

**Report of the Durham District School Board
Standing Committee Public Session
September 7, 2021**

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

1. Call to Order:

The Chair, Christine Thatcher called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Members Present: Trustees Patrice Barnes, Michael Barrett, Chris Braney, Paul Crawford, Donna Edwards, Darlene Forbes, Niki Lundquist, Carolyn Morton, Linda Stone, Scott Templeton, Student Trustees James Kay, De-Mario Knowles, Kayla Malcolm

Officials Present: Director Norah Marsh, Associate Director Jim Markovski, David Wright, Superintendents Gary Crossdale, Georgette Davis, Erin Elmhurst, Mohamed Hamid, Margaret Lazarus, Andrea McAuley, Heather Mundy, Stephen Nevills, Jack Nigro, Executive System Lead Robert Cerjanec, General Legal Counsel Patrick Cotter

Recording Secretary: Kathy Fitzpatrick

2. Land Acknowledgement

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. It is on these ancestral and treaty lands that we teach, learn and live.

3. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest at this time.

4. Motion to Approve the Agenda

2021:SC27

MOVED by Trustee Christine Thatcher

THAT THE AGENDA BE APPROVED.

CARRIED

5. Community Presentations

There were no community presentations at this time.

6. DDSB Presentations

There were no DDSB presentations at this time.

7. Senior Team Update on Return to School Planning

Director Norah Marsh shared that during the last year and a half and based on the experiences and lessons learned during that period, it is important to welcome students as we transition back to learning. As in previous years, the focus will be on relationship building and connections with students. We appreciate that students have had varied experiences during the pandemic and building in time to know our students and listen to student voice will assist in supporting students' mental health and well-being.

As students return to school, we need to celebrate who they are, their identities and their voices and recognize that their lived and life experiences will set them apart in terms of lessons learned and what they bring to the classroom. We will work with students creating relationships and a plan to support and grow them emotionally and academically over the next year.

Director Marsh recognized the September 2021 opening of the two new elementary schools Willows Walk and Rosemary Brown Public Schools and acknowledged the work that facilities staff and school staff had done to prepare for the opening.

She then outlined the topics to be addressed during the update by members of the senior team.

Associate Director Jim Markovski shared the following update with trustees:

Masking: The Ministry of Education has made mask-wearing mandatory for all students in grades one to twelve. Staff will be gently modelling and encouraging mask-wearing in the kindergarten program but recognize that some students may not be developmentally ready.

Students that are transported to and from school are required to wear a mask on the bus.

Exemptions may be provided in situations where there is a documented medical need.

If a student does not have a mask, a non-medical mask will be provided by the school. Students will be encouraged to bring their own reusable masks from home.

All DDSB staff are required to wear board-approved PPE, provided by the Ministry of Education. Non-board personnel entering DDSB buildings, including family members, must wear a mask.

Students are not required to wear a mask outdoors, but distancing will be encouraged between cohort groupings as much as possible.

Compliance with mask-wearing protocols will be monitored by staff. Our expectation is that all staff will help to ensure the safety of students within the school. Mask-wearing will be treated as any other situations where students are putting themselves or the safety of others at risk.

Vaccinations: The vaccination rates within Durham Region provided by the Durham Region Health Department are as follows: as of September 1, 2021- 67% of twelve to seventeen year old children in Durham Region are fully vaccinated and 76.6% have received at least one dose.

To increase vaccination rates, the Ontario government is working with public health units and publicly funded school boards to plan and host vaccination clinics in or near schools. These clinics are open to all eligible students, staff and unimmunized family members. The Durham Region Health Department is responsible for establishing the clinic schedules and will be prioritizing the schools with an earlier start date and schools that reside in a geographical area with lower vaccination rates. The vaccination clinics are walk in and will operate from 4:30 – 7:30 pm. The evening clinics that are being held this week are located at Maxwell Heights SS and Henry Street HS. Friday clinics are located at GL Roberts CVI and DASS (Oshawa), and on Saturday at Brock HS, Port Perry HS, and Uxbridge SS.

