

MAY 14, 2025
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: M. Radlein (Chairperson), B. Cody, S. Estoesta*, J. Meissner, S. Piatkowski, M. Ramsay, M. Waseem, C. Watson, J. Weston and K. Woodcock.

*Virtual Attendance

Trustee C. Johnson was unable to attend.

Student Trustees D. Lakhanpal and F. Luo were not in attendance

The following senior administration members were in attendance: S. Miller (Director of Education and Secretary), L. Agar, A. Gaymes-San Vicente, N. Landry, B. Lemon and C. Sagar.

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

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson M. Radlein called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

That the agenda of the May 14, 2025, Committee of the Whole Meeting be approved.

-Carried-

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chairperson M. Radlein shared regrets from Trustee C. Johnson and Student Trustees F. Luo and D. Lakhanpal.

Trustee J. Weston attended a school council workshop on electronic devices & screen time at Northlake Woods Public School. She attended the Indigenous Voices event at the Education Centre and the Sustainable Waterloo Region event where WRDSB was awarded the Roots and Shoots Award. She also attended the WRDSB Model United Nations event for secondary students.

Trustees S. Piatkowski and M. Radlein attended the Waterloo State of the City Address.

Trustees S. Piatkowski and K. Woodcock attended the Woolwich State of the Township Address. They also attended the Ontario Public School Boards' Association Labour Relations Symposium and Board Meeting.

Trustee S. Piatkowski attended the first of the two Kodaly Choir performances. He also visited Sunnyside Senior Public School and Eastwood Collegiate Institute.

Trustees S. Piatkowski, M. Radlein, J. Weston and K. Woodcock attended the Food 4 Kids Brighter Futures appreciation event.

Trustees M. Waseem and M. Radlein attended the Multi-Language Learners Speech Competition for secondary students.

Chairperson M. Radlein visited W T Townshend Public School, Oak Creek Public School and Pioneer Park Public School. She also attended the N A MacEachern Public School 50th Anniversary celebration. She attended Asian Heritage Day at Elmira District Secondary School.

DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST

Trustee K. Woodcock declared pecuniary interest for Board Policy 3007 - Membership in the Ontario Public School Boards' Association.

DELEGATIONS

There were no delegations scheduled.

STAFF FOLLOW UP

CONSULTATION MOTION PROPOSED NEXT STEPS

Director S. Miller reviewed the motion moved by trustees requesting consultation. This consultation may result in a review of the Strategic Plan. This consultation will include students, families/caregivers, communities served by the WRDSB and community organization. It will also include school and operational staff. Director S. Miller reviewed the purpose of such work, the process including considerations when consulting and how to measure success. He reviewed the times which includes the following phases:

- Phase 1: Planning in May - June 2025
- Phase 2: Implementation in July - December 2025
- Phase 3: Consolidation in January - February 2026
- Phase 4: Reporting in March 2026

Director S. Miller shared that the next step will be the Planning Phase consisting of:

- Creating an Ad Hoc Steering Committee (Trustees and Staff)
- Identifying all stakeholder groups
- Determining scope of work
- Determining consultation process and tools
- Determining consolidation process
- Sharing the plan at the June 23 Board Meeting

Trustees asked questions regarding consulting with groups which are not formally organized and involving all trustees in the process.

POLICY AND GOVERNANCE

REVIEW OF BOARD POLICY 1003 - SCHOOL COUNCILS

The policy was introduced and changes summarized by Trustee S. Estoesta.

2. Moved by S. Estoesta, seconded by J. Weston:

That the Waterloo Region District School Board approve Board Policy 1003 - School Councils as presented at the May 14, 2025, Committee of the Whole Meeting.

-Carried-

REVIEW OF BOARD POLICY 3006 - Student Trustees & Student Representation within the Board

The policy was introduced and changes summarized by Trustee K. Woodcock. Trustees asked about the possibility of having an Indigenous Student Trustee.

