

Report of the Durham District School Board
Standing Committee Public Session
June 1, 2020

The regular meeting of the Standing Committee of the Durham District School Board was held virtually.

1. Call to Order:

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

Members Present: Trustees Patrice Barnes, Michael Barrett, Donna Edwards, Darlene Forbes, Niki Lundquist, Carolyn Morton, Ashley Noble, Scott Templeton, Christine Thatcher, Student Trustees Sally Meseret, Arlene Wang, Tyler West

Regrets: Chair Chris Braney, Trustee Paul Crawford

Officials Present: Acting Director Norah Marsh, Acting Associate Director Jim Markovski, Interim Associate Director Carla Kisko, Superintendents Georgette Davis, Mohamed Hamid, Margaret Lazarus, Jamila Maliha, Andrea McAuley, Heather Mundy, Stephen Nevills, General Counsel Patrick Cotter, Communications Staff Robert Cerjanec, Peter Blake, Kim Brathwaite

Recording Secretary: Kim Cox

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest at this time.

Trustee Niki Lundquist stated that over the last week, we have been reminded of the impact that anti-Black racism has on individuals and communities – and we would be remiss if we failed to acknowledge the collective pain of students, staff and families.

Too many still experience the trauma of racism, oppression and injustice. Being silent in the face of racism is never an option but speaking to it becomes increasingly urgent for all of us when violence is being perpetuated and lives are being lost. Anti-black racism hate and oppression of all kinds must end. We must listen, learn and work to overhaul the structures, systems, and institutions (including educational ones) that have existed and supported inequality of a stunning magnitude for as long as those systems and institutions have existed.

The DDSB is committed to ensuring that all stakeholders have a voice and that they feel valued through the actions we take as a system. We believe in the power of public education and will actively promote equitable and inclusive experiences for every member of our school communities. The DDSB has posted a statement that you can read on the news section of our website and it includes some resources that you can use to speak with your children about race and racism.

June marks the start of PRIDE Month at the DDSB. It is a month to celebrate and honour diversity within our communities and schools, recognizing the achievements in social justice and positive opportunities for Two-Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queers and Questioning individuals. We are proud to raise the PRIDE flag throughout the month of June and invite the public to join with us to support and embrace diversity.

June also marks the start of Indigenous History Month. It is a month for Indigenous and non-Indigenous people to reflect upon the histories, contributions and resilience of Inuit, First Nations and Métis people. Learning accurate histories and recognizing the contributions and strength of Indigenous Peoples is one of the many steps on our journey of reconciliation. Future leaders must understand the impact of history and its modern day implications and realities.

The Durham District School Board acknowledges that many Indigenous Nations have longstanding relationships, both historic and modern, with the territories upon which our school board and schools are located. Today, this area is home to many Indigenous peoples from across Turtle Island. We acknowledge that the Durham Region forms a part of the traditional and treaty territory of the Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation, the Mississauga Peoples and the treaty territory of the Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation.

3. Motion to Approved the Agenda

2020:17

MOVED by Trustee Scott Templeton

THAT THE AGENDA BE APPROVED.

CARRIED

4. Community Presentations

There were no community presentations at this time.

5. DDSB Presentations

(a) Engagement Annual Report

Superintendent Heather Mundy provided trustees with a report on the activities of the Durham District School Board Engagement Portfolio and the annual report for the Parent Involvement Committee (PIC) for the school year 2019-2020. She introduced Valerie Estridge, PIC Co-Chair, who provided trustees with a PowerPoint presentation highlighting the activities that PIC has undertaken to help parents support their children's learning at home and at school. She shared activities in the areas of equity, innovation, success and leadership.

(b) Indigenous History Month

Superintendent Mohamed Hamid introduced Michelle Evans, Indigenous Education Facilitator, Jennifer Henderson, Indigenous Education Coach, and Erin Elmhurst, Indigenous Education Officer who provided trustees with a PowerPoint presentation highlighting the initiatives the Indigenous Education Department has supported that focus on ensuring Indigenous histories and Knowledge Systems are included in our Distance Learning classrooms. The initiatives reflect the Durham District School Board's commitment to Human Rights, reconciliation and Indigenous student achievement, success and well-being. A video was shared with trustees highlighting student voice by students answering the question "This is who I am." They also answered questions of trustees.

6. Recommended Actions

There were no recommended actions at this time.