School Testing Pilot Program: The Ministry of Education announced a new school testing pilot program in August to support those who have been identified as needing testing under provincial COVID-19 guidance. The Ministry has designated four DDSB secondary schools to participate in the pilot: Ajax HS, J. Clarke Richardson CI, Pickering HS and Port Perry HS.

Students and staff who are vaccinated and asymptomatic will receive a take-home self-collection kit when they have been identified as a high-risk contact as part of an identified cohort or outbreak. The pilot phase will launch the week of September 7, 2021, for a total of eight weeks, ending on October 29, 2021. Students, staff and families will continue to have the option to seek testing through their local assessment centre/specimen collection centre or the option to isolate.

The take home kits will be provided to school, who will be responsible for receiving, storing and distributing the kits, when identified and directed by public health.

Superintendent Heather Mundy shared the following update with trustees:

Vaccination Attestation: As per Ministry direction, staff have been working with our vendor to create a vaccination attestation disclosure and will be accessed through the Employee Self-Serve Portal. Staff that indicate that they are not fully vaccinated will be required to complete rapid testing twice a week. Employees who do not have a medical reason will be required to complete an educational program on COVID 19 vaccines provided by the Ministry.

Visitors or third-party partners that have contact with staff or students have been provided with the necessary information that is required as per the Ministry direction. Confirmation of vaccinations will be collected to ensure that all visitors that are in our schools are following the requirements.

Data will be collected as per the Ministry reporting requirements. The depersonalized data will be submitted to the Ministry on September 10, 2021 and posted on the DDSB website on September 15, 2021.

Associate Director David Wright shared the following update with trustees:

Ventilation: The Ministry issued revised Ventilation Standards and Guidance on August 4, 2021.

DDSB was already largely in compliance with the revised standards:

- Operations of all HVAC systems were reviewed to ensure they functioned optimally and as designed.
- Upgraded to MERV 13 level filtration at all sites.
- Increased the rate of fresh air exchange in all ventilated spaces including a full purge before and after occupancy.
- Implemented a duct cleaning program at schools to ensure clean air circulation and free from obstruction.
- Majority of our sites are being mechanically ventilated, a small number of facilities that would be considered exhaust ventilated are required to have HEPA Level Air Filtration units installed in all occupied spaces. These spaces had HEPA units installed in them last year.
- HEPA Air Filtration Units are required in all kindergarten classrooms. Staff have secured enough units for the kindergarten classrooms and the units have been distributed across the system.
- A number of additional HEPA units have been ordered, but not yet received. Once these units have been received, they will be distributed across the system. These will be used as replacements where required or to address any areas of concern to school administrators.
- The Ministry has provided a Ventilation Measures Report Template, which has been completed and is posted on the DDSB website.

Portables: As part of the Federal COVID 19 related infrastructure stream funding, the DDSB has secured funds to purchase 30 new portables this year. Due to supply chain and shipping issues, our portables have not yet been received. Many of the new portables were being purchased to replace existing portables. There are seven schools who have experienced an increase in enrolment and are accommodating eight classes in common spaces within the school until the new portables arrive.

Upcoming Federal Election: Staff contacted Elections Canada representatives in early spring, in preparation for an election call. Site visits took place to review possible polling locations. Staff waited for more information from the Ministry of Education before confirming the use of schools as polling stations. The Ministry has recently confirmed that Elections Canada will not be using our schools as polling stations for this election.

Custodial Cleaning: Staff have worked closely with Durham Region Health to create a custodial cleaning process for elementary and secondary schools. There are some changes to the process this year, particularly, in secondary schools as students will be in school full-days and changing cohorts during the day. A focus will be on cleaning high touch areas and washrooms throughout the day, as well as cafeterias during lunch.

Community Use of Schools: external community permits are not being issued at this time, as our priority is the health and safety of our students and our staff, and to ensure we have the resources to maintain our facilities before we move forward.

Transportation: Although there is a driver shortage across the province, the operators that service DDSB are reporting that they have enough drivers to cover all the scheduled routes. The supply driver pool is not as strong as DSTS would like, but staff feel that DDSB is in solid position because of the secondary 10:00 am to 4:00 pm bell-times for this year.

