

JANUARY 31, 2022

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, January 31, 2022, 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 October 26, 2021
- Approve Minutes - Parent Involvement Committee Meeting of December 7, 2021
- Approve Minutes – Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting of December 8, 2021
- Receive Minutes – Board Meeting of December 13, 2022
- Receive Minutes – Special Board Meeting of January 4, 2022
- Approve Minutes – Committee of the Whole Meeting of January 17, 2022
- Approve Minutes – Committee of the Whole Meeting of January 24, 2022

Receipt/Approval of Monthly Reports:

- | | | |
|----|---|-----------|
| 47 | Staffing Information – Retirements and Resignations | G. Shantz |
| 50 | Staffing Recommendations – Appointments | G. Shantz |
| 52 | Student Suspension / Expulsion Report, December, 2021 | B. Lemon |

Declarations of Pecuniary Interest

Announcements/Celebrating Board Activities

Communications Good News Update

Delegations

Staff Follow Up

Reports

- | | | |
|----|---------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| | Director of Education - Annual Report | j. chanicka |
| 54 | Operational Plan for 2021-2022 | j. chanicka / L. Read |
| | COVID-19 Update | j. chanicka / L. Read |

Board Reports

Board Communications

- 66 Halton District School Board SEAC to Minister of Education - FASD
- 67 Halton District School Board SEAC to Minister of Education - Designated Disease

**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.

- 69 WRDSB to Region of Waterloo - Temporary Isolation Centre
- 70 WRDSB to Minister of Education & Chief Medical Officer of Health - Priority Status
- 71 Waterloo Region District School Board to Minister of Education - N95 Respirators
- 72 Region of Waterloo - Response to WRDSB
- 73 Region of Waterloo Medical Officer of Health - Response to WRDSB
- 75 MPP Catherine Fife to Minister of Education
[York Region District School Board to Minister of Education & Chief Medical Officer of Health](#)
- 76 Thames Valley District School Board to Minister of Education
[York Region District School Board to Minister of Education](#)
- 78 Greater Essex County District School Board to Minister of Education
- 80 Lakehead District School Board SEAC to Minister of Education
- 81 Ottawa-Carleton District School Board to Minister of Education
- 83 Greater Essex County DSB to Minister of Education - 2021-22 Revised Budget Estimates
- 86 Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board to Minister of Education

Other Business

Question Period (10 minutes)

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

Adjournment



Report to Board of Trustees

January 31, 2022

**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.

Staffing Statistics – Retirements
Current at January 31, 2022

Retirements: Elementary Teaching Staff				
First	Last	Position/Location	Retirement Date	Years of Service
Brad	Brenneman	Teacher, St Andrew's PS	January 31, 2022	12
Carolyn	Burjoski	Teacher, Forest Hill PS	January 31, 2022	30
Caroline	Kuhn-Scime	Teacher, NA MacEachern PS	February 28, 2022	32
Gillian	Lambert	Teacher, Prueter PS	January 7, 2022	31
Jennifer	Okum	Teacher, Empire PS	February 28, 2022	31
Susan	Randall	Itinerant Teacher, Special Education	January 14, 2022	30
Marilyn	Webb	Consultant, Special Education	January 31, 2022	22
Dana	Wunder	Itinerant Teacher, Special Education	January 31, 2022	23

Retirements: Secondary Teaching Staff				
First	Last	Position/Location	Retirement Date	Years of Service
Douglas	Gateman	Teacher, Southwood SS	January 28, 2022	26
Paul	Hildebrand	Teacher, Elmira District SS	January 31, 2022	28
Mark	Kalin	Teacher, Southwood SS	January 31, 2022	24
Anne-Viviane	Maus	French Department Head, Sir John A Macdonald SS	June 30, 2022	21
George	Sedra	Teacher, Eastwood CI	January 31, 2022	25

Staffing Statistics – Retirements
Current at January 31, 2022

Retirements: Administrative & Support Staff				
First	Last	Position/Location	Retirement Date	Years of Service
Maureen	Crawford	Educational Assistant, Sir John A Macdonald SS	May 31, 2022	23
Gregory	Crocker	Head Custodian, Mackenzie King PS	February 28, 2022	37
Jean	France	Head Custodian, Moffat Creek PS	February 28, 2022	19
Sharon	Nichols	Library Clerk, Crestview PS	January 28, 2022	25
Christine	Regier	Support Specialist, ITS	December 31, 2021	21
Ria	Schofield	Support Specialist, ITS	March 31, 2022	27
Laura	Schultz	Educational Assistant, Millen Woods PS	January 28, 2022	9
Gabrielle	Yahn	Supply Educational Assistant, various locations	January 17, 2022	19

Staffing Statistics – Resignations
Current at December 13, 2021

Permanent Staff Resignations			
First	Last	Position/Location	Effective Date
Shannon	Carbone	Educational Assistant, Riverside PS	January 2, 2022
Kathy	Charron	Educational Assistant, Forest Hill PS	January 14, 2022
Anne	Coupland	DECE Supervisor, Extended Day	January 7, 2022
Jeffrey	Desruisseau	Elementary Teacher, William G. Davis PS	January 2, 2022
Amy	Grimba	Educational Assistant, Smithson PS	January 1, 2022
Gretta	Hughes	Early Childhood Educator, Howard Robertson PS	January 3, 2022
Lauren	Lovell	Child Youth Worker, Special Education	January 24, 2022
Becky	Martin	Educational Assistant, Queen Elizabeth PS	January 2, 2022
Melanie	Michaud	Head Secretary, Abraham Erb PS	January 18, 2022
Tom	Pettitt	Custodian, Centennial PS (W)	January 21, 2022
Leigh	Rees	Secretary, Northlake Woods PS	January 4, 2022
Glenda	Ribey	Library Clerk, St Jacobs PS	January 2, 2022



Report to Board of Trustees

January 31, 2022

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 January 31, 2022.

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.

Staffing Information – New Appointments
Current at January 31, 2022

New Appointments: Administrative and Support Staff			
First	Last	Position / Location	Effective Date
Mohamad	Alkhen	Senior Regional Internal Auditor, Audit Department	January 10, 2022
Fran	Barker	Library Clerk, St. Jacobs PS	January 31, 2022
Venus	Cahill	HR Assistant, Human Resources	December 20, 2021
Laurie	Charlton	Support Staff-Deployment, Extended Day	December 17, 2021
Cathy	De Luca	Senior Regional Internal Auditor, Audit Department	January 25, 2022
Simon	Hirmiz	Support Specialist, ITS	January 3, 2022
Dondon	Luce	Senior Regional Internal Auditor, Audit Department	January 25, 2022
Morgan	Price- Armstrong	Custodian, Bridgeport PS	January 3, 2022
Marina	Rae	Custodian, Forest Heights CI	January 10, 2022
Christine	Rose	HR Assistant, Human Resources	January 24, 2022
Allison	Soulliere	Secretary, Northlake Woods PS	January 26, 2022
Beth	Sousa	HR Officer, Human Resources	January 10, 2022

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

January 31, 2021

Subject: Student Suspension/Expulsion Report December, 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 December 2020 and December 2021, elementary suspensions have increased by 269 and secondary suspensions have increased by 597.

Comparing year to date from December 2020 and December 2021, school expulsions have remained the same at 1 and board expulsions have increased by 5.

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 remote learning.

Suspensions

- Total elementary school suspensions in December 2020 - 40, year to date - 191
- Total elementary school suspensions in December 2021 - 109, year to date - 460
- Total secondary school suspensions in December 2020 - 9, year to date - 48
- Total secondary school suspensions in December 2021 - 156, year to date - 645

Expulsions

- Total school expulsions in December 2020- 0, Year to Date 1
- Total school expulsions in December 2021 - 0, Year to Date 1
- Total board expulsions in December 2020 - 0, Year to Date 0
- Total board expulsions in December 2021 - 3, Year to Date 5

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 December 2020 - 1, Year to Date 2

- Total elementary/secondary violent incidents in December 2021 - 10, Year to Date 25

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

January 31, 2022

Subject: Operational Plan for 2021-2022

Recommendation

This report is for information to the Board and provides Trustees with an update on staff's work as it relates to the [Strategic Plan](#). Given the unprecedented nature of the past 22 months it has been necessary to ensure that the Operational Plan takes into account the current context and shifting landscape. WRDSB's [Strategic Priorities](#), as reflected in our strategic plan, remain the pillars of our work, and continue to drive our operational plan and priorities that have become critically important as staff respond to the realities and impact of COVID-19 along with the global call to action to respond to the ongoing impact and harm of systemic racism and oppression.

