

**SEPTEMBER 26, 2022
BOARD MEETING**

The Waterloo Region District School Board held a Board Meeting this evening at 7:00 p.m. via video conference, with the following members in attendance: S. Piatkowski (Chairperson), J. Herring, K. Meissner, C. Millar, M. Ramsay, L. Tremble, C. Watson, J. Weston, C. Whetham and K. Woodcock.

Trustee K. Smith was unable to attend this evening's meeting.

Student Trustees V. Raina and K. Soror were in attendance.

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

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

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson S. Piatkowski called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

1. Moved by M. Ramsay, seconded by C. Millar:

That the agenda of the September 26, 2022, Board Meeting be approved.

-Carried-

CONSENT AGENDA

2. Moved by C. Watson, seconded by K. Woodcock:

That the consent agenda of the Board Meeting of September 26, 2022, and the actions contained therein, be approved with the exception of folios 32 and 34.

-Carried-

Abstained: M. Ramsay

Folio 32 and 34 - Monthly Suspension and Expulsion Reports

When asked for more information on the increase in suspensions, Superintendent B. Lemon requested further clarification on the scope of work being requested. Chairperson S. Piatkowski suggested that ADC schedule a Staff Follow Up to address the question.

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Trustee C. Watson was called to order for an interjection deemed to question the integrity of staff and noting that her question was asked and a response will be provided at a future meeting.

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

That folios 32 and 34, from the consent agenda of the September 26, 2022, Board Meeting, and the actions contained therein, be approved.

-Carried-

Opposed: C. Watson
Abstained: M. Ramsay

MOTIONS FROM IN CAMERA MEETING

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

A. Moved by L. Tremble, seconded by K. Meissner:

That the agenda of the September 26, 2022, In Camera Board Meeting be deemed to meet the legislative requirements for discussion in camera with the Security Update being heard first under Other Business.

-Carried-

B. Moved by K. Woodcock, seconded by C. Millar:

That the consent agenda of the September 26, 2022, In Camera Board Meeting and the actions contained therein, be approved.

-Carried-

C. Moved by J. Weston, seconded by K. Meissner:

That we rise and report in public session.

-Carried-

Note: This concludes the reporting of In Camera motions.

DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST

There were no declarations of pecuniary interest.

ANNOUNCEMENTS/CELEBRATING BOARD ACTIVITIES

Chairperson S. Piatkowski shared regrets from Trustee K. Smith.

On September 22, 2022, Trustees L. Tremble, J. Weston and K. Woodcock attended the Waterloo Indigenous Student Centre Annual Pow-wow in Waterloo Park.

Trustee L. Tremble highlighted Ontario Public School Boards' Association's Truth and Reconciliation Professional Development that is available to trustees.

Trustee C. Whetham attended the Trinity Community Table at the Trinity Anglican Church.

COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT GOOD NEWS UPDATE

Interim Chief Communications Officer E. Dougan McKenzie provided the good news update for the month highlighting creative classrooms, student achievements and stories in the community. The update also focused on the First Day Photo Challenge, the opening of Oak Creek Public School, the launch of the new WRDSB Strategic Plan and celebrating International Week of Deaf People. Interim Chief Communications Officer E. Dougan McKenzie reviewed the monthly web traffic, social media engagements and top traditional media stories.

Interim Chief Communications Officer E. Dougan McKenzie was thanked for her time at the WRDSB.

REPORTS

2021-2022 OPERATIONAL PLAN YEAR-END REPORT

This report was provided for information.

The report provided Trustees with a year-end update on staff's implementation of the Operational Plan for the 2021-2022 school year ending August 31, 2022. Given the unprecedented nature of the past 2.5 years, it was necessary to ensure that the Operational Plan took into account the unfolding context and shifting landscape. WRDSB's Strategic Plan and Strategic Priorities remained the pillars of work and continued to drive our operational plan until the end of June, 2022. Staff continued to respond to the realities and impact of COVID-19 and the resulting staffing shortages, closures of schools and classrooms, and the often changing expectations of the Ministry of Education. The report included highlights of key achievements and outcomes for the 2021-2022 school year.

