

**OCTOBER 21, 2024**  
**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING**

The Waterloo Region District School Board held a Committee of the Whole Meeting this evening at 7:00 p.m. 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 D. Lakhanpal and F. Luo were in attendance.

The following senior administration members were in attendance: j. chanicka (Director of Education and Secretary), L. Agar, D. Ahluwalia, J. Albrecht, B. Chatha, E. Dougan-McKenzie, C. Hill, N. Landry, D. Lane, B. Lemon, S. Miller and C. Sagar

Other staff in attendance: R. Dallan, J. Gross, L. Lima, S. Lipskie, M. Mayer, S. Reidel, T. Simms and R. Willms.

**CALL TO ORDER**

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

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

1. Moved by J. Meissner, seconded by S. Piatkowski:

**That the agenda of the October 21, 2024, Committee of the Whole Meeting be approved.**

-Carried-

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Trustees C. Johnson, J. Meissner and K. Woodcock observed a class trip to the Camp Heidelberg outdoor education facility.

Trustees C. Johnson, S. Piatkowski, M. Radlein and J. Weston visited Cedarbrae Public School to see their newly repurposed courtyard.

Trustees C. Johnson, S. Piatkowski and M. Radlein observed a class trip to the Laurel Creek Nature Centre.

Trustee S. Piatkowski represented the WRDSB at the OPSBA Board of Directors meeting in Toronto.

Trustees C. Johnson, S. Piatkowski, M. Radlein and K. Woodcock attended the OPSBA Joint Regional Meeting in Stratford.

Trustee C. Johnson attended Orange Shirt Day events in Cambridge.

Trustees C. Johnson, M. Radlein and J. Weston attended the Black Brilliance Pathways to Post-Secondary Fair at the Education Centre.

Student Trustees D. Lakhanpal and F. Luo hosted their first Student Roundtable with a focus on Menstrual equity.

Trustees M. Radlein and J. Weston attended a tree planting event at Trillium Public School.

### **DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST**

There were no declarations of pecuniary interest.

### **DELEGATIONS**

There were no delegations scheduled to speak.

### **STAFF FOLLOW UP**

There was no staff follow up scheduled.

### **POLICY AND GOVERNANCE**

#### **REVIEW OF BOARD POLICY 1010 - ACCESSIBILITY**

Trustees began discussion of the policy and the Chairperson asked that questions be related to the language in the policy. Trustee C. Watson called a Point of Order when Trustee S. Estoesta expressed that she despised the politicization of persons with disabilities when Trustee C. Watson references the annual reorganization process and the impact it has on students with disabilities. Chairperson J. Weston asked Trustee S. Estoesta to withdraw her comment and not pass judgment on the comments of others. Chairperson J. Weston also reminded Trustee C. Watson that she is to ask her question in Question Period as it is not related to the language of the policy. Trustee S. Estoesta called a Point of Order providing information on nature of disabilities and asked that questions are asked with care and consideration. Discussion on the policy continues with questions regarding implementation and impact on students.

2. Moved by J. Meissner, seconded by C. Johnson:

**That the Waterloo Region District School Board approve Board Policy 1010 - Accessibility as presented at the October 21, 2024, Committee of the Whole Meeting.**

-Carried-

Opposed:  
M. Ramsay  
C. Watson

#### **REVIEW OF BOARD POLICY 1012 - RELIGIOUS AND CREED ACCOMMODATIONS**

Trustees asked questions regarding the School Year Calendar, Ministry requirements and updates to language.

3. Moved by J. Meissner, seconded by C. Johnson:

**That the Waterloo Region District School Board approve Board Policy 1012 - Religious and Creed Accommodations as presented at the October 21, 2024, Committee of the Whole Meeting.**

-Carried-

Opposed: C. Watson

### REVIEW OF BOARD POLICY 6002 - COMPULSORY STUDENT ENROLMENT

Trustees discussed an amendment to include a section 3.4 requiring that the Board of Trustees receive JK and SK enrolment numbers annually in alignment with Ministry of Education reporting dates. It was noted that trustees already receive enrolment updates as part of the Interim Financial Reports. Staff informed the Board that the first reasonable time to provide accurate enrolment information for the year was January after the October 31 enrolment numbers can be verified.

A recorded vote was requested on the amendment.

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

**That the Waterloo Region District School Board amend Board Policy 6002 - Compulsory Student Enrolment to include a section 3.4 requiring that the Board of Trustees receive JK and SK enrolment numbers annually in alignment with Ministry of Education reporting dates**

-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  
\*D. Lakhanpal  
\*F. Luo

\* 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))

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

**That the Waterloo Region District School Board approve Board Policy 6002 - Compulsory Student Enrolment as presented at the October 21, 2024, Committee of the Whole Meeting.**

-Carried-

Opposed:  
B. Cody  
M. Ramsay  
C. Watson

### **REVIEW OF BOARD POLICY 6008 - STUDENT DISCIPLINE**

Trustees asked questions regarding the implementation of the policy and how to decrease suspensions. It was noted that the numbering within the policy would be corrected prior to posting on the website.