Our Operational Plan for 2021-2022 is organized by department ([see Annex A](#)) and reflect the following priorities:

- Ensuring the continuity of quality learning for all students while ensuring that identity and social location are not predictors of outcomes
- Ensuring the safety and well-being of staff and students
- Continuing our commitment to an organizational culture rooted in Indigenous sovereignty, equity and human rights
- Ensuring continuity of effective operations of the school district

Status

As the WRDSB has responded to the many challenges encountered as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have continued to gather feedback and input from students, staff and families. It is recognized that we need to prioritize this complex body of work in responding to the realities of the pandemic while also delivering on our commitments to do more and do better to support all those who have been made more vulnerable as a result of COVID-19. Clarifying our operational priorities also serve to stabilize the system as we focus our energies on what matters most.

The COVID-19 pandemic has shone a light on the many inequities faced by students and their families, reinforcing the foundational importance of human rights, sovereignty and equity. In addition to this, the world has been mobilized by the largest ever civil rights movement that is calling for systemic change to address anti-Black Racism, anti-Indigenous racism, oppression and discrimination. Canada faces the truth of hundreds of unmarked graves of Indigenous children on Residential School sites across the country as we as educators endeavour to honour the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission with concrete action. This context matters as we reflect on these calls to action and the implications on our work and our planning for 2021-2022.

Our community has consistently shared that safety and well-being and human rights sovereignty and equity continue to be of foremost concern and must remain priorities. Ensuring the continuity of quality learning for all students while ensuring that identity and social location are not predictors of outcomes continues to be a focus for all areas of the organization

Our ability to be responsive to these challenges is dependent on an organization that ensures the continuity of all of its operational elements including; human resources; financial resources and facilities; information technology resources and communications. All of these operational priorities work interdependently with the others. We cannot address the learning gaps students have experienced, for example, without also addressing safety, well-being and issues of human rights and equity while simultaneously providing adequate human and financial resources - they are inextricably linked to one another.

We are deeply grateful for the energy and dedication of our administrators, educators, support staff, and central staff who continue to focus on the needs of each and every one of our students, despite the many challenges. Public education has never been more important, and our ability to be responsive to the changing needs of our students and their families during such a difficult time is critical to the future learning and well-being of our students and our community.

We are so proud of our students, their ability to adapt, their many accomplishments and their continued commitment to learning and lending voice and insight to our work. We are profoundly grateful for the patience and support of our families and community partners whose engagement and active participation is critical to ensuring the WRDSB is serving our community. And finally, we are appreciative of Trustees' leadership, active engagement and confidence in staff as we have navigated this tumultuous time .

Background

The Waterloo Region District School Board engaged in a collaborative strategic planning process with the goal of creating a multi-year strategic plan that articulated the priorities, desired outcomes, and commitments of the Waterloo Region District School Board for a 3-5 year period. On June 20, 2016 the Waterloo Region District School Board approved the Strategic Priorities, Outcomes and Commitments. Each year staff provide trustees with regular updates on our progress towards meeting the outcomes related to our strategic priorities as well as the revised annual operational plan for that year. The WRDSB Strategic Plan was due to be refreshed during the 2020-2021 school year; however, the impact of the pandemic required that these plans be put on pause. Work is underway and broader consultation with all stakeholders on a renewed vision, mission, learner profile and strategic directions is set to begin in February 2022.

In March of 2020, the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a global pandemic. What followed from this declaration included the closure of our schools, the

launch of a fully distance learning program from March through to June, and major efforts to ensure the continuity of all operational aspects of the school district. September 2021 saw the return to in-person learning while simultaneously offering remote learning. The WRDSB formed a Pandemic Response Team and a Return to School and Work Committee and together, with input from our students, staff and families, established [principles](#) that would guide our decision making and work as we responded to the pandemic.

Financial implications

The Board of Trustees (Board) approved the [2021-22 operating budget](#) on June 16, 2021. Consistent with the approved budget for 2021-22, the WRDSB is expected to finish the year in a deficit position; this was confirmed through submission of our Revised Estimates to the Ministry of Education (Ministry) on December 15, 2021, which showed an in-year deficit forecast of \$11.6M. The [2021-22 Q1 Interim Financial Report](#), comparing the budget to the forecasted year-end position was provided to the Board of Trustees at the January 24, 2022 Committee of the Whole meeting.

Communications

The Communications Department has developed a multi-dimensional approach aimed at reaching every parent/guardian/student/staff member/stakeholder with meaningful communication during the pandemic. A commitment to accessible, timely, transparent and two-way communication has been the cornerstone of our approach. Key elements of the communication plan include:

- Health and Safety Protocols and Reminders
- COVID-19 Dashboard
- School and community COVID-19 case communications support
- Regular All-Staff updates to support communication and well-being
- News and School Updates
- Guide for families and staff
- Celebrating and recognizing the contributions and achievement of staff, students and the broader WRDSB community
- Frequently Asked Questions

Staff continues to provide trustees and the public with regular updates and details related to COVID-19 and our operational priorities.

Communications will continue its commitment to ensuring that the Strategic Plan and Operational Priorities have a prominent and dynamic presence as part of Waterloo Region District School Board communication efforts.

The Director's Annual Report utilizes the Strategic Plan and Operational Priorities as a framework for reporting back to our community the work of our district, our schools, our staff, our students, our parents, guardians and caregivers, and our community partners.

Prepared by: jeewan chanicka, Director of Education,
Lila Read, Associate Director of Education,
Dana Liebermann, Senior Manager of Research & Evidence-Based Practice, and
Senior Team, in consultation with Coordinating Council

Operational Plan - 2021-2022

In March of 2020, the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a global pandemic. What followed from this declaration included the closure of our schools, the launch of a fully distance learning program from March 2020 through to the current school year and major efforts to ensure the continuity of all operational aspects of the school district. Given the unprecedented nature of this time and uncertainty it has been necessary to revise our operational plan. WRDSB's [Strategic Priorities](#), as reflected in our strategic plan, remain the pillars of our work, and continue to drive our operational plan and the priorities that have become critically important as staff respond to the realities and impact of COVID-19 along with the global call to action to respond to the ongoing impact and harm of systemic racism and oppression.

Our operational priorities for 2021-2022 are detailed in the dashboard below by department.

BUSINESS SERVICES

Lead	Priority Area Description (Strategy)	Intended Outcomes	How well did you do it? (Implementation Measures)	Apr 2022	Oct 2022	Is anyone better off? (Outcome Measures)	Oct 2022
				Stoplight	Stoplight		Outcome Data
Facilities	1. Form an Exterior Design Standards Development (EDSD) committee with staff representation from across the WRDSB	Develop design standards for exterior school grounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EDSD committee formed # of departments consulted (e.g., Indigenous Equity and Human Rights, Student Transportation Services, Multilingual Learners, Early Years, Special Education, Planning) 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft design standards for exterior spaces developed Process for consultation with internal and external stakeholders developed 	
Facilities	2. Develop and finalize a standard inclusive washroom sign and install it in all schools	All gender neutral washrooms have standard signage that is inclusive and understandable by all students/staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standard signage approved Inventory completed 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standard inclusive washroom signage installed in all schools 	
Planning	3. Continual improvement of the Grade 1 French Immersion application process	Clearly communicate the process so that families can make informed decisions and all students are provided the opportunity to select their French program pathway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of virtual translation sessions offered in January # of translations provided/links to translated materials or resources Updated French programs brochure sent to the families of all Senior Kindergarten students AP 1000 is posted on the WRDSB website 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of participants at virtual translation sessions # of times translated materials are accessed on the WRDSB website 	
Transportation	4. Support schools to engage in travel planning by promoting active and safe routes to schools across Waterloo Region.	A higher proportion of students opting to use active transportation to and from schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # schools completing BikeWalkRoll and Family Surveys # active School Travel Planning schools and interventions 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % of students who are using active transportation to and from school as reported in the BikeWalkRoll and Family Surveys # school zone speed limit changes 	

