

JANUARY 17, 2022
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: S. Piatkowski (Chairperson), J. Herring, K. Meissner, C. Millar, M. Ramsay, K. Smith, L. Tremble, C. Watson, J. Weston and K. Woodcock.

Trustee C. Whetham was unable to attend.

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, M. Gerard, E. Giannopoulos, C. Hill, P. Kaur, D. Lataille-Herdsman, B. Lemon, S. Miller, L. Read and G. Shantz.

Other staff in attendance: E. Baumgartner, R. Lam, E. MacKenzie, J. Mitchison and S. Reidel.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson S. Piatkowski called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

1. Moved by L. Tremble, seconded by J. Weston:

That the agenda of the January 17, 2022, Committee of the Whole Meeting be approved with the addition of a WEFI 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

Chairperson S. Piatkowski shared regrets from Trustee C. Whetham for the previous In Camera Committee of the Whole meeting.

Trustee K. Smith shared photos from a tour she attended of the medical facility in the former Kinsmen Children Centre.

Trustee M. Ramsay joined the meeting at 7:06 p.m.

DELEGATIONS

The following delegations were scheduled to speak at this evening's meeting:

- Savio Wong - Library Review
- Carolyn Burjoski - Library Review
- Peggy Thomas, Ontario Library Association - Library Review
- Fraser Gibson - Outdoor Education
- Meg Ruttan Walker - Return to In-Person Learning

Chairperson S. Piatkowski interrupted delegate Carolyn Burjoski to caution that the content of her presentation may be problematic and asked that she ensure that she doesn't say anything that would contravene the Ontario Human Rights Code.

Chairperson S. Piatkowski ended the delegation from Carolyn Burjoski with concerns that her comments were a violation of the delegation requirements not to contravene the Ontario Human Rights Code.

Trustee M. Ramsay challenged the decision of the Chairperson to stop the delegation. Chairperson S. Piatkowski passed the Chair to Vice-Chair K. Woodcock. Trustees voted and upheld the decision of the Chairperson.

Opposed:
M. Ramsay
K. Smith
L. Tremble
C. Watson

After the ruling, trustees were asked, but were not in agreement, to allow the delegation to continue without sharing her visual presentation.

Chairperson S. Piatkowski resumed chairing the meeting.

The remainder of the delegations continued.

Trustees were provided opportunities to ask questions of clarification of delegations.

POLICY AND GOVERNANCE

REVIEW OF BOARD POLICY 3003 - TRUSTEE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Trustees suggested potential changes to section 2.3 to provide clarification regarding virtual learning opportunities and that the title be updated to reflect that this policy is primarily about expenses.

2. Moved by K. Woodcock, seconded by M. Ramsay:

That the Waterloo Region District School Board refer Board Policy 3003 - Trustee Professional Development as presented at the January 17, 2022, Committee of the Whole Meeting back to staff to incorporate clarification regarding virtual opportunities and potential updates to the policy title.

-Carried-

REPORTS

LIBRARY SERVICES PRESENTATION

Coordinating Superintendent G. Shantz introduced the presentation. Digital Literacy Support Teacher E. MacKenzie reviewed the role of the school library and related Ministry of Education direction. Digital Literacy Support Teacher E. Baumgartner reviewed the Canadian School Libraries Standards of Practice. J. Mitchison, IT Consultant for Secondary Schools, reviewed the guidelines used by staff since 2005 and the recent changes made to reflect best practices. Digital Literacy Support Teacher E. MacKenzie shared the difference between selection and censorship. Digital Literacy Support Teacher E. Baumgartner shared the engagement performed when making decisions regarding resource selection and deselection. Digital Literacy Support Teacher E. MacKenzie shared the importance of weeding a library and the grounds for removing a book. Digital Literacy Support Teacher E. Baumgartner and IT Consultant for Secondary J. Mitchison shared some examples of books that were removed including their updated replacements to align with updated curriculum, scope of knowledge, language, and engaging content. Digital Literacy Support Teacher E. MacKenzie shared the Principles of Using Resources and the Reconsideration Process. Coordinating Superintendent G. Shantz concluded the presentation.

Trustees asked questions regarding consultation and how materials are reviewed in a shared library.

MOTION: LIBRARY REVIEW

This Notice of Motion was served by Trustee C. Watson at the November 8, 2021 Committee of the Whole meeting with support from Trustee M. Ramsay. Trustee C. Watson spoke to her motion and the importance of consultation.

Trustees discussed the motion including the existing consultation process for concerns with literature in schools and expressions of harm.

It was requested that the three parts of the motion be voted on separately and that each be a recorded vote.

At the January 31, 2022, Board Meeting the motion was further discussed and voted on.

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

That a written report be presented at a regular Committee of the Whole outlining the criteria, framework and the process for the 2-3 year library and classroom library review by the end of January 2022; and

-Defeated-

In Favour:

M. Ramsay
C. Watson

Opposed:

J. Herring
K. Meissner
C. Millar
S. Piatkowski
L. Tremble
J. Weston
C. Whetham
K. Woodcock
*K. Soror

* 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))

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

That a consultation process be developed that would include students, staff, parents and community members participation in the library and classroom library review; and

-Defeated-

In Favour:

M. Ramsay
C. Watson

Opposed:

J. Herring
K. Meissner
C. Millar
S. Piatkowski
L. Tremble
J. Weston
C. Whetham
K. Woodcock
*K. Soror

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

That the Waterloo Region District School Board develop a “Library Resource Review” policy that would include criteria, framework, process and a consultation process for students, parents, staff and community members.