Trustees discussed amending the language to section 15.4 to reflect the collaborative nature of the process. A motion was made to refer the policy back to the Policy Working Group to come up with the language.

A recorded vote was requested.

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

**That the Waterloo Region District School Board refer Board Policy 6008 - Student Discipline back to the Policy Working Group to change the language in Section 15.4 to reflect the collaborative process.**

-Referral Approved-

In Favour:  
B. Cody  
S. Estoesta  
M. Ramsay  
J. Meissner  
S. Piatkowski  
M. Radlein  
M. Waseem  
C. Watson  
J. Weston  
K. Woodcock  
D. Lakhanpal\*  
F. Luo\*

Opposed:  
C. Johnson

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### **REVIEW OF BOARD POLICY 6009 - STUDENT BULLYING**

Trustees discussed the inclusion of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools, changes in language and the anonymous reporting tool.

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

**That the Waterloo Region District School Board approve Board Policy 6009 - Student Bullying as presented at the October 21, 2024, Committee of the Whole Meeting.**

-Carried-

Opposed:  
B. Cody  
M. Ramsay  
C. Watson

### **NEW INDOOR AIR QUALITY POLICY**

Staff provided trustees with background on the committee and current WRDSB practices regarding indoor air quality. Trustees were provided with additional actions which will result from approval of the policy including:

- The development of an administrative procedure;
- Preventative Maintenance checks to include fresh air damper systems;
- accelerate building automation upgrades;
- CO2 sensors have been installed in HVAC equipment as an energy management and diagnostic tool and changes to the ventilation practices;
- Continue to add Air Conditioning to all of our classrooms with a goal of completing this in the next 5-7 years;
- Develop design standard and procedure for specialized ventilation systems in Special Education spaces and to support specific programs;
- Monitor new air quality technologies as deemed suitable by the Ministry of Education; and
- Report annually to board on the progress.

Trustees agreed to a friendly amendment to include the appropriate procedure for medical accommodations mentioned in Section 2.4 to Related References. Trustees asked questions about making data publically available, having the Policy Working Group add definitions to the policy in the future and air quality in older schools.

8. Moved by C. Watson, seconded by J. Meissner:

**That the Waterloo Region District School Board approve the new Board Policy on Indoor Air Quality as presented at the October 21, 2024, Committee of the Whole meeting.**

-Carried-

## **REPORTS**

### **MAJOR CAPITAL PROJECTS QUARTERLY UPDATE**

This report was provided for information.

Current capital priority projects with budgets greater than \$2.5M were presented with the project status relative to the schedule, budget, and scope. Significant milestones, along with basic project statistics, were also presented.

Trustees asked questions regarding signage for capital projects and ribbon cutting and groundbreaking ceremonies.

### **ANNUAL COMMUNITY PLANNING & FACILITIES PARTNERSHIPS**

This report was provided for information.

To satisfy the requirements of Board Policy 1011 – Community Planning and Facility Partnerships, this report presents the annual identification of school buildings and sites suitable and available for community partnership and future capital projects with potential co-building partnership opportunities. The report included a detailed list of the WRDSB’s short and medium-term needs for additional capacity. Senior Manager L. Agar indicated that no responses were received to the letters sent to community partners and provided trustees with examples of existing partnerships.

### **2024-2025 IDENTIFICATION, PLACEMENT AND REVIEW COMMITTEES - MEMBERSHIP**

The Waterloo Region District School Board operates Identification, Placement and Review Committees. These committees are organized within schools, areas of schools, and the district. According to Regulation 181/98 of the Education Act, “Each board shall establish one or more committees for the identification and placement of exceptional pupils, determine the jurisdiction of each committee and establish the manner of selecting the chair of each committee.”

9. Moved by K. Woodcock, seconded by J. Meissner:

**That the jurisdiction of each of these committees as outlined below and the attached**

**Appendix A outlining WRDSB IPRC Committees, is approved:**

**A) School Committees: A school IPRC is held when a program modification to accommodate an exceptional student with Special Education Needs can be accomplished within the home school environment.**

**B) Area Committees: An area IPRC is held when program modifications to accommodate an exceptional student with Special Education Needs is necessary for them to access a designated program within their current school environment or if a change in schools is required for the student to access the designated program.**

**C) District Committees: A district IPRC is held when program modifications to accommodate an exceptional student with Special Education Needs requires placement in cross-district Special Education Programs (i.e., Provincial School). This occurs when school and district resources have been exhausted or when specialized equipment that is not available in a school setting is being considered.**

-Carried-

## **EQAO UPDATE**

Interim Associate Director B. Lemon introduced the presentation noting the changes to the EQAO testing since 2020 and that the 2021-2022 year is the new baseline for multi-year tracking as a result of the changes.

Dr D. Lane, Executive Manager for Organizational Transformation & Research, provided trustees information regarding the interpretation of EQAO results and shared the following results for 2023-2024:

- 68% of WRDSB students met the provincial standard in primary (grade 3) reading.
- 60% of WRDSB students met the provincial standard in primary (grade 3) writing.
- 58% of WRDSB students met the provincial standard in primary (grade 3) mathematics.
- 82% of WRDSB students met the provincial standard in grade 6 reading.
- 81% of WRDSB students met the provincial standard in junior (grade 6) writing.
- 52% of WRDSB students met the provincial standard in junior (grade 6) mathematics.
- 52% of WRDSB students met the provincial standard in grade 9 mathematics.
- 85% of WRDSB students who were eligible to write the OSSLT for the first time were successful.
- 58% of WRDSB students who were previously eligible to write the OSSLT were successful.