CORPORATE SERVICES

Lead	Priority Area Description (Strategy)	Intended Outcomes	How well did you do it? (Implementation Measures)	Apr 2022	Oct 2022	Is anyone better off? (Outcome Measures)	Oct 2022
				Stoplight	Stoplight		Outcome Data
Communications	1. Create awareness of the Kindergarten student registration process and academic programs in secondary	Families utilizing the central registration system to register their child for Kindergarten Creating awareness of specialized programs in secondary schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Traffic to program webpages along with requests for information # of downloads/views of materials Click through rates 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analysis of public engagement with website and social media content for 21-22 school year # of requests for Kindergarten registrations for 22-23 done in person # questions about program availability received from public 	
Communications	2. Engage families and staff as part of the WRDSB community	Improved understanding of WRDSB values and work Increased connections with community and families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # partnerships with community organization to help engage families and share information # of communications shared with PIC/WRAPSC # of engaged community members in strategic planning process 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sentiment analysis of feedback received (i.e., % negative, positive, and neutral feedback) # of requests to share more information Analysis of the types of questions received from the community (e.g., questions about programming from why the change to how can I learn more) 	
Human Rights Branch	3. Build understanding of the code-based complaints resolution process and stakeholder roles in complaints resolution (i.e., Human Rights Literacy)	Launch the code-based complaints administrative procedures System leaders will have greater knowledge and awareness about the procedure, feel confident in addressing complaints, and will be able to follow the procedure/engage in the process when required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administrative procedures are approved # of sessions offered # participants in each session 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback gathered from administrators, managers and supervisors about their confidence in and capacity to address incidents that impact the Human Rights Policy after the training # of human rights complaints raised and % resolved 	
Human Rights Branch	4. Increase educators' understanding of what discrimination is and build their capacity to respond to discrimination	Educators actively respond to discrimination impacting students using the DIRECT tool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of staff who attend the training sessions # of staff who request coaching 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback gathered from educators at the end of the training about their understanding of discrimination and their capacity to address it 	
Human Rights Branch	5. Support and build the capacity of service leaders to dismantle oppression and address discrimination	All staff see anti-oppression and anti-racism as central to their work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of sessions offered # of service leaders trained in the Policy Review Guide 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback gathered from service leaders key contacts at the end of training sessions about their role in anti-oppression work Feedback gathered from staff about their willingness and comfort using the Policy Review Guide 	
Research	6. Analysis, reporting and action planning of the student census	Student census results are shared in a public report for the broader community in a way that minimizes the potential for further harm to students who have been marginalized by the education system Build system leaders' awareness of appropriate and responsible use of student census data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of consultations conducted Draft report written # of attendees at capacity building sessions 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report shared with public Feedback from participants on change in awareness and understanding of how they might use the student census data 	
Research	7. Develop and implement a strategic planning process	Mission, vision, learner profiles and new strategic priorities have been developed and shared publicly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of participants in the process # of methods used to seek feedback # of participants who engaged in interpreting findings of the Strategic Plan consultation process 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mission, vision, learner profiles and new strategic priorities are developed and posted on the website 	

HUMAN RESOURCE AND EQUITY SERVICES

Lead	Priority Area Description (Strategy)	Intended Outcomes	How well did you do it? (Implementation Measures)	Apr 2022	Oct 2022	Is anyone better off? (Outcome Measures)	Oct 2022
				Stoplight	Stoplight		Outcome Data
Labour Relations	1. Develop and implement processes for monitoring, and ensuring compliance with vaccination attestation and rapid testing	Compliance with directives from the Ministry of Education/Chief Medical Officer of Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop, communicate, and utilize a formal documented process for staff attestation of COVID-19 vaccination status Ensure staff are compliant with the Ministry of Education/Chief Medical Officer of Health directive 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> COVID-19 vaccine attestation summary for school board employees is provided to the Ministry of Education COVID-19 vaccine attestation summary for school board employees and Trustees is posted to the board website and updated monthly and/or as required 	
Labour Relations	2. Develop a multi-year work plan for Human Resource & Equity Services and Indigenous Equity and Human Rights Department to review fair, equitable and transparent hiring processes	<p>Equitable hiring practices and enhancing the diversity of our workforce so that students see themselves reflected in those they are learning from</p> <p>Policy/Program Memorandum (PPM)165 implemented</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of contacts established with Faculties of Education % of staff trained who attend recruitment events to ensure they are using appropriate and welcoming language that will engage and attract BIPOC candidates PPM 165 compliance - embed lived experiences into hiring practices, AP 5000 Review of existing hiring questions initiative, to ensure lived experiences are reflected and equity outcomes are incorporated 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased diversity within the WRDSB employee groups Updated list of hiring questions finalized and implemented 	
Health, Safety & Security	3. Update the "WRDSB Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC) Multi-site Terms of Reference" agreement to ensure it meets current Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development requirements	Renewal of "WRDSB Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC) Multi-site Terms of Reference" for 5 more years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft Terms of Reference presentation to JHSC meeting Participate in review process with Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "WRDSB Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC) Multi-site Terms of Reference" agreement is approved by Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development and shared with the system 	
Health, Safety & Security	4. Develop an online training module for Workplace Inspection Training	An online training module is accessible to all new Workplace Inspection Team members and Administrators/Supervisors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Content for online and in-person course developed Course set-up is completed on online platform Gather feedback on online course prior to launch Draft system communication with enrollment and training dates 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online course launched In-person components of training delivered 	
Health, Safety & Security	5. Ongoing review and development of COVID-19 program management for WRDSB staff based on Ministry of Education guidelines and Public Health recommendations	Up-to-date program /directives for WRDSB staff and Administrators/Supervisors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of times program has been updated 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Process/Requirement(s) are on the website are current 	
Employee Wellness	6. Mental Health support that follows the Guarding Minds at Work protocols.	Provide support/ directives for WRDSB system leaders to support staff well-being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of resources created or made available 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gather feedback from system leaders on change in knowledge of staff well being best practices and supports for a psychologically safe workplace. 	
Employee Wellness	7. Develop an online training module for Resilience for all staff.	Provided training to promote coping strategies so that staff are able to remain at work and thrive.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developed needs assessment and outline for training module # of participants 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback from participants on change in knowledge of staff well being best practices and changes in employee morale. 	

INFORMATION AND TECHNOLOGY SERVICES

Lead	Priority Area Description (Strategy)	Intended Outcomes	How well did you do it? (Implementation Measures)	Apr 2022	Oct 2022	Is anyone better off? (Outcome Measures)	Oct 2022
				Stoplight	Stoplight		Outcome Data
Information and Technology Services	1. Implement a safe and secure wireless network to provide ease of access to staff and students	Wireless network upgrades are completed using a phased approach to implementation with Phase 2 implementation completed by Aug 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Modeling and testing of wireless infrastructure and confirmation of approval to proceed with deployment Procurement and delivery of units All identified schools have fully deployed upgrades 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved network quality and access speeds for students and staff Networks are fully integrated with security measures to ensure safe and secure access for all users 	
Information and Technology Services	2. Implement a new asset management software to provide better lifecycle management and tracking of WRDSB technology assets	Asset management software/application is fully implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business requirement document completed Identification and procurement of asset management system Full migration of current assets 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consolidated life-cycle management and reporting for staff to manage technology assets Up to date tracking of assets and movement occurring in new asset management system 	
Information and Technology Services	3. Enhance security infrastructure and practices for staff to protect student data	Enhance security infrastructure to be implemented by August 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommendation report completed Multi-factor Authentication configured and in place for all staff 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional layer of security to protect Board data and systems in place 	
Information and Technology Services	4. Implement a new Student Information System (SIS) that will be robust, technologically advanced and provide overall improvements in processing and managing student data	The new Student Information System is implemented using a phased approach with partial rollout by Aug 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sign off on system testing and configuration # of instructional and administrative staff trained on the new SIS 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transformation of new SIS is complete "Go Live" of SIS Requirements of the Education Act for Ministry/Board attendance and reporting met and data submitted 	