Superintendent Andrea McAuley shared the following update with trustees:

Special Education:

The District provided families with an additional window to select virtual or in-person learning which included all special education classes. Based on responses received from the survey, adjustments were made to Special Education Programs. DDSB@Home includes programs for students in Practical Learning, Life Skills, School Support and Developmental and Gifted programs. Based on individual student needs, the DDSB@Home team includes Special Education Resource Teachers, Educational Assistants and American Sign Language Interpreters.

Staff returned to school early to provide in-school transition visits for students. Transition supports included assistance from central staff, Orientation and Mobility Specialist. Additional support is provided for the first 8 weeks of the

school year which includes 18 Educational Assistants and 1 Student Learning Plan support position. 40% of the reserved funding will be used for these positions which was approved by the Board of Trustees.

Mental Health and Well-Being: The foundation of a mentally healthy return to the school is grounded in relationships. Moving into this school year, the focus is to co-create environments that prioritize connection, where caring and respectful relationships create the conditions for all students and staff to thrive. The focus on developing caring and attuned relationships will be key to the success of our students, families, and staff.

“Connection before curriculum” puts a focus on our interactions to allow time for staff, students and caregivers/families to re-connect and build or re-establish relationships with one another.

Staff are focusing on [The Foundations of a Mentally Healthy Classroom: The First 20 Days \(And Beyond\) of Creating Connection and Well-Being](#) as a guide. As staff re-engage in learning, we focus on the foundations of mentally healthy classrooms and leveraging the power of connections to support student and educator relationships, while deepening our partnerships with families. It will contribute to making our classrooms more inclusive and equitable learning environments.

Superintendent Georgette Davis shared the following update with trustees:

DDSB@Home Elementary: There are 6000 students currently attending the DDSB@Home Elementary School. Communication was sent out to families last week with regards to logging in to the webpage and introducing the principals and vice-principals.

There will be six campuses this year (Early Years, Grades 1/2, 3/4, 5/6, 7/8 and French Immersion.)

The administration and clerical staff have been working hard to ensure families feel welcome and to hire educators.

Staff have been taking time during Professional Activity Days to continue learning about effective pedagogy and centering Human Rights, Indigenous Rights, Equity and Well- being in how we learn, plan, act, observe and assess our teaching and learning.

Superintendent Stephen Nevills shared the following update with trustees:

DDSB@Home Secondary: The current student enrollment at the Secondary Virtual school is just under 1,900 students. During the final opportunity to submit their learning preference, there were approximately 500 students who had previously chosen virtual school, who switched to in-person learning as their learning preference. Approximately an additional 450 students made the change to virtual school. As a result, the staff at DDSB@Home Secondary have been working diligently to create timetables for the 450 new students. Staff have also been working hard to complete the teacher roster, hiring 23 new teachers.

Students at DDSB@Home Secondary will follow a similar schedule to the one they followed last year, including three, 75-minute classes, and a study hall period. Students will begin the first day with an introduction to the virtual learning platform.

Students in secondary, in-person, schools will receive timetables with two classes per quadmester in alignment with the Ministry Guidelines. Students will attend one class in the morning and a one class for the afternoon.

Athletics: Staff are working closely with both the Lake Ontario Secondary School Athletic Association and the Durham Elementary Athletic Association to gradually return to group physical activity and sport.

There are 34 secondary schools that are part of the Secondary Association which includes the majority of secondary schools in Durham District and Durham Catholic, Peterborough Victoria Northumberland and Clarington Catholic, Kawartha Pine Ridge and 3 secondary schools from other boards.

Staff are following Ministry direction and are progressing cautiously, and have made the decision to keep both elementary and secondary school sports at the local level and will not participate in provincial competitions and tournaments.

Staff are working with provincial associations and the local health department for additional guidance on the delivery of interschool sports and organized athletics. Staff are looking at alternatives for some sports that run in the fall to take place in the spring. Higher contact sports will be modified to allow for appropriate measures for safety.

Elementary and secondary indoor intramural sports will resume for no-contact, low cardio sports, students will be masked. Outdoor intramural sports will resume with no contact and physical distancing, students do not need to wear a mask.

Staff will continue to follow all Ministry and Public Health guidelines, continuously monitoring the current COVID 10 situation, and adjusting as needed to maintain safety within a changing environment.