Comparisons to previous years as well as the provincial averages were provided. Dr. D Lane noted that alongside other data sources, EQAO results are a piece of the puzzle that guide the

work from the board level to the student desk in terms of targeting how to support students, staff, and families by putting the right supports and strategies in place to improve student achievement.

Superintendent B. Chatha shared that the WRDSB has engaged in full-scale system changes include initiatives like the Early Reading Resource Teacher model, Literacy Intervention Specialists, and Math Intervention Specialists and Math Facilitators, all of which are designed to provide tiered supports and interventions to meet the diverse needs of students. She reviewed the use of other data sources and shared that data from the Math Achievement and Action Plan (MAAP) which provides clear evidence of its impact on improving student learning outcomes, particularly in Grades 3 and 6. She reviewed the data from Reading Resource Teachers (RRTs) which provided intensive support to small groups of 8-12 students using the Empower Reading program as a Tier 3 intervention. The program has yielded remarkable results, with many struggling readers showing significant progress and some achieving fluency after completing 110 lessons. Superintendent B. Chatha also provided information on the importance of using a universal screener to assess both student and system-level risks, allowing educators to identify which students are at risk for reading difficulties and evaluate the effectiveness of instructional practices. Early reading screening tools like Acadience are reliable, research-based predictors of early reading skills and help inform decisions about instruction and intervention. She concluded her presentation with a list of key strategies and supports to enhance educational outcomes.

10. Moved by S. Estoesta, seconded by K. Woodcock:

**That the Committee of the Whole Meeting be extended thirty minutes to 10:00 p.m.**

-Carried-

S. Lipskie, Principal at Howard Robertson Public School, introduced educators, R. Willms, J. Gross and T. Simms and the cultural shift at the school and the resulting successes. These individuals shared the work done to change how they teach to better support the needs of each student.

Trustees asked questions regarding duplicating successful practices at other schools.

11. Moved by C. Watson, seconded by B. Cody:

**That the Committee of the Whole Meeting be extended an additional thirty minutes to 10:30 p.m.**

-Carried-

Trustees continued to ask questions regarding student confidence, Ministry of Education priority schools, resources provided to schools and structured literacy.



**BOARD REPORTS**

There were no Board Reports.

**QUESTION PERIOD**

Trustee C. Watson asked what measures are in place so that there are less disruptions at the beginning of the year during the reorganization. Associate Director S. Miller shared that every year reorganization is required by all school boards in the province due to Ministry of Education class size ratios. Staff did the best they could to reduce impacts on students and worked with union leaders to ensure contract teachers were able to keep their positions. Work was done to ensure student moving was minimized and students with special needs were prioritized throughout the process. Staff attempted to keep teachers where they were, working closely with union groups but collective agreements are also required to be followed. Trustee C. Watson asked if students will be impacted next year. Associate Director S. Miller reiterated that this is an annual process affecting the whole province. Trustee M. Radlein shared that, while difficult, this process occurred every year while she worked in schools. Trustee C. Watson called a Point of Order when Trustee M. Radlein comments that staff should not be impugned. Chairperson J. Weston asked that Trustee M. Radlein withdraw her comment.

Trustee S. Piatkowski asked if enrolment has decreased or if it is lower than projected. Superintendent N. Landry indicated that he would not be able to provide accurate numbers until after the October 31st enrolment numbers are finalized.

Trustee C. Johnson left the meeting at 10:25 p.m.

**FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

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

*Whereas the WRDSB projections for 2023/24 were short by 300 students and funding from the Ministry of Education is based on student enrollment;*

*Whereas some parents are choosing to enroll their non-Catholic JK, SK children in the Catholic Educational system;*

*Whereas the WRDSB does not record statistical data as to why parents withdraw their children from the WRDSB school board;*

*Whereas many parents have shared their concerns and believe that identity politics and ideologies are taught in the classroom and have threatened to pull their children out of the WRDSB school board;*

*Therefore be it resolved,*

*That staff prepare a report with the historical data and trends for the last ten years concerning WRDSB enrollment data for JK and SK, regional growth and immigration rates; and*

*That the data collection and analysis be presented to the Board of Trustees at a Committee of the Whole by the end of March 2025; and*

*That Waterloo Region District School board explore implementing a voluntary exit interview and or survey for parents who remove their children from the WRDSB to help determine why parents choose to remove their children from the WRDSB; and*

*That this information also be presented to trustees as part of budget deliberations.*

This Notice of Motion will be scheduled by the Agenda Development Committee.

**ADJOURNMENT**

12. Moved by J. Meissner, seconded by B. Cody:

**That the Committee of the Whole Meeting of October 21, 2024, be adjourned.**

-Carried-

The meeting adjourned at 10:28 p.m.