LEARNING SUPPORT SERVICES

Lead	Priority Area Description (Strategy)	Intended Outcomes	How well did you do it? (Implementation Measures)	Apr 2022	Oct 2022	Is anyone better off? (Outcome Measures)	Oct 2022
				Stoplight	Stoplight		Outcome Data
Elementary Program and Special Education and Mental Health	1. K-2 Early Reading Strategy: A system-wide approach to supporting oral language in Kindergarten to Grade 2 in support of early literacy skill development	Educators in identified schools will have the instructional capacity to directly teach early literacy skills All Kindergarten students in identified schools will know their letters and sounds by the end of Senior Kindergarten	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication Boards and Sound Boards have been developed # of PD sessions provided in identified schools % of students in identified schools with diagnostic assessment data Educator survey to capture feedback about the implementation of lessons 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change from pre- to post assessment for students in identified schools % of students who received targeted early reading supports Feedback from educators on change in knowledge and implementation of practices 	
Elementary Program	2. Ongoing Implementation of the 2020 mathematics curriculum: Support educators to ensure that culturally relevant, equitable mathematics instruction and assessment practices are in place and the implementation of High impact strategies	Increased educator understanding of mathematical concepts and capacity to implement differentiated instructional strategies to improve student achievement Increased educator confidence in implementing the 2020 mathematics curriculum Increased student achievement in mathematics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of educators accessing Mathematics Long Range Plans # of educators accessing synchronous and asynchronous PD opportunities Educator survey to capture feedback about which strategies are being implemented and how often 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educator feedback/reflections about the impact that identified resources, and professional learning sessions have had on their teaching practice, their confidence teaching mathematics and student achievement % of educators in identified schools who received professional learning related to supporting students in early math % of students in Grade 3 and 6 achieving at or above level 3 in mathematics (report card), and if available, % of students achieving provincial standard (Level 3/4) on primary/junior EQAO mathematics assessments 	
Secondary Program	3. Implementation of destreamed Grade 9 mathematics course: Collaborating, developing and creating systems with greater opportunity for all students	Centering the learner in classroom planning so that students and their post-secondary program pathway are the starting point for course planning Students in MTH1W (Grade 9 Mathematics) express greater confidence and identity as a mathematician Use of classroom practices that are responsive of and accessible to all learners: Universal Design for Learning (UDL), differentiation, and Culturally Responsive and Relevant Pedagogy (CRRP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of contacts Math Itinerants make # of other educators Math Itinerants are supporting, surveys, anecdotal and artifact data # of participants in PD sessions 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback from students in MTH1W (Grade 9 mathematics) on changes in attitude and confidence Feedback from staff teaching MTH1W (Grade 9 mathematics) on inclusion of practices in classrooms % of students in Grade 9 achieving at or above level 3 in mathematics (report card), pass rates, and if available, % of students achieving at or above provincial standard (Level 3/4) on Grade 9 EQAO mathematics assessments 	
Secondary Program	4. Build educator capacity to encourage a more progressive, equitable and individualized approach to assessment and evaluation that centers the needs of the learner	Looking at growth over time in skills instead of weighted assessment. Assessment that honors the multifaceted nature of intelligence and that informs students in their growth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Materials developed to support educators # of participants who attend PD sessions 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback from educators on change in knowledge and in assessment practices being used Feedback from administrators on changes in assessment practices being used 	
Secondary Program	5. Developing essential literacy and numeracy for all Grade 9-12 students through a culturally relevant and responsive approach	Increased teacher capacity in Culturally Responsive and Relevant Pedagogy (CRRP) Development of literacy supports to aid educators in more responsive program planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of schools using materials # of participants in PD sessions 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback from educators on the knowledge and understanding of CRRP and implementation of responsive program planning Pass rates in compulsory courses in Grades 9 and 10 	
Secondary Program	6. Provide students in grades 7 to 12 with the information and supports they need to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify their interests and strengths 	Each student makes a successful transition to their initial postsecondary destination.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of educators using myBlueprint in Individual Pathway Plan 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % of students in Grades 7–12 who annually update their Individual Pathways Plan (IPP) 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● explore opportunities for different possible pathways ● set goals ● develop a plan to make a successful transition to their initial postsecondary destination 	Provide a range of diverse and engaging learning opportunities, courses, and programs, both in and outside the classroom, that meet the interests, strengths, needs, and aspirations of the students and honour all postsecondary destinations – apprenticeship training, college, community living, university, and the workplace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Student attendance/engagement in pathway planning activities ● % of students participating in job skills programs (including co-op, Specialist High Skills Majors, Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program and Dual Credits) 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Feedback from students on transitions from student exit survey ● % of students entering a university program, college program, apprenticeship training program or other post-secondary institution after secondary school 	
Indigenous Sovereignty, Equity and Inclusion Branch	7. Designing Culturally Relevant and Responsive Pedagogy (CRRP) training for schools so every educator understands the role they play in the development of a CRRP mindset in the system	A teaching staff who are comfortable, confident and competent in using Culturally Relevant and Responsive Pedagogy (CRRP) in their teaching practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● # of New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP) Teachers who have completed training related to CRRP ● # of identified schools who have received training related to CRRP ● # pilot schools enrolled in the Dismantling Anti-Black Racism Strategic Action Plan ● # pilot schools enrolled in the Indigenous Education Strategic Action Plan 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Feedback from educators on sense of efficacy in making learning experiences more meaningful and relevant for all students ● Feedback from students they have access to identity-affirming content ● NTIP teacher feedback indicate sense of preparedness in embracing and embedding the identities and lived experiences of students in classrooms 	
Indigenous Sovereignty, Equity and Inclusion Branch	8. Finalize, approve and communicate a new Student Dress Policy	<p>A Student Dress Policy that is more inclusive and devoid of bias.</p> <p>Students are aware of the updated Policy.</p> <p>Educators, administrators and families are aware of the new Policy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Policy is approved by the Board of Trustees ● # of Administrators trained in the updated Student Dress Policy 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● # of visits to the web pages about the new Student Dress Policy ● # of requests for support about the Policy ● Feedback from administrators who attend training about their understanding and appreciation for the necessary changes to the new Policy 	
Indigenous Sovereignty, Equity and Inclusion Branch	9. Build staff capacity for embedding Indigenous perspectives, ways of knowing and being across the curricula in ways that avoid appropriation	Viewing and representing through a lens that reflects Indigenous diversity, excellence, beauty, brilliance, and ways of knowing and being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● # of staff who participate in capacity building opportunities ● # of engagements booked with classroom educators ● # of visits to website 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Feedback from educators/consultants after participation on PD sessions on changes in knowledge, awareness, and confidence ● Student and staff feedback from sessions in Indigenous education identify new learning and understanding 	
Multilingual Learners	10. Supporting Multilingual Learners (MLL) students and their families: Build educator capacity through the use of an English Language Learner (ELL) Module while facilitating community and family partnerships	<p>Transform model of support to ensure a team approach</p> <p>MLL Support Teachers and other staff are embedding translanguaging (i.e., MLL students are encouraged to use all of their linguistic abilities in their learning), co-planning and co-teaching as part of their professional practice</p> <p>Fully implemented inclusive and equitable communication strategy</p> <p>Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with various community partners in place in support of students and families</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● # of educators and administrators using the ELL Module ● # PD sessions ● Published inclusive and equitable communication strategy on board website ● # of documents/campaigns translated into different languages ● # of new community partnerships ● # of schools partnering with new community organizations 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Improved achievement on assessments of English proficiency for students in both ESL and ELD programs ● Improved report card marks and, if available, EQAO reading and writing scores for MLL students ● Feedback from educators after participation on PD sessions on changes in knowledge, awareness, confidence, and practice ● Website traffic to MLL homepage ● Feedback from schools and communities through surveys and focus groups ● Feedback from school administrators about the benefits of partnerships with community organizations for students and their families 	
Multilingual Learners	11. Develop and implement an inclusive and equitable communication strategy to allow WRDSB materials to be accessible to all families, especially those families whose first language is other than English.	Fully implemented inclusive and equitable communication strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Published inclusive and equitable communication strategy on board website ● # of documents/campaigns translated into different languages 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Website traffic to MLL Homepage ● Feedback from schools and communities through surveys and focus groups on accessibility of materials 	
French Language Programs	12. Build French as a Second Language (FSL) educator capacity to support French language instruction for all students.	A French Immersion program that is welcoming, inclusive, accessible and supportive of all students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● # of sessions offered ● # of PD attendees ● Resources created and made available publicly 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● % of students who are MLLs and students who have Special Education needs enrolled in French Immersion 	

		<p>Increase the enrollment and retention of students who have been traditionally marginalized from the French Immersion Program (e.g., students who are MLLs and students who have Special Education needs)</p> <p>A robust and inclusive French Language program that meets the needs of all students</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of attendees at multilingual information meetings 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attrition rate of students who are MLLs and students who have Special Education needs already in French Immersion • Feedback from administrators and FSL educators to gauge changes in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • beliefs/attitudes/ knowledge about French language instruction, • educator confidence in supporting students with a wide variety of learning needs and experiences • Feedback from families about their experience accessing information about French Immersion and the French Immersion application process 	
Outdoor and Environmental Education	13. Infusing Indigenous land-based education in the Outdoor and Environmental Education Centre (OEEC) programs and at all school exterior grounds and build staff capacity to use them effectively	<p>Clearly identified learning points related to Indigenous land-based learning for each Outdoor and Environmental Education (OEE) program</p> <p>Resources for school staff to build their capacity to use Ecological Learning Spaces (ELs) effectively</p> <p>Exterior Grounds Design Standards enable Ecological Learning Spaces (ELs)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program descriptions including Indigenous land-based teaching points • Online resources for educators to use are created • # of visits to board website • Creation of the Exterior Grounds Design Standards (EGDS) document • # school requests for support in creating an ELS 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback from educators and students on their knowledge of Indigenous learning after visiting OEE Centre • # of schools using the outdoor spaces as ELs • # of schools with Indigenous learning opportunities in their outdoor spaces 	
International and Indigenous Languages Program	14. International and Indigenous Languages Program (IILP): Work with Indigenous community groups to instruct and support new Indigenous language classes	<p>The effective launch of an Indigenous language class</p> <p>Develop resources and provide PD to International and Indigenous Languages Program instructors</p> <p>Create a collaborative team culture amongst the ILLP staff to share resources and best practices</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of students registered • # of additional staff hired • # of PD sessions and attendance • # of resources created 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback from educators, students, parents and caregivers about the benefits of this Indigenous language course • Feedback from supervisors about changes they've observed, collaboration between ILLP instructors, culture of the program • Feedback from educators about changes in knowledge, awareness, confidence, practice, culture of the program, and sense of community 	
Leadership Development	15. Embed and centre Indigenous Sovereignty, Human Rights and Equity work across all groups within the Board Leadership Development Strategy (New Teacher Induction Program, Position of Added Responsibility processes, professional development, and School Improvement Planning) to build capacity across the board	<p>Develop the Indigenous Sovereignty, Human Rights and Equity capacity of school level educators (teachers, administrators, etc.) to influence practices that impact student outcomes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of learning sessions with a focus on Human Rights, Indigenous Sovereignty and Equity • # of participants 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback from participants on their knowledge and understanding of implementing practices that impact student outcomes 	
Leadership Development	16. Build system leaders' capacity focused on Indigenous Sovereignty, Human Rights, Equity and Inclusion including developing Indigenous sovereignty and equity as a leadership competencies	<p>Further develop the Indigenous Sovereignty, Human Rights and Equity capacity of all system leaders (school level and service level leaders)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of SLM meetings with a focus on Human Rights, Indigenous Sovereignty and Equity • # of participants 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback from participants on their knowledge and understanding of equity competencies 	
Leadership Development	17. Provide dedicated time and space for Black, Indigenous, and Racialized leaders to share their learning, thinking, reflections, and experiences (e.g., affinity groups)	<p>Inspire the success of our marginalized students through supporting the success of Indigenous, Racialized Administrators Mentorship and Support (IRAMS) and Indigenous and Racialized Teachers (IRT) groups</p> <p>Members of IRAMS and IRT experience increased agency, efficacy, retention and</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of learning sessions offered • # of participants attending the sessions 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback from members of IRAMS and IRT groups on their sense of agency and efficacy in their role • Feedback from staff on applying to leadership roles 	

