	orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or any other similar factor.	
E9	Bullying, if the pupil has previously been suspended for engaging in bullying and the pupil's continuing presence in the school creates an unacceptable risk to the safety of another person.	0
E10	Any other activity that, under a policy of the board, is an activity for which a student may be considered for expulsion.	2

E - Expulsion

* The number of suspensions pending expulsion for each reason code will appear higher, as one suspension may have had two or more reason codes and therefore counted multiple times. This chart should be used to review the reasons for a suspension pending expulsion, not a total number of suspensions.

Suspension Analysis by Location:

Bleachers	0
Cafeteria/Lunch	4
Change Room	2
Classroom	145
Gymnasium	16
Hallway	28
Internet	11
Laboratory	0
Library	0
Not Available	N/A
Off Site	40
Office	8
Other	11
Parking Lot	1
Portable	1
School Bus	8
School Grounds	129
School Trip	0
Sports Events	0
Staircase	0
Swimming Pool	0
Washroom	21



**Office of the Chair of the
Board**

27 October 2021

The Honourable Stephen Lecce
Minister of Education
438 University Ave, 5th Floor
Toronto, Ontario
M7A 1N3

The Honourable Monte McNaughton
Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development
400 University Avenue 14th Floor
Toronto, Ontario
M7A 1T7

Dear Ministers Lecce and McNaughton:

At its meeting of 26 October 2021, the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board approved the following motion:

THAT the Chair of the OCDSB write a letter requesting that the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Labour consider the approval and endorsement of masking better than level 2, and that the Ministry of Education fund this enhanced PPE for all staff and students across Ontario.

Early in the course of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Ontario government took action to procure and supply face masks to school districts as part of its efforts to contain the spread of the virus, for which we are very grateful. At that time, however, good quality respirators were in very short supply and had to be reserved for healthcare workers. Also at that time, it was not well understood that COVID-19 can spread by aerosol transmission. Now that there is much greater availability of quality respirators, and now that much more is understood about the transmission of COVID-19 through the air, it is time to give serious consideration to upgrading the masks that are used in the school setting.

With much appreciation for your immediate attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Lynn Scott
Chair, Ottawa-Carleton District School Board

cc: Dr. Vera Etches, Medical Officer of Health, Ottawa Public Health
Cathy Abraham, President, OPSBA
W.R. (Rusty) Hick, Executive Director, OPSBA
T.J Goertz, Senior Communication and Policy Officer
OPSBA and All English Public Chairs
Trustees, Ottawa-Carleton District School Board
Senior Staff, Ottawa-Carleton District School Board

Corporate Records



October 12, 2021

The Honourable Stephen Lecce

Ministry of Education

5th Floor, 438 University Ave.

Toronto, ON M5G 2K8

Re: Decision Making Regarding the Return to Traditional Semester Model

Dear Minister Lecce,

Secondary Schools in the Halton District School Board (HDSB) are currently operating with a modified semester model to satisfy both the Ministry of Education and Public Health COVID-19 related Guidelines. This model has students taking four courses during the semester; however, they attend only two courses per day for a week and then attend the remaining two courses the next week. This alternates week by week. This model was chosen due to its flexibility to quickly pivot back to a traditional four-course per day model within a maximum of two weeks' notice. The modified semester model is not optimal for student achievement or student and staff well-being, particularly those receiving special education support, and, on behalf of the Special Education Advisory Committee of HDSB, I am writing to request an urgent return to the traditional semester model.

For students with special education needs, the modified semester system does not allow for equitable access to education. Students with attention issues find it almost impossible to stay focused and keep up when classes are 2.5 hours long, particularly if it is the second 2.5-hour class in a day. As students' attention fades, they begin to fall behind, leading to poorer marks, reduced success, and increased stress and anxiety. Students with mental health and transition issues are subject to increased anxiety each week as they move from one set of subjects to the next. All students are finding it harder to build strong bonds with their teachers as they do not see them as regularly and are less comfortable approaching their teachers if they are struggling. If students miss a class or assignment, due to the medical or support service appointments that many exceptional students require, it is more difficult for them to catch up with the material covered in such a long class. It is also harder for students who struggle with organization to keep track of what they have learnt and what is due when. Educators must also spend extra time at the start of each week reminding students of what they were taught a week before, rather

than automatically building on what took place the day before. This is particularly difficult for students with exceptionalities affecting memory.

During the summer, the Ministry indicated that the use of modified semester models would be temporary, as it focused on controlling COVID in schools at the beginning of the school year with the assumption that it significantly reduces student contacts. The reality is that teenagers are currently congregating and mixing before and after school, at lunchtime, for co-curriculars, and evening activities; be it jobs or recreational activities. There is very little benefit to continuing with modified semester schedules when all these other factors are at play, given that the other COVID prevention measures in place appear to be working well over an extended period of time.

