

**OCTOBER 30, 2023
BOARD MEETING**

The Waterloo Region District School Board held a Board Meeting this evening at 7:00 p.m. in the Education Centre Boardroom, with the following members in attendance: J. Weston (Chairperson), B. Cody, S. Estoesta, C. Johnson, J. Meissner, S. Piatkowski, M. Radlein, M. Ramsay, M. Waseem*, C. Watson and K. Woodcock.

*Virtual Attendee

Student Trustees A. Awan and C. Dong were in attendance.

The following senior administration members were in attendance: j. chanicka (Director of Education and Secretary), L. Agar, D. Ahluwalia, J. Albrecht, J. Brown, V. Collis, R. Dallan, E. Dougan-McKenzie, J. Fedosoff, E. Giannopoulos, C. Hill, P. Kaur, N. Landry, B. Lemon, D. Liebermann, I. MacIsaac, S. Miller and G. Shantz.

Other staff in attendance: B. Chatha, R. Hewer, A. Klassen, M. Mayer, J. Shortreed, S. Reidel and M. Yoshy.

CALL TO ORDER

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

Trustee J. Weston provided a statement to remind individuals that public disruptions are not permitted at Board meetings.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

That the agenda of the October 30, 2023, Board Meeting be approved with an amendment to the agenda to have the Delegations occur prior to the Consent Agenda.

-Carried-

DELEGATIONS

The following delegations spoke at this evening's meeting:

- Cristina Fernandes - Motion to Change Board Policy 1012 - Religious and Creed Accommodations
- Blanca Siguenza - Virtual Library Policy Motion

Student Trustee C. Dong joined the meeting at 7:18 p.m.

Trustees were provided an opportunity to ask questions of clarification.

CONSENT AGENDA

2. Moved by S. Piatkowski, seconded by C. Johnson:

That the consent agenda of the Board Meeting of October 30, 2023, and the actions contained therein, be approved with the exception of Folio 26 Motion #5 and Folio 28 Motion #7.

-Carried-

FOLIO 26 MOTION #5: MOTION: CHANGES TO BOARD POLICY 1012 RELIGIOUS AND CREED ACCOMMODATIONS

Trustees discussed whether or not there was sufficient debate on this item at the previous meeting. Staff were asked if they had any follow up information on the previously referenced 2009 Supreme Court case.

Trustee C. Watson called a Point of Order indicating that she cannot hear the Director's response. Chairperson J. Weston noted that there would be some technical adjustments to the sound level before the next meeting. Director j. chanicka reiterated his remarks that staff follow the Ministry of Education direction and the Ontario Human Rights Code.

A recorded vote on a motion to defer was requested.

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

That the Waterloo Region District School Board defer the motion until such time as a response from legal counsel is received regarding the Supreme Court decision of 2009.

-Defeated-

In Favour:

B. Cody
M. Ramsay
C. Watson

Abstained:

*A. Awan

Opposed:

S. Estoesta
C. Johnson
J. Meissner
S. Piatkowski
M. Radlein
M. Waseem
J. Weston
K. Woodcock
*C. Dong

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

Trustee C. Watson called a Point of Order indicating that it is hard to hold down the microphone buttons while speaking and that it is hard to hear. Chairperson J. Weston noted the concern once again indicating that the volume would be looked at prior to the next meeting and asked trustees to speak loudly.

Trustees continued discussion on the main motion and whether or not they support the motion. Director j. chanicka read an example letter provided in a school for sexual health curriculum. and the exemption process.

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

That Board Policy 1012 under 1.7 be revised to more accurately reflect 3.4 concerning the exception of “competing rights;” and

That Board Policy 1012, 1.6.6. be added to ensure that parents be provided with detailed information concerning dates, times, sexual health teaching, class discussions and presentations outside of curriculum-based health class which would allow parents to make informed decisions about their child’s accommodation.

-Defeated-

In Favour:

B. Cody
M. Ramsay
C. Watson

Opposed:

S. Estoesta
C. Johnson
J. Meissner
S. Piatkowski
M. Radlein
M. Waseem
J. Weston
K. Woodcock
*A. Awan
*C. Dong

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FOLIO 28 MOTION #7: MOTION: VIRTUAL LIBRARY POLICY

Trustees further discussed this motion, some indicating a need for filtering in the virtual library and others referencing that they are license subscriptions not in need of filtering as the resources are selected by professionals.

