



March 23, 2026

# Business Services Standing Committee

## Minutes

The Waterloo Region District School Board held a Business Services Standing Committee Meeting this evening at 6:00 p.m. in the Education Centre Boardroom, with the following members in attendance:

S. Piatkowski (Committee Chair), B. Cody, M. Radlein (Chair of the Board), M. Ramsay and J. Weston.

Additional Trustees in Attendance: C. Watson and K. Woodcock.

Student Trustees K. Kaur and K. Trivedi were in attendance.

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

Other staff in attendance: R. Connolly, S. Reidel and S. West

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### Call to Order

Chair S. Piatkowski called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

### Approval of Agenda

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

**That the agenda of the March 23, 2026, Business Services Standing Committee Meeting be approved.**

-Carried-

### Announcements

There were no announcements.

### Declarations of Pecuniary Interest

There were no declarations of pecuniary interest.

### Delegations

There were no delegations scheduled.

## Staff Follow Up

There was no staff follow up.

## Reports

### Development Areas Annual Report 2025-2026

The Development Areas Annual Report 2025-2026 outlined proposed administrative adjustments to temporary student accommodation assignments effective April 1, 2026. Following a provincial review of enrolment trends and residential growth, the Planning Department recommended dissolving several Development Areas (DAs)—including West Elmira and Rosenberg III—into their permanent school boundaries due to sufficient local capacity. The report further identifies the dissolution of secondary school holding components in various DAs where redirection is no longer deemed necessary, as well as the reassignment of holding schools for the East Side Lands Secondary Plan to Blue Heron and William G. Davis Public Schools. These changes only apply to areas where residential development has not yet commenced, ensuring no impact on currently enrolled students, with any associated transportation or accommodation costs being absorbed within existing operating budgets.

Trustees asked questions regarding secondary capacity at Huron Heights Secondary School as it related to the dissolution of the Rosenberg III development area. It was noted that it would have minimal impact on the school.

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

**That the Business Services Standing Committee recommend approval of the updated Development Areas, shown in Appendix A of the 'Development Areas Annual Report 2025–2026,' presented on March 23, 2026, with the changes taking effect April 1, 2026.**

-Carried-

### Education Development Charge (EDC) Update

This report was provided for information.

The report confirmed that the board does not currently meet the provincial eligibility requirements under Ontario Regulation 20/98 to pass a new Education Development Charge (EDC) by-law. Assessments indicated that the WRDSB does not meet the "capacity trigger," as five-year enrolment projections do not exceed available pupil places, nor the "financial obligation trigger," as outstanding growth-related commitments

do not exceed the EDC reserve fund balance. Consequently, the existing by-law will expire on May 31, 2026, and the board will cease collecting EDCs on new developments until it qualifies under the capacity trigger in a future cycle. While this expiration limits the board's ability to fund growth-related land purchases through EDC revenues, staff will continue to monitor development activity and pursue alternative site acquisition funding through the Ministry of Education's Land Priorities process.

When asked, it was noted that the WRDSB has collected EDCs since the process was started in the early 2000s and the Waterloo Catholic District School Board will still be eligible to collect EDCs. The capacity trigger is based on the board-wide capacity and does not take into account growth in parts of the region. Trustees asked questions regarding the process to reinstate the EDC bylaw in the future, the process for site funding applications and the amount of EDCs collected. Further background information on EDCs was also provided.

### **Interim Financial Report and Forecast, Q2 2025-2026**

This report was provided for information.

The 2025-2026 Second Quarter Interim Financial Report and Forecast outlined the board's fiscal position based on financial results up to February 28, 2026. The projected in-year deficit to support a number of short-term strategic spending initiatives has been adjusted to \$6.4 million due to evolving pressures such as increased staff replacement costs for short-term sick leave and fluctuations in student enrolment. Staff are utilizing a one-time favourable variance of \$3.5 million from student transportation and implementing an Attendance Support Program (ASP) this spring to address the root causes of increased absenteeism.

Trustees asked questions about enrolment and the related provincial trends. Staff agreed to provide a response to the Board regarding a question on the cost of grievance and arbitration. Trustees also asked questions regarding the one-time variance in the Student Transportation budget and the new Attendance Support Program launching on May 1, 2026.

### **Major Capital Projects Quarterly Update Report**

This report was provided for information.

The quarterly update is on major capital projects with budgets exceeding \$3.0 million and the restoration of Elizabeth Ziegler Public School. Notable progress includes the partial occupancy of Willow River Public School's second floor and the official naming of Giinawind Public School, which remains on track for a September 2026 opening. Additionally, construction tenders have successfully closed for both the new Breslau

Hopewell Crossing Public School and the Elizabeth Ziegler restoration, with work expected to commence shortly for targeted September 2027 completions. While all projects currently hold Ministry of Education funding approval, staff continue to monitor potential price escalations in supplies and services.

Trustees asked questions regarding the funding and permitting processes for the Elizabeth Ziegler Public School restoration. Staff confirmed that the Heritage Committee has approved the restoration and expressed confidence in the budget. Trustees also received confirmation that the WRDSB will still be able to work collaboratively with the Waterloo Catholic District School Board regardless of whether Education Development Charges are collected or not.

## Board Reports

There were no Board reports.

## Question Period for Members

There were no questions from members.

## Adjournment

3. Moved by M. Radlein, seconded by J. Weston:

**That the Business Services Standing Committee Meeting of March 23, 2026, be adjourned.**

-Carried-

The meeting adjourned at 7:13 p.m.