Halton's COVID-19 vaccination rate as per the Region's website for 12–17-year-olds is exceptional. The rate for this age group is 95% with a single dose and 91% that are fully vaccinated. Our 7-day rolling average of new cases in Halton is just 12.7. Out of 19,390 students learning in-person in HDSB

secondary school facilities last month, we have had only 11 student cases, no cases amongst educators and no outbreaks in schools. Considering the increased transmission rate of the Delta variant, our defenses against in-facility transmission are outstanding.

We are asking you to immediately allow all school boards in Ontario to work directly with their Regional Public Health Departments to determine whether it is appropriate to transition our high school students back to a regular semester. This will allow differentiation of approach based on local COVID levels, ensuring the appropriate balance of public safety and academic and emotional well-being of students. Without this, students with special education needs will continue to be disproportionately affected by our response to the pandemic and will be unable to receive equitable access to education.

We look forward to hearing from you on this matter.

Yours sincerely,



Alison Brindle,

Chair, SEAC HDSB

Cc: HDSB Special Education Advisory Committee



November 2021

Honourable Stephen Lecce
Minister of Education
Mowat Block
900 Bay Street
Toronto, ON M7A 1L2

Sent via email to Minister.edu@ontario.ca

Dear Minister Lecce:

The Special Education Advisory Committee for the Avon Maitland District School Board, recently received letters from the Rainy River District School Board and the Rainbow District School Board SEAC, regarding their support of Bill 172, the Education Statute Law Amendment Act for Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). This proposed legislation will require all Boards of Education throughout Ontario to develop policies and guidelines with respect to FASD and require the Ontario College of Teachers ECE programs to provide training with respect to FASD.

A FASD diagnosis impacts children's ability to thrive in school due to the combination of deficits associated with the diagnosis and their limited capacity to understand expectations and demands. For this reason, staff need to be taught about the early signs and symptoms of FASD and how to provide appropriate accommodations in the classroom, and school boards need to develop policies and guidelines with respect to FASD for the academic environment.

At the regular meeting on November 3, 2021, the Avon Maitland District School Board Special Education Advisory Committee approved the following motion:

That the Special Education Advisory Committee recommends sending a letter to the Minister of Education endorsing Bill 172, the Education Statute Law Amendment Act (Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder).

Carried unanimously.

In approving this motion, the members of the Avon Maitland District School Board's Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) ask that you acknowledge our support for Bill 172 as it will help our students and educators experience success in their classrooms and improve their overall wellbeing.

We appreciate your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Lee
Avon Maitland DSB SEAC Chair

Cc: Ontario District School Board SEACs
Dr. Lisa Walsh, Director of Education & Secretary to the Board



**UPPER GRAND
DISTRICT SCHOOL
BOARD**

Martha MacNeil

Board Chair, Upper Grand District School Board

Board Office: 500 Victoria Road N. Guelph, ON N1E 6K2

Email: martha.macneil@ugdsb.on.ca

Tel: 519-822-4420 ext. 735 or **Toll Free:** 1-800-321-4025

Wednesday, November 17th, 2021

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

Dear Minister Lecce,

The Upper Grand District School Board would like to acknowledge the support of the provincial government for the ongoing supply of personal protective equipment (PPE) for our staff during the COVID-19 pandemic.

At the October 26th, 2021 meeting of the UGDSB, the Board passed a motion directing the Chair to write to you requesting that the PPE for staff reflect the highest level of protection deemed appropriate at the time.

An additional motion was passed directing senior staff, through the director, to investigate actions taken by other school boards regarding types of masks being used and to prepare a report to share the findings. This report will be shared with trustees at the November meeting of the Board.

The staff of the Upper Grand District School Board deserve the very best protection during these difficult times as they support our students in our schools and programs.

We appreciate your consideration of this matter and look forward to your response.

Sincerely yours,

Martha MacNeil
Chair of the Board
Upper Grand District School Board

Upper Grand District School Board

- | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------|--------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| • Martha MacNeil; Chair | • Mark Bailey | • Jolly Bedi | • Linda Busuttill | • Gail Campbell |
| • Barbara Lustgarten Evoy; Vice-Chair | • Jen Edwards | • Mike Foley | • Robin Ross | • Lynn Topping |

cc:

Premier Doug Ford

Ted Arnott, MPP Wellington-Halton Hills

Sylvia Jones, MPP Dufferin-Caledon

Randy Pettapiece, MPP Perth-Wellington

Mike Schreiner, MPP Guelph

T.J Goertz, Senior Communications and Policy Officer, OPSBA

All Public School Board Chairs

Ontario Public School Boards Association

UGDSB Board of Trustees

Peter Sovran, Director of Education, UGDSB

All Local Union Presidents

Upper Grand District School Board

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• Barbara Lustgarten Evoy; Vice-Chair

• Mark Bailey

• Jen Edwards

• Jolly Bedi

• Mike Foley

• Linda Busuttill

• Robin Ross

• Gail Campbell

• Lynn Topping



November 19, 2021

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

Re: Capital Project Funding and Ministry Approval Delays

Dear Minister Lecce,

For the past number of years, Halton region has been experiencing intense growth which resulted in an increase in the student population for the Halton District School Board (HDSB). With this, we have gained much experience building new schools and navigating what is becoming a more complicated approval process. Our school construction challenges arise throughout the process including difficulty acquiring prepared land in a timely fashion, various onerous approval processes and timelines including municipal by-laws, site plan approvals and permits, provincial government approvals, and more recent supply shortages which have increased costs.

