

**Report of the Durham District School Board
Standing Committee Public Session
November 7, 2022**

The hybrid regular meeting of the Standing Committee of the Durham District School Board was held on this date.

1. Call to Order:

The Chair, Christine Thatcher called the meeting to order at 7:20 p.m.

Members Present: Trustees Kate Bird, Donna Edwards, Darlene Forbes, Linda Lowery, Carolyn Morton, Scott Templeton, Student Trustees Ben Cameron, Lauren Edwards and Gwen Kuyt

Regrets: Trustee Niki Lundquist

Officials Present: Director Norah Marsh, Associate Director David Wright, Superintendents Georgette Davis, Erin Elmhurst, Mohamed Hamid, Margaret Lazarus, Andrea McAuley, Heather Mundy, Stephen Nevills, Jack Nigro, Executive Lead Robert Cerjanec, General Counsel Patrick Cotter, Human Rights and Equity Advisor Devika Mathur

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

2022:SC30

MOVED by Trustee Christine Thatcher

THAT THE AGENDA BE APPROVED.

CARRIED

5. Director's Update

Director Norah Marsh shared with trustees the following update:

Earlier today the Government of Ontario has confirmed that they will rescind Bill 28 which had imposed a four-year contract on the employees within our system represented by CUPE, examples of which include:

- Custodial and maintenance staff;
- Office, clerical, and technical staff (i.e. school secretaries, clerical staff, and IT support staff);
- Student transportation (DSTS) staff;
- Educational Assistants and Outdoor Education staff; and
- Continuing Education staff.

These employees are generally the lowest paid employees in the education sector in terms of salary and benefits.

The promise to rescind Bill 28 occurred at a time when the labour movement was gearing up for what media were reporting was going to be a general strike action in sectors far broader than education as there was significant concern at how the unprecedented legislation passed by the government was undermining labour's right to collective bargaining.

Director Marsh indicated that she knows that many in the sector are pleased and relieved that the staff represented by CUPE will once again have the opportunity to negotiate the terms of their contract through regular collaborative bargaining processes.

As this situation continues to evolve, concerns about the direction from the Ministry of Education to offer synchronous learning in the absence of in-person learning are still relevant given that we may find ourselves in this situation again. During the pandemic we were able to move to synchronous learning for students because of the support and collaborative effort by CUPE members and all staff. In the context of this past week, and the potential of a longer shutdown, we would not have been able to offer virtual learning in a similar manner as we did during the pandemic. Virtual learning was not a viable solution.

For example, CUPE staff are responsible for deploying technology, for fixing technology, for supporting families and classroom staff when they encounter technological difficulties and support the whole infrastructure behind our platforms. Moreover, CUPE staff are in our classrooms doing the important work of Educational Assistants, which assisted in engaging students with special education needs in a less than ideal circumstance of on-line learning. Finally, CUPE staff respond to parent concerns and are a liaison between the school and the classroom at a time when we could not be in person.

The Ministry's direction to engage in synchronous learning gave the impression that in the absence of in-person learning, that classes were continuing, but the reality is that without CUPE staff, on-line learning is not a sustainable offering.

While the Director does not have the authority to not follow Ministry direction in this regard, it was not a strategy that was workable for any duration and in fact further alienates those families in most vulnerable situations. It is important that Trustees, as well as the community, understand the operational implications given where we are in the process and where we may find ourselves again.

For now, school is able to resume tomorrow, and we are hopeful that the strong reaction to the government's actions encourages it to fully engage in collective bargaining.

6. Recommended Actions

There were no recommended actions at this time.

7. Information Items

(a) Student Trustee Report

Student Trustees Ben Cameron, Gwen Kuyt and Lauren Edwards provided the following update:

On October 17, 2022, the Student Senate Symposium took place in the boardroom. The Student Senate had the opportunity to meet and discuss what the year ahead will look like. The day started off with a presentation from Mental Health Lead Steffanie Pelleboer who spoke about well-being.

Information was provided to the group on the Student Senate election process. The elections will take place at next meeting on November 21, 2022.

On the weekend of October 20 - 23, 2022 the Ontario Student Trustee Association (also known as OSTA - AECO) held the fall general meeting in Toronto. The conference had many keynote speakers who presented topics on mental health, governance and sexual education curriculum. Education Minister Stephen Lecce also spoke and expressed his appreciation for OSTA.

Student trustees joined the OSTA Working Groups, similar to the DDSB Student Senate, which was composed of student trustees from across the province. In these groups, we addressed issues and concerns that are affecting students across the province.

Student trustees are currently working on next year's student trustee elections and looking at ways to make the process more equitable for everyone running.

(b) Electronic Monitoring Procedure

General Counsel Patrick Cotter provided trustees with an overview of the *Electronic Monitoring Procedure* that has been adopted by the Durham District School Board (DDSB) in compliance with Bill 88, the *Working for Workers Act*. Bill 88 amended the *Employment Standards Act, 2000* ("ESA") in requiring employers with 25 or more employees to have a written policy disclosing electronic monitoring of employees.

Bill 88 requires employers to be transparent about electronic monitoring of employees that currently occurs in the workplace. The procedure does not introduce new forms of electronic monitoring. The electronic monitoring referenced in the attached procedure is outlined in applicable DDSB policies, procedures, and practices.

The procedure was adopted by Administrative Council on October 11, 2022, in compliance with the timelines in the legislation.

Trustee questions were answered.

(c) OPSBA Report

Trustee Christine Thatcher provided a brief update for trustees and shared that the Good Governance 2022-2026 will be available online November 15, 2022, and the hard copy will be provided at the PEZ Conference in January 2023.

8. Correspondence

- i. Halton District School Board
- ii. Rainy River District School Board
- iii. Waterloo District School Board

The above correspondence was shared with trustees for information.

9. Other Business

There was no other business at this time.

10. Adjournment

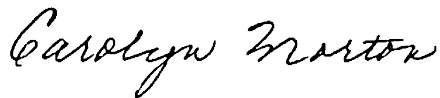
2022:SC31

MOVED by Trustee Christine Thatcher

THAT THE MEETING DOES NOW ADJOURN.

CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at approximately 7:40 p.m.



Chair



Secretary