		<p>success in the role.</p> <p>Black, Indigenous and Racialized staff report increased motivation and confidence to apply to leadership roles</p>				
Leadership Development	18. Develop and mobilize the school learning and improvement process to ensure all students, staff and leaders are focussed on learning and improvement efforts	Quality Implementation of School Improvement Strategies, including the Conditions for Learning in all schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● # of Family of Schools (FOS) meetings with a focus on school improvement planning] ● # of schools documenting school improvement plans ● # of Lateral Learning Sessions ● # of site visits with a focus on School Improvement 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Feedback from FOS participants on content/PD shared ● Feedback from Lateral Leaders on the content of FOS meetings
Leadership Development	19. Through ongoing and formal mentorship and networking opportunities, newly appointed leaders will develop their capacity in understanding and implementing technical and operational expectations.	Newly appointed leaders will be equipped with the knowledge, resources and skills they need to manage the operational expectations of their roles.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● # of Administrator Mentorship Program (AMP) Meetings ● # of participants at each session ● % of mentees with a mentor 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Feedback from participants about knowledge and confidence to manage operational expectations
Special Education and Mental Health	20. Develop a common system understanding of an asset/strength based approach to student support and universal accommodations	<p>Staff have the capacity to support student learning through identified student strengths</p> <p>A learning environment prioritizing accessibility by implementing identified universal accommodations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● IEP Committee has been developed and includes representative from the IEHR Division ● IEP resources developed ● # of PD sessions offered ● Criteria for universal accommodations developed and communicated to the system 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● # of times committee has met ● Terms of reference for the IEP Committee have been established ● Feedback from staff on their knowledge and confidence to support student learning and universal accommodations
Special Education and Mental Health	21. Develop a system approach to supporting student well-being and mental health by utilizing collective expertise	<p>Socio-emotional Learning (SEL) practices implemented in all secondary schools</p> <p>Utilizing WRDSB Teachers, Psychological Consultants, Social Workers and Child and Youth Workers to support proactive mental health supports</p> <p>Increase and ease of access to community supports and information</p> <p>Increased family engagement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● # of PD session provided to wellness teams in secondary schools ● Mentally Healthy Classroom Resource (Brightspace Course/School Mental Health Ontario Resources) has been developed for staff ● # of PD Sessions and staff/community attendance 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● # of times committee has met ● % schools with wellness teams ● Feedback from students determine impact of school wellness teams ● Feedback from attendees at learning sessions to inform future workshops
Safe and Healthy Schools	22. Develop a process that supports schools and departments as as they respond to positive COVID-19 cases and outbreaks	<p>Schools and workplaces are safe and healthy places to learn and work</p> <p>Clear and timely communication about cases or outbreaks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● # materials produced ● # of staff members trained ● Process in place that allows for timely communication of reporting cases publicly 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reporting dashboard available on external website ● # cases reported accurately to the board website and Ministry reporting system
Safe and Healthy Schools	23. Develop resources and build capacity for schools to use alternative approaches to student discipline through a restorative model	A reduction in the number of suspensions and expulsions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Participating schools identified ● # of school staff at participating schools who engage in professional learning specific to equity and human rights to support restorative practices ● Description of supports being provided 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Feedback from students and members of the school community on school climate and sense of belonging ● Educator reflections throughout the PD on their knowledge and implementation of practices ● # of suspensions and expulsions



December 13, 2021

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

Dear Minister Lecce:

The Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) for the Halton District School Board recently received letters from the Avon Maitland District School board, 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 accommodation in the classroom and school boards need to develop policies and guidelines with respect to FASD for the academic environment.

At our committee meeting on December 7th, 2021, the Halton 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 Halton 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,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Alison Brindle'.

Alison Brindle, Chair of the Halton District School Board Special Education Advisory Committee

Cc: Margo Shuttleworth, Chair of Halton District School Board



December 13th, 2021

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

The Honourable Christine Elliot
Ministry of Health, 8th Floor
438 University Ave. Toronto, ON M5G 2K8

Dear Minister Lecce and Minister Elliot:

At its most recent committee meeting on December 7th, 2021, the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) of the Halton District School Board (HDSB) carried the following motion:

“That the HDSB SEAC write a letter asking the Minister of Education and the Minister of Health to consider amending the Immunization of School Pupils Act to include Covid-19 as a “designated disease”, due to the high impact of COVID on the disruption to learning for students with special education needs”

Students with special education needs have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic, academically, emotionally, and through loss of support services typically provided in a school setting. To ensure equitable access to education for all, it is essential that schools remain open so that students with special needs can be accommodated appropriately. This will only be possible if we are able to ensure safety in our schools throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

Currently, there is no mandate for eligible students to be vaccinated against COVID-19. Eligible students now include all students from the age of 5 and over. The addition of COVID-19 as a “designated disease” within the Immunization of School Pupils Act is a crucial step in our fight against this disease. It will hopefully inspire an increased uptake of the vaccine amongst our children and youth, which will provide increased protection for those who are too young or medically unable to be vaccinated in school communities. This will result in a safer environment for all students, staff, and their families. It will also help ensure consistent and equitable access to appropriate learning environments for students with special education needs.

In approving this motion, the HDSB Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) is adding its voice to the many boards and SEACs who have made the same request. I would like to thank you in advance for your consideration of this request to further improve the safety of the learning environments in Halton and across Ontario.

Sincerely,



Alison Brindle, Chair of the Halton District School Board Special Education Advisory Committee

Cc: Margo Shuttleworth, Chair of Halton District School Board

**Waterloo Region District School Board**

51 Ardelt Avenue
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T: 519-570-0003
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wrdsb.ca

January 7, 2022

Karen Redman, Regional Chair, Region of Waterloo
Regional Council, Region of Waterloo
Region of Waterloo
150 Frederick Street
Kitchener, ON, N2G 4J3

Dear Chair Redman and Regional Council,

On behalf of the Board of Trustees for the Waterloo Region District School Board (WRDSB), I am writing regarding the Region of Waterloo conversion of the former Kinsmen Daycare Centre into a temporary isolation center for individuals experiencing homelessness who test positive for COVID-19 or who are awaiting testing results. Trustees have requested that the Region provide a detailed safety plan and timelines for parents of the four surrounding schools and community members.

The WRDSB looks forward to working together with the Region of Waterloo and Cambridge Shelter Corporation to ensure appropriate measures are taken to mitigate any potential concerns and ensure the wellbeing of our students and staff, as well as those isolating at the Centre. As we move forward, we would like to extend an offer to collaborate at the start of projects in a way that may proactively address concerns and better support the communities we serve.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Scott Piatkowski".

Scott Piatkowski
Chairperson of the Board of Trustees
Waterloo Region District School Board


Waterloo Region District School Board

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January 7, 2022

The Honourable Stephen Lecce, Minister of Education
 Dr. Kieran Moore, Chief Medical Officer of Health
 Dr. Hsiu-Li Wang, Commissioner & Medical Officer of Health

Dear Minister Lecce, Dr. Moore and Dr. Wang,

The public continues to be advised, by medical professionals and government officials, that vaccinations are our greatest defence against COVID-19 and being fully vaccinated significantly reduces the risk of serious illness.

At its January 4, 2022, Special Board Meeting of the Waterloo Region District School Board (WRDSB), the Board of Trustees approved the following motion:

That the WRDSB write a letter to the CMOH (Chief Medical Officer of Health), including the local MOH (Medical Officer of Health) and the MOE (Minister of Education) requesting that

- i) priority status be provided to all school staff to receive COVID vaccine and subsequent boosters; and**
- ii) priority status be given to all students aged 5+ for the first, second and third dose of COVID vaccine as medically appropriate;**

Thank you for prioritizing vaccination and boosters for education, childcare workers and students. This will help make schools safer.