Director Norah Marsh provided the following update for trustees:

Enrolment and Funding: Early indicators suggest that the number of elementary students has increased for this school year by 2,700, mostly at the primary level. Associate Director Jim Markovski and staff will be carefully reviewing the attendance this week and next week as we recognize these numbers will fluctuate.

Trustees approved during the budget process the reserved funding of \$5M to assist with larger classes and COVID 19 related specific interventions to support safety in schools, as significant funding was not received from the province. The enrolment will continue to be monitored in the coming weeks as enrolment fluctuates and then the funds will be allocated once it is determined were class sizes need to be reduced. Trustee questions were answered.

8. Recommended Actions

There were no recommended actions at this time.

9. Information Items

(a) Student Trustee Report

The Student Trustees introduced themselves to the trustees and shared which working groups they will be chairing as part of the Student Senate.

- De-Mario Knowles, Representing Oshawa/Whitby and is the Chair of the Equity working group.
- James Kay, Representing Brock/Scugog/Uxbridge and is the Chair of the Student Success working group.
- Kayla Malcolm, Pickering/Ajax and is the Chair of the Student Voice working group.

(b) Elementary Staffing and Enrolment 2021-2022

Associate Director Jim Markovski provided trustees with an overview of the elementary staffing and enrolment report, which includes an update on the elementary class size and the staffing needs of elementary schools for the upcoming 2021-2022 school year. Trustee questions were answered.

(c) Technology Model Update

Associate Director David Wright introduced Head of Information Technology Services David Rule who provided trustees with the current technology and technology model update. Trustee questions were answered.

(d) Special Education Plan 2021-2022

Superintendent Andrea McAuley shared with trustees the updates to the Special Education Plan for the 2021-2022 school year. In accordance with Regulation 306, each school Board is required, every two years, to publish a Special Education Plan outlining programs and services provided by the Board. The Special Education Plan is published on the District website and is submitted to the Ministry of Education. Trustee questions were answered.

(e) OPSBA Report

Trustee Patrice Barnes shared that the COVID 19 Guidance Update and the School Board Implementation Resource documents will be emailed to trustees for their information.

OPSBA has completed their Diversity and Equity Audit, the report will be presented to the Board of Directors at the next OPSBA meeting.

10. Committee Reports

(a) Governance and Policy Committee

i. Governance Ad Hoc Committee Meeting, May 10, 2021

Trustee Linda Stone provided trustees with the Governance Ad Hoc Committee minutes from the May 10, 2021 meeting. The next meeting of the committee will be held on October 25, 2021.

Trustee Patrice Barnes shared a revision to the May 10th, 2021 minutes on page 4 under section 8. Political Policy, second sentence. This item will be reviewed at the October 25, 2021 committee meeting.

ii. Draft Amended Consolidated By-Laws

Trustee Linda Stone shared that the committee met on May 10 and June 14, 2021 to complete the work on the final Draft Amended By-Laws. At the direction of the Committee, the proposed Amended By-Laws were brought to the Board as a Notice of Motion on June 21, 2021 for consideration by the Board at the September 20, 2021 Board meeting.

2021:SC28

MOVED by Trustee Michael Barrett

SECONDED by Trustee Niki Lundquist

THAT THE DRAFT AMENEDDED CONSOLIDATE BY-LAW BE REFERRED BACK TO THE GOVERNANCE AND POLICY COMMITTEE.

CARRIED

12. Correspondence

- i. Bluewater District School Board
- ii. Halton District School Board (2 Letters)
- iii. Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board
- iv. Ottawa-Carleton District School Board
- v. Thames Valley District School Board (2 Letters)
- vi. Waterloo Region District School Board (3 Letters)

The above correspondence was shared with trustees for information.

13. Other Business

There was no other business at this time.

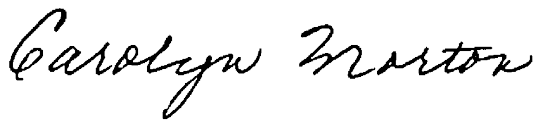
14. Adjournment

2021:SC29


THAT THE MEETING DOES NOW ADJOURN.

CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:32 p.m.



Chair



Secretary