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

That the Waterloo Region District School Board develop a virtual library policy that would ensure that virtual libraries are age appropriate, with graduated filtering that is consistent with the filtering used for WRDSB chrome books and that this filtering also aligns with the Ministry of Educations Sexual Health Curriculum guidelines.

-Defeated-

In Favour:

B. Cody
M. Ramsay
C. Watson

Opposed:

S. Estoesta
C. Johnson
J. Meissner
S. Piatkowski
M. Radlein
M. Waseem
J. Weston
K. Woodcock
*A. Awan
*C. Dong

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MOTIONS FROM IN CAMERA MEETING

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

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A. Moved by M. Radlein, seconded by C. Johnson:

That the agenda of the October 30, 2023, In Camera Board Meeting be deemed to meet the legislative requirements for discussion in camera.

-Carried-

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

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

That the consent agenda of the October 30, 2023, In Camera Board Meeting and the actions contained therein, be approved

-Carried-

RISE AND REPORT

C. Moved by C. Johnson, seconded by S. Estoesta:

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

Student Trustee A. Awan attended an event for Islamic Heritage Month at Laurel Heights Secondary School.

Trustee S. Piatkowski noted the upcoming joint regional meeting with Central West and Western regions of OPSBA hosted by WRDSB at Oak Creek Public School on Saturday.

Trustee C. Johnson attended a recent meeting of the Equity and Inclusion Advisory Group.

Trustee C. Johnson will be going to Grandview Public School on Wednesday for the Green Grandview event.

COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT GOOD NEWS UPDATE

Senior Manager H. Hughes introduced the Communications Good News Update video sharing highlights from the month and items of traditional media and social media interest.

REPORTS

INCLEMENT WEATHER PROCESS

Superintendent J. Fedosoff started the presentation by referencing the related administrative procedures and shared the infographic the WRDSB will be using in communications related to severe weather. He reviewed street maps of the Region of Waterloo, showing just how many roads are used every day by buses transporting students to and from school, and provided background information on the snow clearing timelines in the region. He reviewed the decision-making process, severe weather plan and communications. The presentation concluded with the number of historical school closures due to severe weather.

MATH ACHIEVEMENT ACTION PLAN

After an introduction by Superintendent C. Hill, System Administrator J. Shortreed provided an overview of the presentation. Learning Support Services Consultant A. Klassen outlined the Ministry of Education’s (Ministry) Priority Actions areas and reviewed the related strategies at a board, school and classroom level. She referred to the Ministry-identified priority schools which were identified using 2021-2022 EQAO results. Learning Support Services Consultant R. Hewer referenced the alignment between the Ministry priorities and the WRDSB Strategic Plan and shared the WRDSB Vision for Math. She outlined the key components of the action plan and tiered support model. System Administrator J. Shortreed concluded the presentation sharing how staff planned to measure and monitor the data.

Trustees asked questions regarding new resources, Ministry timelines for reporting and educator supports.

BOARD IMPROVEMENT AND EQUITY PLAN

This report was provided for information.

The report provided Trustees with a year-end update on staff’s implementation of the Board Improvement and Equity Plan for the 2022-2023 school year ending August 31, 2023. The Board Improvement and Equity Plan (formally the Operational Plan) is what supports the implementation and achievement of the WRDSB’s Strategic Directions and highlights our work as a learning organization.

The 2022-2023 WRDSB Board Improvement and Equity Plan focussed on 4 areas:

1. Achievement
2. Sovereignty, Human Rights and Equity
3. Mental Health, Well-Being and Engagement
4. Pathways and Transitions

Within each area, the desired results, key indicators and strategies were identified, along with examples of the actions being taken by staff to help “turn the curve” for the key indicators. The 2022-2023 Board Improvement and Equity Plan was created based on the expectations from the Ministry Of Education that were made available in the Fall 2022 and WRDSB’s Multi-Year Strategic Plan.