We ask for your serious consideration of the request to prioritize vaccinations for all eligible students and staff to protect the health and safety of all our students, staff and families and reduce the risk of outbreaks from the COVID-19 virus in schools in the WRDSB and throughout Ontario. We must do everything we can to ensure that when schools are opened they are as safe as possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Scott Piatkowski".

Scott Piatkowski
 Chairperson of the Board of Trustees
 Waterloo Region District School Board

CC: Ontario Public School Boards' Association, Ontario Public School Boards



Waterloo Region District School Board

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January 7, 2022

The Honourable Stephen Lecce, Minister of Education
 Ministry of Education
 315 Front Street West, 14th Floor
 Toronto, ON, M7A 0B8

Dear Minister Lecce,

At its January 4, 2022, Special Board Meeting of the Waterloo Region District School Board's (WRDSB), Board of Trustees agreed to write to you to strongly urge the Ministry of Education (Ministry) to request that the same level of N95 respirators that are provided to staff, be provided for students.

Given the pervasiveness of the highly transmissible COVID-19 Omicron variant and research proving the COVID-19 virus is aerosolized, this is an urgent concern.

N95 respirators can provide greater protection against exposure to respiratory viruses compared to ASTM rated medical face masks and cloth face masks. The use of N95 respirators by students and staff will provide greater protection and a safer learning environment for all.

Minister Lecce, we ask for your serious consideration of this request, as it will provide an additional level of safety, protect the health and safety of students, staff and their families in the WRDSB and throughout Ontario. This additional layer will support the province's goal of ensuring students continue to have the opportunity to learn in-person.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Scott Piatkowski".

Scott Piatkowski
 Chairperson of the Board of Trustees
 Waterloo Region District School Board

CC: Ontario Public School Boards' Association, Ontario Public School Boards



OFFICE OF THE REGIONAL CHAIR
Karen Redman

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January 11, 2022

Scott Piatkowski
Chairperson, Board of Trustees
Waterloo Region District School Board
51 Ardelt Avenue
Kitchener, ON N2C 2R5

Dear Chairperson Piatkowski,

Thank you for your correspondence on behalf of the Board of Trustees for the Waterloo Region District School Board regarding the temporary isolation centre. I have forwarded your request to our housing team and will ensure that they follow-up with the senior administration at WRDSB. We are grateful for the work that school administration, staff and board staff have done with staff from the Region and the Cambridge Shelter Corporation to disseminate information to the neighbouring community. We recognize that this is on top of an already busy 2022 with the resumption of distanced learning.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the Board of Trustees and WRDSB staff for the continued collaboration in addressing the COVID-19 pandemic. The school-based clinics, information sessions, and adherence to IPAC measures have been essential for the health of students and residents. Thank you for your partnership.

Sincerely,

Karen Redman
Chair, Regional Municipality of Waterloo

Fwd: COVID-19 Vaccine

Wed, Jan 12, 2022 at 10:27 AM

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Kathy Proksch** <KProksch@regionofwaterloo.ca>
Date: Wed, Jan 12, 2022 at 9:08 AM
Subject: COVID-19 Vaccine
To: scott_piatkowski@wrdsb.ca <scott_piatkowski@wrdsb.ca>

Sent on behalf of Dr. Hsiu-Li Wang, Medical Officer of Health

Dear Mr. Piatkowski,

Thank you for your letter requesting priority status for Waterloo Region District School Board educators and staff for a third dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, and two doses for students 5 years of age and older. The Region of Waterloo is committed to making it easier for everyone to have access to first, second and third doses of the COVID-19 vaccine.

Throughout the vaccine rollout, the Region of Waterloo has been collaborating with community partners, including school boards to prioritize vaccination against COVID-19. Yesterday, Region of Waterloo Public Health informed all local school boards, private schools and child care agencies about opportunities to get a third dose of the vaccine at Bingemans Conference Centre during convenient evening clinics that commence on Wednesday, January 12. These employers will provide their staff with a direct link to book an appointment for a third dose. Daytime appointments will also be available at Bingemans, Cambridge Pinebush and 150 Frederick Street vaccination clinics and can be booked on the Region of Waterloo website : regionofwaterloo.ca/getavaccine

We appreciate our partnership with WRDSB and the opportunity to provide on-site clinics for first doses for 5-11 year olds at many schools across Waterloo Region in December. Planning is underway to run second-dose clinics in the same schools in the latter part of January and into February.

Our top priority is to improve access to vaccines and increase vaccination rates. We are expanding capacity at existing vaccination clinics to get more third doses in arms while prioritizing administering first and second doses to 5-11 year olds. There are a number of other opportunities for residents of Waterloo Region to get first, second or third doses of the vaccine including at doctors' office (for their patients), and at many local pharmacies: covid-19.ontario.ca/vaccine-locations

On behalf of the Region of Waterloo, I would like to thank you for your ongoing support and commitment to the health and safety of educators, child care staff and students/children from COVID-19.

Sincerely,

Dr. Hsiu-Li Wang

Commissioner & Medical Officer of Health

Region of Waterloo Public Health & Emergency Services

Kathy Proksch

Sr. Administrative Assistant

to the Commissioner/Medical Officer of Health

Region of Waterloo Public Health and Emergency Services

Work: 519-575-4400 ext. 5220

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Catherine Fife

MPP Waterloo

Hon. Stephen Lecce, MPP
Minister of Education
5th Floor, 438 University Ave.
Toronto, ON M5G 2K8

RE: Classroom ventilation concerns

Thursday, January 27, 2022

Dear Minister Lecce,

I am writing to amplify concerns I am hearing from teachers and to ensure you are aware of the current situation in specific classrooms in Ontario.

A teacher at a local high school reached out to my office to share concerns about the safety conditions in several classrooms at her school. Her classroom must accommodate 32 learners plus a teacher, with no possibility of physical distancing given the size of the space. This particular classroom was built in 1955 and has the original windows, most of which have been sealed shut over the past 67 years, with only two small windows that open. Two pictures of this classroom are included for your reference.

As you can see from the picture of the window, the room is heated with radiators, which means there is no clean air being pumped into the space. This room has not been provided with a mechanical HEPA filter device with the justification that ventilation is already provided. The existing ventilation consists of two 67 year old return vents that are encrusted with dust and not connected to a fan with the only available air flow coming from opening the small windows to let in the cold winter air. While deploying an additional 3000 stand-alone HEPA filter units to school boards is a good start, it is clear that more action is necessary given that the classroom described above is not being provided a mechanical HEPA filter device despite a lack of adequate ventilation.

My constituents are looking for leadership and action to ensure that classrooms are physically safe spaces to learn and work. On behalf of these constituents, I'm writing to ask for details on your plan to address the need for improved ventilation and physical distancing, particularly in older schools.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Catherine Fife, MPP
Waterloo

C: MPP Marit Stiles, Official Opposition Critic, Education
Scott Piatkowski, Chairperson, Waterloo Region District School Board

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Mark Fisher, Director of Education and Secretary

2022 January 13

Hon. Stephen Lecce Minister of Education
315 Front Street, 14th Floor
Toronto, ON M7A 0B8

Re: Recommendation To Allow Student Trustees To Present Motions

Dear Minister Lecce:

This is a letter is to inform you of a motion approved by Trustees of the Thames Valley District School Board (TVDSB) at its December 14th, 2021, meeting of the board. The motion relates to the recommendation to amend the Education Act to allow Student Trustees the ability to introduce items by way of a motion for discussion. The move, which was brought forward by TVDSB student trustees Harini Satheeskumar, Hanzala Subhani and Niigonii White-Eye is part of an Ontario Student Trustees Association (OSTA) initiative.

Giving students the ability to influence learning is integral to everyone's success. We want our schools to be places where students take ownership of their learning and their school environment.

As you are aware, student trustees across Ontario are not allowed to move or second motions.

Currently, Section 55(4) of the Ontario Education Act states:

A student trustee is not entitled to move a motion, but is entitled to suggest a motion on any matter at a meeting of the board or of one of its committees on which the student trustee sits, and if no member of the board or committee, as the case may be, moves the suggested motion, the record shall show the suggested motion.

By allowing our student trustees the ability to move motions for discussion, they will be better able to complete their job fully, respond and meet the requests of the students they represent. Thames Valley District School Board values student voice and believes that if student trustees are able to move motions, this voice becomes stronger in school boards.

The full motion is detailed here:

To request that the Chair send a letter to the Ministry of Education asking for the amendment of the Education Act to give Student Trustees the right to move and second motions.