Trustees asked questions regarding helping students feel welcomed, supported and represented, helping students identify their strengths and interests. When asked a question about community consultation on the Strategic Plan, it was clarified that this is a final report on the Operation Plan

from the 2021-2022 school year and not related to the new Strategic Plan for the 2022-2023 school year.

Trustee C. Watson was called to order for continuing to speak without being called upon.

A number of trustees expressed appreciation to staff for their work noting the key achievements including increased graduation rates.

REPORTS FROM BOARD MEMBERS

DISCUSSION: QUESTION FROM OPSBA

On September 6, 2022, the Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA) reached out to Board Chairs asking Boards to indicate if they support extending the ability of Boards to hold electronic board meetings beyond the current expiration date of November 15, 2022.

Trustees discussed the question and provided the following comments:

- Preference to have in person meetings with hybrid capabilities
- Virtual meetings provide flexibility for health and safety needs
- Virtual meeting provide flexibility for inclement weather
- Flexibility is important as not all regions in the province will have the same needs
- Virtual meeting provide flexibility to ensure quorum and to conduct the business of the board
- Northern boards who need to travel to meetings and the related expenses should be considered
- Virtual options increase accessibility
- Virtual options promotes transparency for parents who cannot come out but could delegate as a virtual attendee

There was a clear consensus among trustees to support extending the ability of Boards to hold electronic board meetings beyond the current expiration date.

BOARD COMMUNICATIONS

The Board received the following communications:

- Rainy River District School Board to Minister of Education
- Upper Canada District School Board to Minister of Education and Minister of Health
- District School Board Ontario North East to Minister of Education and Treasury Board
- Simcoe County District School Board to Minister of Education - Child Care Sector
- Simcoe County District School Board to Minister of Education - Transportation
- Waterloo Region District School Board to Minister of Education
- WRDSB to M. Rae, Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Education
- WRDSB to P. Barnes, Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Education
- Waterloo Region DSB to B. Riddell, Member of Provincial Parliament
- Waterloo Region District School Board to C. Fife, Member of Provincial Parliament

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- Waterloo Region District School Board to J. Dixon, Member of Provincial Parliament
- Waterloo Region District School Board to L. Lindo, Member of Provincial Parliament
- Waterloo Region District School Board to M. Harris, Member of Provincial Parliament
- York Region District School Board to Minister of Education
- Renfrew County District School Board to Minister of Education and Treasury Board
- York Region District School Board to Treasury Board Secretariat
- Thames Valley District School Board to Minister of Education
- Avon Maitland District School Board to Minister of Education

Student Trustees K. Soror and V. Raina suggested that the WRDSB write a letter in support of the letter from York Region District School Board (YRDSB) requesting an amendment to the Education Act to allow student trustees to move and second motions. Trustees discussed a motion to support the letter.

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

That the WRDSB postpone consideration of the motion to write a letter to the Ministry of Education in support of YRDSB’s letter until a future meeting.

-Postponement Defeated-

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

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

Discussion resumed on the main motion.

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

That the WRDSB write a letter to the Ministry of Education in support of YRDSB’s letter requesting an amendment to the Education Act to allow student trustees to move and second motions.

-Carried-

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Opposed:
M. Ramsay
C. Watson
C. Whetham

Trustees discussed the Board Communication from Thames Valley District School Board on folio 84 regarding capital funding. Trustees asked staff if there is a way for trustees to advocate for capital funding in a way that would benefit the WRDSB. Coordinating Superintendent M. Gerard suggested that some pieces of the Thames Valley District School Board's letter would positively impact the WRDSB. As mentioned at the Committee of the Whole Meeting last week, staff would like some time to review the benchmark funding prior to providing a suggestion. Trustee L. Tremble agreed to forward a capital funding letter OPSBA recently submitted to staff.

6. Moved by K. Woodcock, seconded by L. Tremble:

That the WRDSB refer the letter regarding capital funding from Thames Valley DSB to staff for recommendations on how trustees can best advocate for the WRDSB regarding capital funding; and

That staff report back at the Committee of the Whole on October 17, 2022.

-Carried-

OTHER BUSINESS

RETIREMENT OF ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR L. READ

Chairperson S. Piatkowski shared that Associate Director Lila Read was retiring at the end of the month. Trustees each took an opportunity to wish Associate Director L. Read well in retirement and expressed appreciation for her years of service. Chairperson S. Piatkowski and Director j. chanicka also provided remarks. Associate Director L. Read took the opportunity to say that the decision to retire was made with mixed emotions.