The Trustees of the Halton District School Board request that the capital projects approval process be reviewed and streamlined in recognition of the detrimental impact on school opening timelines. The Trustees also request that benchmark funding more closely reflect the current, and escalating costs of building schools. These points are addressed in our letter.

The delays in Ministry of Education approvals for **fully-funded projects** is onerous and time-consuming. The Ministry's own [chart](#) outlines approvals at the following stages:

- 1 approval at the Pre-design stage
- 2 approvals at the Pre-tender stage
- 1 approval at the post-tender stage

In addition to this, the board must provide a third-party cost consultant analysis through the design process prior to tender.

As an example, a current project, Milton #12 was submitted by staff for Approval to Proceed (ATP) in June 2021 and it received Minister approval in September (3 months). This is in an environment with rapidly escalating costs, with the consequence that by the time ATP is received and the tender closes,

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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

construction costs have risen above the proposed budget. As a result, the Board is required to return to the ATP stage to seek additional Ministry approvals to utilize scarce HDSB funds. This is a highly unproductive and costly cycle.

The four approvals required by the Ministry alone, along with the associated timeframes for approval, add a year to the overall project. This is time that we don't have and it is in addition to timelines for site plan and building permit approvals, which vary by municipality, township, and are impacted by town and municipal staff workload. In some cases, the Board may also need to seek re-zoning, zoning by-law amendments. Out of necessity, the HDSB has initiated construction on lands that the board doesn't fully own based on partial permit releases (foundation and superstructure permits).

It is imperative that we reduce accommodation pressures and temporary locations for students, necessitated by the steep population growth in some communities in our region. The HDSB Facility Services team has used a small pool of qualified consultants and repeat school designs to expedite the process of approval and minimize cost escalations. Despite this, the Ministry has effectively reduced capital benchmark funding by asking board staff to conform to building new schools at 90% of the benchmark funding. This effectively reduces the funding for our schools, the footprint of our school buildings as well as services and amenities for our communities, and does not address student accommodation needs.

Focussing on the past five years, HDSB has been actively building schools in Milton and Oakville. The cost per square foot of each elementary school is listed below:

- Milton #10 (Viola Desmond PS, Tendered 2017) - \$176/sq. ft.
- Oakville #2 (Dr. David D Williams PS, Tendered 2019) - \$213/sq. ft.
- Milton #11 (TBD PS, Tendered 2020) - \$213/sq. ft.
- Milton #12 (TBD PS, Tendered 2021) - \$250/sq. ft.

Based on these four elementary schools, capital costs of construction have escalated roughly 42%. This Ministry's benchmark funding falls short of these costs, and the gap is widening. For our newest Milton secondary school, Elsie McGill, the HDSB had to increase the budget beyond Ministry funding by \$3M using HDSB funds. This is not sustainable or equitable, as it impacts other areas, including our ability to upgrade aging schools adequately and in a timely way.

As costs rise, we move further and further from the benchmark, further depleting HDSB funds and adding delays to projects due to the additional approvals and time required when tenders exceed approved funding amounts. This frustrates our parent communities. A family waiting for a new school may have children at multiple holding schools. These schools end up with fields of portable classrooms and shrinking outside space for students for curricular and recess activities, and there is reduced access to common spaces like libraries, music rooms, science labs, technology studies rooms and gymnasiums. At the core of this issue, is our belief that we must do better for students and staff.

The Trustees of the Halton District School Board appreciate your attention to review and streamline the capital projects approval process so that we can mitigate the detrimental impact on delays in school openings and that benchmark funding be revised to reflect the current, and escalating costs of building schools.

Sincerely,



Andréa Grebenc
Chair of the Board of Trustees
Halton District School Board

Cc: Hon. Ted Arnott, MPP
Stephen Crawford, MPP
Hon. Parm Gill, MPP
Hon. Jane McKenna, MPP
Effie Triantafilopoulos, MPP
Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA) President
Ontario School Board Chairs (English Public, English Catholic, French Public,
French Catholic)
Gary Carr, Halton Regional Chair
Gordon Krantz, Mayor of Milton
Rob Burton, Mayor of Oakville