-Defeated-

In Favour:

M. Ramsay
C. Watson

Opposed:

J. Herring
K. Meissner
C. Millar
S. Piatkowski
L. Tremble
J. Weston
C. Whetham
K. Woodcock
*K. Soror

* 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))

MOTION: PAUSING EQAO TESTING

This Notice of Motion was served by Trustee K. Woodcock at the December 13, 2021, Board meeting with support from Trustees K. Meissner, J. Herring and J. Weston. Trustee K. Woodcock spoke to concerns regarding the mental health of students and the additional pressures of the test.

Trustees discussed the motion and received clarification from staff regarding alternative assessments.

6. Moved by J. Herring, seconded by M. Ramsay:

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

-Carried-

Trustees continued to discuss the motion and staff noted that at this time the Ministry of Education plans to continue with EQAO testing this year.

7. Moved by K. Woodcock, seconded by J. Weston:

That the Board direct the Chair to send a letter to the Minister advocating for a pause of EQAO testing for this year; and

That the Chair ask a question about pausing EQAO at the next Chairs/Minister teleconference.

-Carried-

RETURN TO IN-PERSON LEARNING

Director j. chanicka introduced the presentation. Associate Director L. Read reviewed the current context for this presentation and an update on local vaccination efforts. Coordinating Superintendent G. Shantz provided an update on staff coverage and Personal Protective Equipment. Coordinating Superintendent M. Gerard updated trustees on ventilation, HEPA Filtration Units and the distribution of Rapid Antigen Test kits. Superintendent B. Lemon noted that PCR Self-collection Kits will no longer be provided by the Ministry of Education. He also provided an update on the new school screener. He reviewed the changes to case and contact management, reporting, and monitoring, as well as the new cohorting requirements.

8. Moved by K. Woodcock, seconded by J. Weston:

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

-Carried-

Superintendent J. Albrecht provided information on the Short Term Elementary Virtual Learning option and Superintendent R. DeBoer provided information on the Short Term Secondary Virtual Learning option. Superintendent S. Miller provided an update on support for students with complex learning needs.

Trustees discussed a motion to write letters with numerous pandemic related requests.

9. Moved by J. Herring, seconded by J. Weston:

That WRDSB Trustees request that the Chair write letters directed to the appropriate individuals below including to the CMOH (Chief Medical Officer of Health), and/or local MOHs (Medical Officers of Health), the MOE (Minister of Education) and copying all member Boards, OPSBA and local MPPs requesting the following:

- 1) Student and staff access to PCR testing in cases of high risk exposure and suspected COVID-19;**
- 2) Supports and implementation of a “Test to Return” strategy following COVID-19 illness and exposure, supported by an adequate rapid antigen test supply;**
- 3) Continued funding and adequate supplies of rapid antigen tests for all students and staff;**
- 4) Funding for ventilation upgrades, beyond portable HEPA units, to ensure a long-term commitment to student and staff health;**

5) Full reimbursement of all school board pandemic-related costs.

-Carried-

Trustees asked questions regarding discrepancies in the cohorting guidelines, case management and HEPA filters.

Trustees discussed a motion to investigate the feasibility of placing HEPA filters in every classroom.

10. Moved by J. Weston, seconded by J. Herring:

That the WRDSB investigate the feasibility, effectiveness and cost of placing HEPA filters in every classroom; and

That the WRDSB investigate if funding for these filters is available through the Ministry or, if this is not possible, then by using unallocated surplus funds; and

That staff report back to Trustees no later than February 14, 2022.

-Carried-

Abstained: M. Ramsay

Trustees continued to ask questions regarding possible school closures and the Elementary Short Term Virtual Learning program.

11.

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

-Carried-

Abstained: K. Smith

Trustees resumed asking questions regarding concerned parents and the 30% absenteeism threshold to activate public health resources.

Trustee K. Smith and Student Trustee K. Soror left the meeting at 10:30 p.m.

BOARD REPORTS

WATERLOO EDUCATION FOUNDATION INC. (WEFI) UPDATE

Trustee K. Woodcock shared that at a Special Meeting, the WEFI Board of Directors approved a fundraiser campaign to raise money for additional HEPA filters. WEFI has not previously used funds for this type of equipment, but given the pandemic, this campaign meets the needs of the community.

Coordinating Superintendent M. Gerard noted that the donations will be to a central fund for additional HEPA filters and related operating expenses not for a specific school or classroom. When the information is published, it will include further details.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Trustee J. Weston served the following Notice of Motion with support from Trustee J. Herring:

Whereas, COVID-19 transmits mainly through [aerosols](#), and aerosol transmission of viruses (including seasonal colds and flus) [can be reduced by improved ventilation](#);

Whereas, NDIR CO2 monitors can provide timely data about air quality in a room that will allow immediate actions to be taken and allow additional resources to be focused where they are most needed;

Whereas, other jurisdictions have provided CO2 detectors in schools “[so staff can quickly identify where ventilation needs to be improved](#)”;

Whereas, [CO2 levels have a significant effect on cognitive performance](#) and concentration;

Be it resolved

That Trustees direct staff to investigate the feasibility and effectiveness of placing CO2 monitors in a minimum of three schools, as a pilot project, to determine their usefulness at measuring and logging air quality, including CO2, and clean air delivery rate (CADR) in occupied rooms; and

That the report includes a full costing of implementing this pilot.

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

ADJOURNMENT

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

That the Committee of the Whole Meeting of January 17, 2022, be adjourned.

-Carried-

The meeting adjourned at 10:38 p.m.