WHEREAS per section 55(5) of the Ontario Education Act student trustees have the right to partake in certain in-camera sessions closed to the public, demonstrating the high standing and trustworthiness of student trustees, and;

WHEREAS the student voice is most effectively communicated by granting student trustees equal opportunities to participate in Board functions as other Board trustees, and;

Thames Valley District School Board - Office of the Chairperson

1250 Dundas Street, London, Ontario, N5W 5P2 Tel: 519-452-2000 Fax: 519-452-2396 website: www.tvdsb.ca

We build each student's tomorrow, every day.

WHEREAS per section 55(7) of the Ontario Education Act student trustees receive equal opportunities to Board trustees, including access to professional development, resources and training, and;

WHEREAS student trustees are elected representatives, and are to be held accountable to the student body, and;

WHEREAS the student voice must be articulated fairly and expressively for the benefit of the school board, and;

WHEREAS the student voice must be represented fairly and articulated expressively for the benefit of the school board and to accurately reflect the students' in decision-making, and;

WHEREAS student trustees further desire the right to move and second motions, to incite discussion:

WHEREAS doing so furthers the dynamic and effectiveness of student representation across Ontario, as students can begin the discussions surrounding items that they feel are most pertaining to their constituency without the need to request for support.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT: the Chair of the Board send a letter to the Ministry of Education on behalf of the Thames Valley District School Board with copies to local MPPs and other school boards, requesting the Ministry of Education to push for the recommendation in allowing student trustees the right to independently move and second motions during board meetings.

The Trustees of the Thames Valley District School Board appreciate your attention to review the Education Act as it pertains to the participation of student trustees and motions. We value the importance of student voice at the Board table and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Lori-Ann Pizzolato, Chair
Thames Valley District School Board

cc: Trustees
M. Fisher, Director of Education
E. Hardeman, MPP Oxford
J. Yurek, MPP Elgin-Middlesex-London
T. Armstrong, MPP London-Fanshawe
T. Kernaghan, MPP London North Centre
P. Sattler, MPP London West
M. McNaughton, MPP Lambton-Kent-Middlesex

Greater Essex County District School Board

451 Park St. W., P.O. Box 210, Windsor, ON N9A 6K1 · 519-255-3200



VIA EMAIL ONLY

January 21, 2022

Honourable Stephen Lecce
5th Floor, 438 University Ave.
Toronto, ON M5G 2K8
Email: stephen.lecce@pc.ola.org

Dear Minister Lecce:

The return of students to in-person learning has been a relief to many, and certainly a necessity for some. We enthusiastically welcomed the resumption of face-to-face interactions at schools among students and staff, especially now that higher grades of PPE have been provided.

We believe this is the best model of learning for the mental health, well-being and academic success of all students. To protect and preserve the school year from further interruptions, sir, the GECDSD Board of Trustees has some suggestions we implore you to consider, on behalf of our staff, students, and our communities.

We would like to see the resumption of a supported plan for the tracking and public reporting of confirmed COVID-19 cases in schools. To allow students and staff to return to school following COVID-19 illness or exposure, we also recommend a test-to-return strategy, permitting them to return to work and/or school if symptom free with a negative PCR or Rapid Antigen Test result. To this end, Minister, we strongly advise you to ensure ongoing, regular, equitable access to RAT kits for both students and staff throughout the course of the continuing pandemic.

Previously, GECDSD Trustees also advocated for the government to add the COVID-19 vaccination to the list of required vaccinations for students under the Immunization for School Pupils Act, and we would appreciate an update on this request.

The past two years have created many hardships for all Ontarians and we do not wish to see those difficulties compounded by an inadequate supply of school board resources. We urge for the inclusion of funding, within the Grants for Student Needs, to upgrade and improve technological tools and support networks used in remote learning. There have been many unfunded costs incurred by our school board during the pandemic that have impacted our overall operations, and we encourage the government to make a full reimbursement. There is also a tremendous need for the hiring of additional staff to support virtual learning. Our Board has been fiscally prudent, and we know that the needs of our students and staff will not end with COVID-19 costs. Investing in Ontario's exceptional public education system includes setting our Boards up for future success, as well as maintaining health and safety toward the success and achievement of our students today.

Finally, Minister, we believe that you and your government must commit to and engage regularly in open dialogue, allowing for feedback, with Directors of Education, school boards, and education partners prior to the broadcast of plans to the media. Most certainly, confidences can be kept, and implementation will be faster and smoother if transparent, timely communication with the Ministry of Education precedes a public announcement. Leaders in Ontario's school boards like GECDSB have perspectives and expertise that is born of experience, interaction, collaboration, and professionalism. The Ministry only serves to benefit from this shared knowledge. Ontario's families look to their schools and those they interact with daily to bring context, calm, and confidence to the decisions we are making with their best interest at heart. We are trusted community leaders with shared goals and responsibilities. We seek to further enhance our valued partnership for the families and communities of the GECDSB, and those of Ontario.

Sincerely,



Alicia Higgison
Chairperson of the Board

Cc: Honourable Lisa Gretzky, MPP, Windsor West: lgretzky-qp@ndp.on.ca
Honourable Percy Hatfield, MPP, Windsor – Tecumseh: phatfield-qp@ndp.on.ca
Honourable Taras Natyshak, MPP Essex: tnatyshak@ndp.on.ca
Honourable Marit Stiles, MPP, Education Critic (Email: MStiles-QP@ndp.on.ca)
School Board Chairs: TGoertz@opsba.org
Dr. Shanker Nesathurai, Acting Medical Officer of Health, WECHU



Jim McCuaig Education Centre
2135 Sills Street Thunder Bay ON P7E 5T2
Telephone (807) 625-5126 Fax (807) 623-7848

January 17, 2022

Via email: stephen.lecce@pc.ola.org; minister.edu@ontario.ca

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

Honourable Stephen Lecce,

We are aware that there is a shortage of personal support workers (PSWs) in the Province of Ontario. During the COVID-19 pandemic, employees, who would normally fill the position of Student Support Professionals (SSPs), also known as Educational Assistants (EAs), in Boards, were eligible for higher pay elsewhere. Pandemic pay recognized PSWs as front line workers and made working for other organizations, that were already able to offer more pay, even more attractive. This leaves Boards of Education with daily and long-term shortages.

SSPs and EAs are doing the same work in schools as PSWs are doing in the community; toileting, hygiene, mobility support and feeding to name a few. They are often working with students who are unmasked. The glaring difference is that they are not receiving the same rate of pay, which makes staying in the field of education difficult.

Daily and long term SSP and EA shortages, unfortunately, mean that students with special education needs are unable to be supported to attend school, and their families must find solutions to last minute cancellations. Boards are forced to be as creative as possible to keep this from happening, but it is often impossible to avoid.

We understand that compensation for education workers is a central bargaining item and is out of the control of the local Boards. Without the support of the government to raise the rate of pay, Boards are left with few or no options to encourage staff to continue to work, nor to attract new employees.

We ask that the government consider this to be a pressing issue moving into this next round of discussions centrally. We need to provide high quality care and support for students with special education needs in our schools.

Sincerely,

Suzanne Posthumus
Chair, Special Education Advisory Committee
Lakehead District School Board

cc: Chairs of all Ontario Special Education Advisory Committees

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Office of the Chair of the Board

14 January 2022

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

Dear Minister Lecce:

At our Committee of the Whole meeting on 11 January 2022, trustees of the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board asked me to share a number of specific requests relating to the reopening of our schools to in-person learning next week. While we appreciate the updated guidance and information in your memorandum of 12 January 2022, our greatest concerns remain unaddressed.

First among these is the need for **continued tracking and public reporting of confirmed and suspected COVID-19 cases in schools by local Public Health Units**. Reporting rates of absenteeism is an imprecise and inadequate proxy for understanding the prevalence of Covid-19 cases in schools. An article in today's *Toronto Star*, by Isabel Teonio, entitled "Thousands of students are 'no shows' after forced switch to remote learning," illustrated the wide range of reasons currently being offered for student absences, the vast majority of which do not reference illness. Families should not have to rely on uninformative absence reports or on community rumour to determine whether or not a child may have been exposed to COVID-19 infection at school, or whether the risk of exposure to COVID-19 at a school exceeds their family risk tolerance in light of other family members who have unique vulnerabilities to the virus.

Tracking and reporting the incidence of COVID-19 cases associated with schools requires the availability of tests. Students and staff must have **access to PCR testing in instances of high-risk exposure and suspected COVID-19**. In addition, our schools need continued funding for and supplies of **rapid antigen tests for all students and staff, in support of implementing a "Test to Return" strategy** following COVID-19 illness or exposure. The PCR tests should be available to asymptomatic individuals with high-risk exposure as well as to symptomatic individuals with suspected COVID-19 infections.

We appreciate your decision to provide non-fit-tested N95 masks as an optional alternative to medical masks for school staff, but we believe that **medical masks and non-fit-tested N95 masks should also be provided and funded as an option for students**. In addition, it is imperative that any provided masks come in a full range of sizes to ensure optimum effectiveness for both children and adults.