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

That the Waterloo Region District School Board approve Board Policy 3006 - Student Trustees & Student Representation within the Board as presented at the May 14, 2025, Committee of the Whole Meeting.

-Carried-

REVIEW OF BOARD POLICY 3007 - MEMBERSHIP IN THE ONTARIO PUBLIC SCHOOL BOARDS' ASSOCIATION

Trustee K. Woodcock left the meeting at 7:32 p.m.

The policy was introduced and changes summarized by Trustee J. Weston.

4. Moved by J. Weston, seconded by M. Ramsay:

That the Waterloo Region District School Board approve Board Policy 3007 - Membership in the Ontario Public School Boards' Association as presented at the May 14, 2025, Committee of the Whole Meeting; and

That the Waterloo Region District School Board continue with membership in the Ontario Public School Boards' Association for 2025-2026.

-Carried-

Trustee K. Woodcock rejoined the meeting at 7:33 p.m.

REVIEW OF BOARD POLICY 4022 - SCHOOL SIZE AND CONFIGURATION

The policy was introduced and changes summarized by Trustee J. Weston.

5. Moved by J. Weston, seconded by B. Cody:

That the Waterloo Region District School Board approve Board Policy 4022 - School Size and Configuration as presented at the May 14, 2025, Committee of the Whole Meeting.

-Carried-

REVIEW OF BOARD POLICY 6005 - ALTERNATIVES IN EDUCATION

The policy was introduced and changes summarized by Trustee J. Weston. Trustees discussed including language in the policy that encourages discussion and engagement with families. It was noted that discussions do occur as part of these processes.

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

That the Waterloo Region District School Board refer Board Policy 6005 - Alternatives in Education to the Policy Working Group to include language regarding engagement and discussions with families.

-Carried-

7. Moved by J. Weston, seconded by J. Meissner:

That the Waterloo Region District School Board approve Board Policy 6005 - Alternatives in Education as presented at the May 14, 2025, Committee of the Whole Meeting.

- Referred Back to the Policy Working Group -

REVIEW OF BOARD POLICY 6007 - SCHOOL NUTRITION

The policy was introduced and changes summarized by Trustee S. Estoesta.

Trustees discussed the use of different language for parents, families and caregivers, noting the inconsistency between policies. Members of the Policy Working Group shared that they use the most inclusive language whenever possible.

8. Moved by S. Estoesta, seconded by J. Weston:

That the Waterloo Region District School Board approve Board Policy 6007 - School Nutrition as presented at the May 14, 2025, Committee of the Whole Meeting.

-Carried-

Opposed: C. Watson

REPORTS

EXTENDED DAY PROGRAM FEE FOR NEXT YEAR

The Extended Day Program (EDP) fee is established annually in accordance with the guidelines set out by the Ministry of Education (Ministry) in Ontario Regulation 221/11. The underlying objective in establishing the fee is to ensure it bears a reasonable relationship to incremental operating costs incurred by the Waterloo Region District School Board (WRDSB), and that the program operates on a cost-recovery basis. The recommended fee of \$32.50 per pupil per day means families and caregivers will experience an increase of \$1.00 over the fee charged in 2024-25. This fee applies to students who are not eligible for a reduced fee under the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Program, which only provides funding for children under age 6.

Manger M. Hilton provided an overview of changes and updates to the programming and services. She also provided updates on registration and use of the software.

Trustees asked questions of clarification on pairing part-time schedules and the staggered registration process.

9. Moved by K. Woodcock, seconded by M. Waseem:

That the Waterloo Region District School Board approve the Extended Day Program fee of \$32.50 per day, per child, for the 25-26 school year.

-Carried-

KINDERGARTEN HISTORICAL DATA TRENDS

This report was provided for information.