QUESTION PERIOD

Trustee C. Watson asked staff to confirm if schools are prohibited from having tests and sports on the identified Days of Significance. Superintendent C. Hill referred to the information already provided to trustees indicating that schools are asked to be mindful of the Days of Significance, and if relevant to their school community, avoid assessments, evaluations and significant activities on these days. Instruction can still occur on Days of Significance. This allows students to participate in their faith traditions without negative impact on their education or school life. This is important in creating a sense of belonging and inclusion for students. Students who practice Christian traditions are already unencumbered as their traditions are Stat holidays or Sundays. She confirmed that families, students and staff have been consulted and the list of days

is provided at the beginning of the school year to assist education staff in planning their school year.

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

That the Board Meeting of September 26, 2022, be extended an additional thirty minutes to 10:00 p.m.

-Carried-

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

The following Notice of Motion was served by Trustee J. Weston with support from Trustee J. Herring:

Whereas support for student and staff well-being is one of our strategic directions; and

Whereas staff well-being impacts student achievement and well-being; and

Whereas some staff have reported feeling stressed as they struggle to meet the growing needs of their students in a time of funding cuts; and

Whereas the COVID-19 pandemic and related social and economic challenges have significantly impacted mental and physical health; and

Whereas unaddressed mental and physical concerns can lead to staff absences; and

Whereas incidents of harassment on social media have impacted the mental health of education workers;

It is recommended:

That Waterloo Region District School Board Trustees request a report that explores the structures that currently exist to support staff well-being; and

That the report explores further support that may be needed to create and action a staff wellness and well-being strategy; and

That the report consider how staff can be supported when impacted by circumstances outside the workplace, including harassment on social media and personal situations; and

That the report and all costs associated with the supports, be provided to the Board of Trustees as soon as possible and as scheduled by the Agenda Development Committee.

The following Notice of Motion was served by Trustee M. Ramsay with support from Trustee

C. Watson:

Whereas, The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance ("IHRA") is an international intergovernmental organization composed of the governments of 35 member countries, including Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, France, Germany, Argentina, Spain, Norway, Sweden, Finland, with 10 additional observer countries including Brazil, Turkey, El Salvador, New Zealand and Uruguay, and, the Organization of American States (OAS), and

Whereas, the Working Definition ("WD") of antisemitism published by the IHRA ("IHRA WD") was endorsed as the official policy of the Government of Canada on June 27, 2019, and

Whereas the IHRA WD was adopted by the Government of Ontario on October 26, 2020 and also by the Governments of British Columbia, Quebec, New Brunswick, and Alberta.

Whereas the IHRA WD does not restrain criticism of the policies or actions of the State of Israel, the advocacy for the human rights and national aspirations of Palestinian people,

Therefore, be it resolved that the Waterloo Region District School Board adopts and recognizes the IHRA WD as its operative definition of antisemitism, guiding its staff in the administration of its operational policies, including its human rights and equity policies.

The following Notice of Motion was served by Trustee C. Watson with support from Trustee M. Ramsay:

Therefore be it resolved that the Waterloo Region District School Board strike an ad hoc committee of appropriate staff, 6 parents with elementary and secondary children who ride on the school bus, one representative from SEAC, PIC and WRAPSC, and 2 trustees to discuss various topics concerning the bus driver shortage but not limited to, bus driver wage, starting bonus, added incentives, school bus monitors, exploring other solutions to assist families, supplementing drivers split shifts, communication protocol and early notice of a driver shortage.

And that the committee provides recommendations to the board of Trustees no later than January 2023,

And that a letter be written to the Minister of Education requesting a provincial review concerning the current bus driver shortage and that this review provide sustainable recommendation that will ensure that students who qualify for busing be provided with reliable transportation to and from school.

Notices of Motion will be scheduled by the Agenda Development Committee.

ADJOURNMENT

8. Moved by L. Tremble, seconded by K. Meissner:

That the Board Meeting of September 26, 2022, be adjourned.

-Carried-

The meeting adjourned at 9:33 p.m.