As we and other school boards have requested previously, we would like to see a **long-term commitment to adequate funding for upgrades to school ventilation systems**, beyond providing additional portable HEPA filter units, in the interests of the long-term protection of the health of students and staff. We welcome any increases to funding for vital school facility improvements, but at this time, replacing outdated HVAC systems and retrofitting schools built before mechanical ventilation systems were commonplace must be highlighted as significant needs.

Finally, we would appreciate **confirmation that additional funding will be provided to cover any COVID-related expenses that cannot be funded through current planned budgets**. While the Grants for Student Needs for 2021-2022 included some additional funding, the Omicron variant has created new budget pressures.

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

Greater Essex County District School Board

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VIA EMAIL ONLY

January 10, 2022

Honourable Stephen Lecce
5th Floor, 438 University Ave.
Toronto, ON M5G 2K8
Email: stephen.lecce@pc.ola.org

Dear Minister Lecce:

Subject: 2021-22 Revised Budget Estimates

The Greater Essex County District School Board (the "Board") recently submitted their 2021-22 Revised Budget Estimates to your Ministry offices. The Board is appreciative of the additional funding measures provided by the Province to support of the safe re-opening of our schools and to protect the health and wellbeing of students and staff in our facilities.

We respectfully submit the following concerns for your consideration:

COVID-19 Funding Gaps: The Board would like to highlight some specific funding gaps related to COVID-19:

- Additional Staffing funding is insufficient to address the increased costs of additional teachers, school administrators, educational support staff and professionals that are required to support a remote learning environment. Many families in our region have chosen to participate in our virtual elementary and secondary schools, which have required an investment in staffing to support remote learning for our students. Further, the funding is inadequate in addressing the requirements for additional custodians for the enhanced disinfecting and cleaning of our facilities.
- Additional School Operations funding is insufficient to support increased utilities costs for adjusting the operating systems of existing HVAC systems to run longer hours and to support increased outdoor air ventilation, and increased frequency in filter changes. Further complicating matters are supply chain issues associated with the procurement of MERV-13 filters for use in our facilities.
- The changes in the 2021/22 GSN stabilization funding model has required the Board to use 2% of its operating allocation to manage the costs associated with COVID-19. In

the prior year, the Board received specific GSN stabilization funding of \$5,629,422 which was not tied to its accumulated surplus. With the current GSN stabilization funding model, the resulting reduction in funding has resulted in the Board having to make very challenging budget decisions to alleviate cost pressures associated with COVID-19 while ensuring the safe operation of our schools.

- Current COVID-19 funding supports do not adequately contemplate increased occasional teacher costs and staff absenteeism, which are increasing at a substantial rate due to the rapid spread of COVID-19, the changes in eligibility for PCR testing, the unavailability of rapid antigen test kits and the new requirements for self-isolating, recently announced by the Province. Implications associated with rates of staff illness from COVID-19 and/or the requirements to self-isolate will have substantial impacts on expenses which may exceed existing funding supports and the 2% operating allocation.
- COVID-19 funding supports do not consider the negative impact of international student enrolment, which has significantly declined over the past two years. The Board has relied on the tuition received by international students to assist with the expenditures of the Board.

Accumulated Surplus:

The Board would like to thank the Ministry for recognizing the ongoing impact the pandemic is having on the safe operation of our schools by releasing the second half of COVID-19 funding supports and permitting Boards to utilize up to 2% of its operation allocation.

The Board consistently adopts a conservative, intentional and fiscally prudent approach to its budget preparation. The Board's objective is to be fiscally responsible in our decision-making process. The Board recognizes the importance of maintaining adequate reserve levels to provide protection from unanticipated events and has ensured that its accumulated surplus represents approximately 4% of the total 2021-22 budget, which we consider representative of a good benchmark. The Board has deemed it necessary to utilize 2% of its operating allocation (\$8.5 million) to address COVID-19 funding pressures. Providing adequate funding and investments to address the needs of COVID-19 realities is a concern shared by all communities in Ontario, and represents a commitment to the importance of public education. The Board would like to express its concern that utilizing accumulated surplus to fund COVID-19 expenses impacts the Board's efforts in maintaining reserves to support unplanned expenditures and puts further pressures on the Board to rebuild reserve balances from current and future budgets.

Ventilation Measures:

The CVRIS – Resiliency Infrastructure funding stream has been instrumental in introducing mechanical ventilation to schools which currently rely on passive ventilation systems. As noted above, additional funding supports for running these systems longer is required, particularly as more mechanical ventilation systems are introduced into our schools. The Board would like to advocate for additional investments for improving the ventilation systems in our schools, together with a permanent increase in the operating allocation in the GSN to support the increased operating expenses for utilities and filter expenses that will be incurred for the operations of these enhanced systems.

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to working with the Ministry to address the above concerns.

Sincerely,



Alicia Higgison
Chairperson of the Board

Cc: Honourable Lisa Gretzky, MPP, Windsor West: lgretzky-qp@ndp.on.ca
Honourable Percy Hatfield, MPP, Windsor – Tecumseh: phatfield-qp@ndp.on.ca
Honourable Taras Natyshak, MPP Essex: tnatyshak@ndp.on.ca
Honourable Marit Stiles, MPP, Education Critic (Email: MStiles-QP@ndp.on.ca)
School Board Chairs: TGoertz@opsba.org

HWDSB

January 6, 2022

Hon. Stephen Lecce, Minister of Education
315 Front Street, 14th Floor
Toronto, ON M7A 0B8

Dear Minister Lecce,

At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Ontario Government stated that “schools should be the last thing to close and the first thing to open,” yet this week, Ontario closed schools for in-person learning across the province for the fourth time.

On behalf of Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board, Trustees understand that the emergence of the Omicron variant has presented the most recent COVID-19 pandemic challenge for public education. We believe that for the public education system, student success must be prioritized and the well-being of students, education workers and families must be paramount.

Therefore, in order to ensure an outcome for public education that is different than previous extended closures, we are formally requesting the immediate implementation of the following specific measures to help ensure that schools can reopen for safe in-person learning as soon as possible:

1. Priority access to vaccinations for frontline education workers and students.

Our Board cannot function without the hard work and dedication of educators. In order to re-open schools and minimize COVID-related workforce disruption, it is critical that all frontline educators be provided with priority access to COVID-19 vaccinations as quickly as possible. Further, to ensure student safety in a congregate setting once schools are re-opened, priority access to COVID-19 vaccination booster shots should also be provided to students aged 12 to 17 as soon as possible.

We welcome the opportunity to help support in-school student and employer-based vaccination clinics, noting the urgency of this request.

2. Continued tracking and public reporting of confirmed and suspected COVID-19 cases in schools.

It is our ethical responsibility as a board of education to ensure that parents, frontline educators, and their families and loved ones know if they have been in close contact with a potential COVID-19 infection.

We recognize that Hamilton Public Health Services staff do not have the capacity to complete contact tracing, as we have in the past. However, tracking and public reporting can be achieved through adequate supply of take-home PCR test kits or Rapid Antigen Test kits, voluntary self-reporting of probable or test-confirmed cases, and absence tracking.

HWDSB

It is important that staff, students, and families are informed when there is a probable or confirmed case in their classroom, and we request the Ministry support a modified tracking and reporting mechanism for COVID-19 in schools, as well as an ongoing supply of PCR or Rapid Antigen Tests for school boards.

3. Ministry funded or provisioned high-quality masks for students.

Masking is another critical strategy that has helped reduce the risk of transmission during the pandemic. We thank the Ministry for providing 3-ply masks for students; however, we note the inventory provided is quite limited. To ensure students have equitable access to higher-quality masks, we request the Ministry provide or fund an ongoing inventory of masks for students in our system. In addition, we are seeking further direction on refined mask exemption requirements for students.

4. Additional technology funding to ensure that every student receives a device for learning.

As of January 5, preliminary numbers from our Remote Learning Device Request survey to families indicate that we have more than 8,000 students in need of a device, which is approximately 2,000 devices short from what we are able to offer. Trustees request additional funding for technology as the need for individual devices has grown beyond our current inventory. During this critical stage of the pandemic, equity of access is vital to supporting the education needs of our students.

5. Transparent and timely communication to families and staff regarding changes to in-person learning.

Throughout the pandemic we have advocated for timely planning and communication from the Ministry of Education and provincial government. Changes in learning modes are challenging for many families and they need adequate notice to plan for their child's childcare and learning needs.

We respectfully request that any potential changes to the target date for the return to in-person learning be communicated as early as possible and in a transparent manner.

We know the decision to temporarily move students to remote learning was a difficult one as we have heard clear evidence from our pediatricians and mental health experts about the significant, lasting negative impacts this can have on our students. We appreciate hearing this is a targeted and time-limited strategy. We continue to advocate for a return to in-person learning as soon as possible and feel strongly that the additional steps listed above are essential.

Thank you for your consideration. I would be happy to discuss our requests further.

Sincerely,



Dawn Danko

Chair, Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board