

**DECEMBER 18, 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 Attendance

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, M. Armellini, J. Brown, V. Collis, E. Dougan-McKenzie, J. Fedosoff, C. Hill, H. Hughes, N. Landry, B. Lemon, D. Liebermann, I. MacIsaac, S. Miller, M. Newlands and G. Shantz.

Other staff in attendance: M. Mayer and S. Reidel.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson J. Weston called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

1. Moved by C. Watson, seconded by S. Estoesta:

That the agenda of the December 18, 2023, Board Meeting be approved with the addition of a delegation from Wasai Rahimi on the Motion: Letter Concerning Parental Rights.

-Carried-

DELEGATIONS

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

That the delegations be reordered to have C. Fernandes delegate last as she has not arrived yet.

-Carried-

Opposed: S. Piatkowski

The following delegations spoke at the meeting:

- Sandra Glaze - Motion: Letter Concerning Parental Rights
- Wasai Rahimi - Motion: Letter Concerning Parental Rights
- Cristina Fernandes - Response to Opposition to Motion: Letter Concerning Parental Rights

Trustees were provided with opportunities to ask questions of clarification.

CONSENT AGENDA

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

That the consent agenda of the Board Meeting of December 18, 2023, and the actions contained therein, be approved with the exception of:

- **Folio 22-25 Motions #2, 4, 8, and 12;**
- **Folio 26 Motion #14;**
- **Folio 32-37**

-Carried-

Folio 22-25 Motions #2, 4, 8 and 12 - Policy Language

Trustee C. Watson expressed concern for the language change to families/caregivers noting that the Child and Youth Act and the Ministry of Education both use the word parent. She also referenced a recent article in The Record.

She requested a recorded vote and asked to vote on all policies for approval. Trustees discussed the language further and staff confirmed that the Ministry of Education has not provided any correspondence to WRDSB regarding this matter. Director j. chanicka indicated that it is untrue to suggest that families and caregivers do not include parents. The Policy Working Group is working on a glossary of terms which will include a definition of families. The language of families and caregivers has been used consistently for at least five years so as not to exclude some families.

A discussion regarding the motion on the table occurred. With permission from the Chairperson, the motion was withdrawn by Trustees C. Watson and M. Ramsay in line with the WRDSB Bylaws. Trustee M. Ramsay called a Point of Order providing clarification on the changes Trustee C. Watson would like to see reflected. Discussion continued. When discussing a new motion, Trustee S. Piatkowski called a Point of Order indicating that a motion to approve would be required before amending the policies as per Robert's Rules of Order. A main motion to approve the policies was moved and seconded, followed by a motion to amend the policies.

Trustees discussed the amendment with some indicating concerns from parents about the change. It was requested that concerns be forwarded to staff to follow up on. Other trustees indicated that they have not received the same complaints. Trustees reviewed the Policy Working Group consultation webpost and the committee did not believe they received any concerns with the language of families and caregivers.

**DECEMBER 18, 2023
BOARD MEETING**

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

That Board Policies 1006, 2001, 4014 and 4017 on Folio 22-25, Motions 2, 4, 8 and 12, from the consent agenda of the December 18, 2023, Board Meeting, be amended to use the language parent / guardian in place of families / caregivers.

-Amendment 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

* 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))

A recorded vote was requested for the main motion.

5. Moved by S. Piatkowski, seconded by K. Woodcock:

That Folio 22-25, Motions 2, 4, 8 and 12, from the consent agenda of the December 18, 2023, Board Meeting, and the actions contained therein, be approved.

-Carried-

In Favour:

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

Opposed:

B. Cody
M. Ramsay
C. Watson

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Folio 26 Motion #14 - Motion: Letter Concerning Parent Rights

Trustee C. Watson urged trustees to reconsider and write the letter to the Minister of Education. Trustees discussed the motion.

A recorded vote was requested.

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

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.

-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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Folios 32-37 Reported Student Behaviour Incidents Quarterly Data

Trustee C. Watson asked about the increase in elementary panel incidents. Associate Director S. Miller suggested that staff could bring a future report to share information on the work being done including student well-being and support for staff and their well-being. This will be sent to the Agenda Development Committee for scheduling.

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

That Folios 32-37, from the consent agenda of the December 18, 2023, Board Meeting, and the actions contained therein, be approved.