Highlights of key achievements and outcomes for the 2022-2023 school year included:

- Reading in Grade 2
- EQAO Grade 6
- EQAO Grade 9 Math
- Achievement Grade 9 Destreamed Math
- Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT)
- Credit Accumulation - 16 credits by the end of Grade 10
- Graduation Rates

Trustees asked questions regarding Brightspace portfolios.

Trustee M. Ramsay left the meeting at 9:24 p.m.

Trustees asked questions regarding the dual credit data not yet available.

4. Moved by C. Watson, seconded by C. Johnson:

That the Board Meeting of October 30, 2023, be extended an additional thirty minutes to 10:00 p.m.

-Carried-

Trustees continued to ask questions regarding this being the baseline data going forward.

Trustee M. Ramsay returned to the meeting at 9:28 p.m.

Trustees continued to ask questions regarding Ministry of Education indicators requiring tracking, the use of educator and student voice in presentations, cursive writing and teacher professional development.

REPORTS FROM BOARD MEMBERS

AD HOC BYLAW REVIEW COMMITTEE UPDATE

Trustee M. Radlein, as Chairperson of the Ad Hoc Bylaw Review Committee, provided the Board with an update on the committee.

The Bylaw Review Ad Hoc Committee consists of Trustees M. Radlein (Chair), C. Johnson, J. Meissner, C. Watson and K. Woodcock; Associate Director G. Shantz; and Manager, Corporate Services, S. Reidel. The committee had its first meeting on October 11, 2023 and the second meeting is scheduled for November 2, 2023. The Committee's Terms of Reference require review of current Board Bylaws, with particular focus on By-laws 13, 14 and 24 and other by-laws requiring updates per changes in legislation and/or practice. The bylaws were last reviewed in September 2020.

Recognizing that this needs to be a thorough and thoughtful process and that committee members have schedules which can be challenging to coordinate, the Bylaw Review Ad Hoc Committee submitted a motion to extend the reporting deadline.

2. Moved by M. Radlein, seconded by J. Meissner:

That the Waterloo Region District School Board extend the time frame given in the Bylaw Review Ad Hoc Committee’s Terms of Reference from October 30, 2023 to June 26, 2024, and;

That the Terms of Reference be amended to read, “The ad hoc committee will report progress to the Board of Trustees once a month. A final report and recommendations will be presented to the Board of Trustees before or by June 26, 2024.”

-Carried-

Abstained: C. Watson

BOARD COMMUNICATIONS

The Board received the following communications:

- Durham District School Board to Minister of Education
- Rainy River District School Board to Minister of Education & Minister of Children, Community and Social Services
- Rainy River District School Board to Minister of Education

There was a Will of the Board to write a letter in Support of Rainy River District School Board’s letter re: Toronto Youth Cabinet’s recommendations to improve children and youth mental health across Ontario.

QUESTION PERIOD

Trustee K. Woodcock inquired into how cursive writing will be embedded into the curriculum. Associate Director S. Miller shared that it is part of the new curriculum which is currently in the planning phase and that further information can be shared in the future.

Trustee C. Watson indicated that the WRDSB is shredding all books published before 2003 and asked for confirmation. Associate Director G. Shantz referred to the resource weeding practices shared a number of times with the Board of Trustees and reiterated that this practice is not done using a specific date.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

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

Whereas the Ontario Education Act is not clear about the rights of parents and guardians;

**OCTOBER 30, 2023
BOARD MEETING**

Whereas the government promised to develop a Parents Bill of Rights in 2018, “To ensure that the rights of parents are respected throughout and following the reform process, the Government will also begin drafting a Ministry of Education Parents’ Bill of Rights”;

Whereas many parents/guardians believe their parental rights are not respected;

Whereas there has not been a province wide consultation process by the Ministry of Education since 2018;

Therefore it be resolved that the Waterloo Region District School Board write a letter to the Minister of Education requesting that the minister initiate a province-wide public consultation process that will allow parents, interested individuals and groups to present detailed proposals to the Ministry concerning parent rights; and

That the letter also request that the minister of education follow through with the 2018 promise to develop a Parents Bill of Rights for parents/guardians in Ontario.

This Notice of Motion will be scheduled for a future meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

4. Moved by K. Woodcock, seconded by M. Radlein:

That the Board Meeting of October 30, 2023, be adjourned.

-Carried-

The meeting adjourned at 9:42 p.m.