

Approved Minutes – Governance and Policy Committee Meeting
Wednesday, February 26, 2025, 6:00 p.m., Hybrid

1. Call to Order

Trustee Kelly Miller, Committee Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

Members Present: Michelle Arseneault (virtual), Emma Cunningham (virtual), Donna Edwards, Mark Jacula, Stephen Linton (virtual, joined 6:18 p.m.), Deb Oldfield, Student Trustees Kayla Hoare (virtual), Nitishan Poopalasundaram (virtual), Shampavi Vijayakumar (virtual, joined 7:00 p.m.)

Regrets: Trustees Tracy Brown, Carolyn Morton, Shailene Panylo, Christine Thatcher

Staff Present: Director of Education Camille Williams-Taylor, Associate Director Jim Markovski, Associate Director David Wright (virtual), General Counsel Patrick Cotter, Senior Manager Dervla Kelly

Recording Secretary: Gillian Venning

2. Land Acknowledgment

Trustee Kelly Miller gave the Land Acknowledgement: the Durham District School Board acknowledges that many Indigenous Nations have longstanding relationships, both historic and modern, with home to many Indigenous peoples from across Turtle Island (North America). 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.

4. Approval of Agenda

MOVED by Trustee Mark Jacula

THAT THE AGENDA BE APPROVED.

CARRIED

5. Minutes

(a) Draft minutes of the Governance and Policy Committee meeting of January 29, 2025

MOVED by Trustee Donna Edwards

THAT THE DRAFT MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 29, 2025 GOVERNANCE AND POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING BE APPROVED.

CARRIED

6. Recommended Actions

(a) Revised Board Member Code of Conduct

General Counsel Patrick Cotter provided an overview of the report, which proposes a minor amendment to Section 7 of the Board Member Code of Conduct to ensure its alignment with the recently adopted amendments to the Complaints Protocol.

There were no trustee questions.

MOVED by Trustee Donna Edwards

THAT THE GOVERNANCE AND POLICY COMMITTEE APPROVE THE REVISED BOARD MEMBER CODE OF CONDUCT INCLUDED AS APPENDIX A, AND THAT THE MATTER PROCEED TO THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES AT ITS NEXT MEETING FOR CONSIDERATION.

CARRIED

(b) Revised Bylaws – Trustee Attendance Requirements

General Counsel Patrick Cotter provided an overview of the report, which proposes amendments to Section 5.7 of the Bylaws (Attendance at Meetings). The revisions are being made in response to amendments to the Education Act and its Regulations regarding requirements for in person and electronic trustee attendance at regular Board and regular Committee of the Whole meetings, referred to in the revised Bylaws as Mandatory Meetings. It was noted that while a separate Policy on Trustee Attendance Requirements was initially contemplated, staff are recommending that, in light of the extensive terms already in the Bylaws governing meeting attendance and electronic meeting requirements, all such terms ought to be included in a single document (whether the Bylaws or a separate policy).

Discussion took place and Trustee questions were answered. Through discussion, additional amendments to the proposed revisions were noted that will help to ensure consistency and bring further clarity in relation to section 5.7.2. This will help ensure consistency with the other provisions in the Bylaws and the Board's practices – including as to “rising and reporting.” General Counsel Cotter will incorporate the further amendments as suggested by members and will prepare a revised versions of Section 5.7 of the Bylaws to present at the next meeting of the Committee.

(c) Motion – Request for Report on Bullying

Committee Chair Kelly Miller handed the Chair to Vice Chair Mark Jacula.

Trustee Kelly Miller provided an overview and rationale for bringing forward the motion, noting the desire to improve responsiveness and prevention of incidents of bullying and their impacts on the DDSB community.

Discussion took place and Trustee questions were answered.

MOVED by Trustee Kelly Miller

THAT STAFF PREPARE AN INFORMATION REPORT TO THE COMMITTEE ON ANY AND ALL DDSB POLICIES, PROCEDURES, DIRECTIVES, GUIDELINE AND PRACTICES RELATED TO BULLYING AS WELL AS THE DDSB’S COMPLIANCE WITH LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS REGARDING BULLYING IN SCHOOLS SO THAT THE COMMITTEE MAY ASSESS AND DETERMINE:

1. IF THERE ARE ANY POLICY GAPS; AND/OR
2. IF THERE MAY BE ANY POLICY IMPROVEMENTS THAT COULD BE MADE AS TO TRANSPARENCY, REPORTING AND RESPONSIVENESS TO IMPACTED STUDENTS AND FAMILIES.

CARRIED

As part of the discussion around this motion, the Director committed to bringing forward an initial report to set out a proposal and plan for development of the report.

Trustee Miller resumed the role of Chair of the Committee.

7. Information Items

(a) Trustee Expense Policy

General Counsel Patrick Cotter provided an overview of the report, which provides the current Trustee Expense Policy in response to a recent trustee request for discussion around annual trustee discretionary funding allocations, particularly as it relates to use of funds for self-selected professional learning opportunities.

Discussion took place and trustee questions were answered.

MOVED by Trustee Donna Edwards

THAT STAFF PREPARE A REPORT ON SOURCES OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUNDING AND THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK, AS WELL AS A JURISDICTIONAL SCAN OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT POLICIES AND EXPENSES OR FUNDING FOR THAT PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT.

CARRIED

(b) Committees Rising and Reporting

General Counsel Patrick Cotter requested to defer this report to provide staff the opportunity to consider revisions to ensure alignment with further amendments to the Bylaws around attendance requirements. There were no trustee questions. Seeing no objection from the Committee, it was confirmed that this report will be revised and brought back to the Committee at its next meeting.

(c) Bylaws – Cycle and Scheduling of Board and Standing Committee Meetings

General Counsel Patrick Cotter provided an overview of the report, which outlines the current terms of the Bylaws regarding the annual cycle and schedule of Board and Standing Committee meetings in response to a recent request from a trustee to consider the possibility of moving the first Standing Committee meeting in September so that it does not fall on the first day of school.

Discussion took place and trustee questions were answered.

MOVED by Trustee Emma Cunningham

THAT THE AMENDMENTS TO SECTION 4.2.4 OF THE BYLAWS AS OUTLINED IN THE REPORT BE APPROVED.

CARRIED

Further discussion took place. It was confirmed that a motion requesting that the September 3, 2025 Standing Committee be moved to a day other than the first day of school will be presented by Trustee Emma Cunningham at the next Regular Board meeting taking place on March 17, 2025.

(d) Bylaws – Report on Abstention

General Counsel Patrick Cotter provided an overview of the report, which outlines the terms of the Bylaws applicable to members abstaining from a vote as well as the subsequent impact of reducing the number of “in favour” votes required to pass a motion.

Discussion took place and trustee questions were answered.

8. Adjournment

MOVED by Trustee Mark Jacula

THAT THE MEETING ADJOURN.

CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at approximately 7:21 p.m.