-Carried-

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. Ramsay, seconded by S. Piatkowski:

That the agenda of the December 18, 2023, In Camera Board Meeting be deemed to meet the legislative requirements for discussion in camera with the addition of the Principal Pool Appointment under Other Business.

-Carried-

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

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

That the consent agenda of the December 18, 2023, In Camera Board Meeting and the actions contained therein, be approved.

-Carried-

RISE AND REPORT

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

That we rise and report in public session.

-Carried-

Note: This concludes the reporting of In Camera motions.

DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST

Trustees C. Watson and M. Ramsay each declared a pecuniary interest at the previous in camera meeting.

ANNOUNCEMENTS/CELEBRATING BOARD ACTIVITIES

Chairperson J. Weston recognized and thanked Executive Manager Ivana MacIsaac for her service to the WRDSB noting Executive Manager MacIssac will be leaving WRDSB at the beginning of January.

Trustee M. Radlein shared information from her visit to Trillium Public School.

Trustee C. Johnson shared that Student Trustee A. Awan hosted a meeting for prospective student trustees.

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.

When asked why the video did not say Merry Christmas it was noted that Christmas messages would go out on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day as there are other holidays to recognize as well over this period.

REPORTS

2023-2024 BOARD IMPROVEMENT AND EQUITY PLAN

This report was provided for information.

The Board Improvement and Equity Plan/Student Achievement Plan (formally the Operational Plan) is what supports the implementation and achievement of the WRDSB Strategic Directions and highlights our work as a learning organization. The 2023-2024 Board Improvement and Equity Plan/Student Achievement Plan outlines the desired results, key indicators, strategies and examples of the actions being taken by staff to help “turn the curve” for the identified areas. This year’s Board Improvement and Equity Plan/Student Achievement Plan aligns with Ontario’s Better Schools and Students Outcome Act (Bill 98), continues work as outlined in the 2022-2023 Board Improvement and Equity Plan and focuses on four areas:

- Achievement - Every student will succeed academically.
- Sovereignty, Human Rights & Equity - Every student and staff member has equitable opportunities in an environment free from discrimination.
- Mental health, Well-being and Engagement - Every student has equitable opportunities to learn in an environment free from discrimination. Every staff member has equitable opportunities in an environment free from discrimination.
- Pathways and Transitions - Every student will learn in an environment that engages them and supports their mental health and well-being. Every staff member will work in an environment that engages them and supports their mental health and well-being.

**DECEMBER 18, 2023
BOARD MEETING**

Trustees asked questions regarding de-streamed math classes and consulting with teachers. Trustees appreciated the use of student voice during the presentation. Trustees asked questions regarding mentorship, trend analysis, parent consultation and student surveys and consultation.

COMMUNITY REPORT CARD

This report was provided for information.

Waterloo Region District School Board staff have completed the first annual Community Report Card. This offers a snapshot on the progress made on strategic directions. The report card provides families and the wider community an update on the WRDSB's transformation of the education system. This year will be the baseline to track future progress and achievement. Executive Officer E. Dougan-McKenzie shared that there are numerous other connections being made that are not included as they are harder to quantify and that more outreach is planned including through the Student Agency and Voice Plan and further community roundtables.

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

That the December 18, 2023, Board Meeting be extended an additional 30 minutes to 10:00 p.m.

-Carried-

Trustees asked questions regarding parent consultation, roundtable conversations, virtual desktop software access for students.

Trustee C. Watson called a Point of Order noting that she felt a comment made by Trustee S. Piatkowski was a judgment of her. Trustee S. Piatkowski had said that it was not appropriate for Trustees to question the professional integrity of employees in regards to a comment made about a one-sided survey. Trustee C. Watson was referencing the Strategic Plan communication within the Strategic Plan process. Trustee S. Piatkowski had an opportunity to withdraw his comment; he noted that he did not believe the one-sided survey comments were appropriate. Other trustees supported Trustee S. Piatkowski and stated a trust in the professionalism of staff when gathering stakeholder input.

Trustees continued to ask questions about graduation rates, community roundtables and consulting parents.

A motion to extend the meeting an additional 30 minutes was moved by Trustee S. Estoesta but had no seconder.

Chairperson J. Weston provided concluding remarks thanking staff for their work this year to support student achievement and well-being. She also noted the celebrations at this time of year including Hannakah, Kwanzaa and Christmas.

The meeting adjourned at 10:00 p.m.