Staff reviewed the JK/SK enrolment trends showing kindergarten enrolment declining by 2% from 2015 to 2024 with fluctuations closely tracking with birth rate trends in the Region of Waterloo. They then shared that overall regional population grew 10.9% from 2015 to 2021; however, children aged 4–5 decreased slightly. Staff showed the proportion of total population by age group. Newcomers to the region increased dramatically (378% from 2015 to 2022) but that growth was largely driven by international students at the post-secondary level and has less impact on K-12 populations. Staff reviewed WRDSB Kindergarten Participation Rates which hovers around 63%–69% of 4–5 year olds enrolling in WRDSB schools. Staff shared the provincial data which shows JK/SK enrolment declined ~4.1% from 2019-2020 to 2024-2025 province-wide.

Trustees asked questions of clarity regarding the data provided and discussed reasons why students may or may not register with WRDSB based on conversations in the community. Staff noted there is no way for the WRDSB to gather data from families who did not register their students with WRDSB.

BOARD REPORTS

MOTION: SUPERVISION DURING NUTRITION BREAKS

This Notice of Motion was served by Trustee C. Watson with support from Trustee B. Cody at the March 17, 2025, Committee of the Whole meeting.

Trustee C. Watson introduced the motion sharing that she has heard complaints various times throughout her career as trustee. She stated that the Ontario Principals' Council (OPC) has indicated there are students eating lunch alone in portables. She would like trustees to learn more about this and get a handle on supervision. She also noted that there could be other connections, such as suspension rates.

Trustees discussed the motion and asked questions of staff. It was noted that supervision is negotiated as part of collective bargaining and schools create schedules that are reviewed to ensure compliance with collective agreements. There are also paid supervision monitors generated by school enrolment and population. Use of portables and sitelines are included in the allocation of supervision monitors. In regard to allergies, student support plans are in place and this is addressed and considered at all times, not just nutrition breaks. Some trustees expressed concern with impacts to collective agreements. It was confirmed that supervision rotates through classrooms and there would be short periods of time that students are alone.

A recorded vote was requested.

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

That the Waterloo Region District School Board trustees request a written report about the current challenges around supervision during nutrition breaks; and

That staff also explore supervision standards of comparative boards and that the report also contain potential solutions around supervision within the elementary panel; and

That the report also include the supervision protocol of students with food allergies, and students in portables; and

That this report be presented to the board of Trustees no later than the first Committee of the Whole in June 2025.

-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

QUESTION PERIOD

There were no questions.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

The following Notice of Motion was served by Trustee C. Watson at the May 14, 2025, Committee for the Whole meeting with support from Trustee M. Ramsay:

Whereas violent incidents continue to increase within WRDSB schools,

Whereas ongoing collaboration with students, parents, staff and community members provides opportunities to share information, build understanding and provide well informed recommendations to the board of trustees.

Therefore be it resolved that the WRDSB establish a “Collaboration” Standing Committee to review research, statistical information, trends, best practices within our board and abroad, including relevant legislation, funding information, budget timelines and constraints, information about the role and responsibilities of ECEs EAs, and CYWs and any other information related to the increase of violent incidents and lack of funding for educational supports within the learning environments within WRDSB schools; and

That this Collaboration Standing Committee have at a minimum, 1 Student Trustee, 2 Parents, 1 Special Education Advisory Committee member, 1 Early Childhood Educator , 1 Educational Assistant , 1 Child and Youth Worker , 1 Elementary teacher, 1 Secondary Teacher, 1 Vice Principal (Elementary), 1 Principal (Elementary/Secondary), 1 Superintendent, 2 Trustees chosen by the Chair and any other staff member and/or board staff as designated by the Director; and

That the Committee structure remains flexible to include designates for each member and that experts and guest speakers be included as needed; and

That this new Collaboration Standing Committee makes recommendations to the Board of Trustees that would help address violent incidents, the lack of funding for educational support, and any other related challenges within the learning environments in WRDSB schools; and

That this committee would be established for September of 2025.

ADJOURNMENT

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

That the Board of Trustee moved into a Special In Camera Committee of the Whole Meeting of May 14, 2025.

-Carried-

MAY 14, 2025
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING

Trustees moved into a Special In Camera Committee of the Whole meeting at 8:35 p.m.