7. Information Item

(a) Student Trustee Report

Student trustee Arlene Wang advised that The Ontario Student Trustees' Association (OSTA) held its first ever virtual Annual General Meeting at the end of May. As many other events have had to turn to online alternatives, OSTA has as well. The incoming student trustees were introduced to their support network for the upcoming year and were able to connect with other outgoing student trustees about the past year in education that students have experienced. Like many activities throughout the pandemic, students had to innovate. New to this conference were one-on-one Virtual Coffee Chats to bring student trustees

(a) Student Trustee Report

together, and career exploration sessions from OSTA-AECO alumni. All in all, it allowed students to celebrate the term served as well as empower the next generation of student leaders.

Student trustee Sally Meseret stated that equity is undoubtedly the foundation of our education system, as such OSTA - AECO has developed an Equity survey and report that gathered student feedback on three key areas of equity within education - Special Education, Geography, and Representation. OSTA-AECO received over 3,300 student responses and this will form the basis of recommendations that will be provided to the provincial government on what must be done to support students.

Student Senate engaged elementary and secondary students in the first ever online senate meeting. This student senate meeting was also open to any student in grades 7-12 interested in joining the meeting. There were 117 students in attendance at the meeting that came from a range of schools and areas from across the Durham District School Board. It is important in moving forward that the Board heavily invest in student leadership and provide students with the supports they need in order to continue the pipeline of student leadership in the same way adult leadership is prioritized. It is important to hear from a diversity of student perspectives and support them, as that is what enables our education system to operate.

The DDSB released a statement recognizing the senseless murders of Black Americans and Canadians that took place this past week. These murders are not an American problem, they are a Canadian problem, they are our problem. It is not only the justice system, but the education system that is failing people. As a black woman, Student trustee Sally Meseret indicated that she has experienced racism and discrimination, and it does not matter how smart you are, how capable you are, the systems will always discriminate. It is not the job of minorities to fix the way they behave in order to be supported, it is the systems that must change. Also, the idea that we need to fix the systems is wrong, the systems are working exactly as they were meant to work, we need to create new systems that support all people.

Student Trustee Tyler West advised trustees that feedback was received from Student Senate surrounding the return to school in September and feedback included concerns around:

(a) Student Trustee Report

- How to start a brand new class online.
- Orientation to eLearning if necessary.
- How will it be ensured that schools are safe for students.
- Flexibility in adjusting back after such a long period of time.
- How will classes look in the future and what special considerations may be made.
- Well-being resource access.
- How to support students transitioning to high school.

He advised that the incoming student trustees for the 2020-2021 school year were introduced and congratulated:

- Aaliyah Jaleel - Pickering/Ajax
- Logan Keeler - Brock/Scugog/Uxbridge
- Arpita Savaliya - Oshawa/Whitby

(b) Distance Learning Update #5

Acting Director Norah Marsh shared communication regarding the modified calendar noting that, at this stage, the ministry has not approved any calendars. Recognizing that modified schools have an earlier start, the district will clarify for those communities. The district staff have ensured the ministry is aware of the earlier start to some school calendars.

Acting Director Norah Marsh also noted that the ministry has not provided information regarding the budget. The Education Finance Committee meetings will be delayed until further information is received from the ministry. The district was expected to submit a balanced budget at end of June and this will not occur until later in August. As soon as information is received, the Education Finance Committee will be activated.

Acting Director Norah Marsh provided trustees with an update on school closures and subsequent related activities for the period of May 15, 2020 to June 1, 2020. She highlighted information regarding the retrieval of personal belongings; the assessment, evaluation and reporting memo; the Inclusive Student Services team; Thoughtexchange feedback; and summer learning. Acting Director Norah Marsh and Superintendent Stephen Nevills answered questions of trustees.

(c) Official Enrolment Projections 2020-2024

Interim Associate Director Carla Kisko provided trustees with information on the October 31, 2020 Official Enrolment Projections (OEP) and an overview of the OEP summary tables. She also answered questions of trustees.

(d) OPSBA Report

Trustee Donna Edwards advised that OPSBA, through the Policy and Education Committee, is working on a submission in response to government consultation regarding the framework to reopen schools in September. The submission will highlight the value of programs and recognize that while there may be some opportunities for eLearning, not all students are successful with eLearning. OPSBA also submitted a letter to support the proposed amendment to the Ontario Highway Traffic Act to allow camera evidence from school buses to be introduced in court, without the need for a witness, in order to support bus drivers going to court.

8. Committee Reports

There were no Committee Reports at this time.

9. Correspondence

There was no correspondence at this time.

10. Other Business

There was no other business at this time.

11. Adjournment

2020:18

MOVED by Trustee Darlene Forbes

THAT THE MEETING DOES NOW ADJOURN.

CARRIED

Standing Committee Meeting Minutes
June 1, 2020

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:08 p.m.

Chair

Secretary