

Report of the Durham District School Board
Standing Committee Public Session
February 3, 2020

The regular meeting of the Standing Committee of the Durham District School Board was held this date in the Boardroom, Education Centre, 400 Taunton Road East, Whitby.

1. Call to Order:

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

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

Officials Present: Acting Director Norah Marsh, Superintendents Georgette Davis, Mohamed Hamid, Margaret Lazarus, Jamila Maliha, Jim Markovski, Andrea McAuley, Heather Mundy, Stephen Nevills, Silvia Peterson, General Legal Counsel Patrick Cotter, Communications Manager Peter Blake, Communications Officer Kim Brathwaite

Regrets: Director Lisa Millar

Recording Secretary: Kim Cox

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest at this time.

3. Motion to Approved the Agenda

2020:03

MOVED by Trustee Christine Thatcher

THAT THE AGENDA BE APPROVED.

CARRIED

4. Community Presentations

(a) Maple Ridge Boundary Changes – Capacity Planning

Noel Manchulenko and Paige Solakis provided trustees with a PowerPoint presentation regarding feedback received about capacity planning at Maple Ridge P.S. They highlighted key areas including regular track historic enrolment and the generational turnover in the community. They noted that the current structure cannot sustain an increased demand for French enrollment and asked that the French Immersion review include lessons learned from other boards and the review of boundaries balance the capacity between French Immersion program schools. They recommended several available options for future reviews along with improvements in the proposal development, review and consultation process with the community.

(b) Special Needs Implications of French Immersion Review

Anna Sennema provided trustees with information regarding the Maple Ridge P.S. boundary deferral and how the boundary review will impact families and students in the community, and specifically students with special needs. She shared her personal experience and the detrimental impact a boundary change will have for her son who would be removed from his home school. He has faced many challenges and has felt a closeness to his school community and a familiarity with his classmates. Displacing him will have social and emotional ramifications resulting in academic and social anxiety. A move will present a hardship to academic achievement and to student well-being especially for students with special needs. The French program does not allow for exceptionalities. She asked that the French Immersion review also examine why supports are not in place for special needs students to take French. She noted that all families within the local community will be impacted by any boundary proposal entertained and asked that the review be completed transparently and through an independent consultation.

(c) French Immersion Programs

Sachin Maharaj provided trustees with an overview of the 2019 enrolment numbers for Maple Ridge P.S. He noted that the Board decided to pool enrolment from nine different schools. As an English language school board, the DDSB has an obligation to ensure there is a strong English program in its schools and if the DDSB is going to offer a French Immersion program as a public school, it must ensure that it is equitable and inclusive. School boards across the country are struggling to offer French Immersion programs due to staffing, resources and certification requirements. He stated that the DDSB has an obligation to not

(c) French Immersion Programs (Continued)

expand the FI program beyond its ability to provide high quality teachers and resources. He highlighted the FI attrition numbers for elementary and secondary students and indicated that the program may be operating as academic streaming and socioeconomic segregation. He noted that specialty programs in Toronto are located in the wealthiest neighbourhoods. An equitable FI program should include a collection and comparison of student demographics (SES, race, special education); cohort tracking (attrition by student demographics); GIS (purposeful placement of FI programs in low SES areas; increased supports for FI students; and dual track programs. The DDSB should not be in the business of academically streaming and sorting young children, or widening socioeconomic and racial divides.

5. DDSB Presentations

(a) Bullying Prevention and Intervention Conference: Be the Voice

Superintendent Georgette Davis introduced Dan Hogan, Substance Abuse/Violence Prevention Coordinator who provided trustees with PowerPoint information on the Show Your Character: Bullying Awareness and Prevention Conference & Forum 2019-2020. Dan Hogan introduced O'Neill C.V.I. students Denniala Fray and Mitchell Collins and Leigh Morton, teacher, who provided trustees with an overview of the November leadership conference. Joseph Gould P.S. students Colin Carlson, Addison Lasenby, Connor Mills and Emma Turner provided trustees with an overview of how Joseph Gould students show kindness, respect and courage in their school.

(b) Igniting Learning via Black History Month

Superintendent Margaret Lazarus introduced Jacqui Steer and Merrill Mathews, Equity Officer who provided trustees with an overview of the newly created resource, Black History Month, which will be shared in schools during Black History Month as a commitment to igniting and supporting learning through focused, impactful, educational and inspiring activities. The document was developed as a means of sharing across the district some of the activities that schools have engaged in the past to celebrate Black History Month.

7. Recommended Actions

There were no recommended actions at this time.

8. Information Items

(a) Student Trustee Report

Student trustee Arlene Wang provided trustees with an update from the Student Senate meeting held earlier in the evening. The regional committees met to review current board policies and were given an opportunity to discuss geographically specific initiatives and ideas. From the Pickering/Ajax regional committee, Pickering HS and Ajax HS shared their interschool candy gram sales, where students can purchase candy and send it to a friend in the other school in spirit of Valentine's Day. This collaboration is a product of young leaders having the opportunity to connect through Student Senate meetings, and demonstrates the support Senate provides in advancing DDSB student interests.

Student trustee Tyler West advised that Uxbridge S.S. brought in support dogs for puppy therapy during their exam season last month. This opportunity was found through contact information on therapy puppy services being shared amongst senators. Working committees worked on various initiatives in the relevant areas of Student Voice, Equity and Well Being.

Student trustee Sally Meseret stated that local schools also decided to engage in cat therapy and study cafes to support the current exam season taking place. OSTA - AECO released statements outlining the importance of ensuring the needs of students are kept at the forefront during the ensuing strike actions and work to rule currently taking place across Ontario. Students across the province have seen the implications of the actions and it must be recognized that they have tangible impacts on the everyday realities of the student experience. Students have explained how they may lose extra help opportunities, extracurricular opportunities, and even grade eight graduation trips, all of which are central to an effective educational experience. OSTA-AECO recognizes that the actions and the rhetoric taking place pales in comparison to the everyday realities where students are being impacted. Any action that is not centered around what is in the best interest of students is antithetical to all that our education system stands for, and for who it was created to serve.

(b) Quarterly Construction and Major Projects Progress Report

Acting Director Norah Marsh introduced Christine Nancekivell, Chief Facilities officer who provided trustees with a quarterly report of the current construction and major projects progress. She also answered questions of trustees.

(c) OPSBA Report

Trustee Donna Edwards provided trustees with an overview of the OPSBA conference held from January 23-25, 2020. She noted that five trustees attended the conference. The keynote speaker for the pre-symposium, Michael Fullan talked about Global leadership and the need for change. He noted that traditional methods of schooling are not meeting the needs of students, inequity is widening between rich and poor, and there is negativity in the world, but deep learning innovations show promise. Boards need to develop coherence which only happens when a depth of understanding about the work, or the purpose of work is shared. He went on to define the six core competencies of character, citizenship, collaboration, communication, creativity and critical thinking. This is not new to the board as the DDSB has imbedded Michael Fullan's research into its practices. He reminded Trustees that politics is what is done to get elected, but governance is what should be done in running an effective board. He noted that no matter why a trustee runs for election, a commitment to a shared moral imperative and a well-led governance system will build a strong foundation for sustainable and excellent learning for students. Nik Nanos, Nanos Research presented the results from the OPSBA polling regarding public education and the results from the survey can be found on the OPSBA website. Other workshops included Director of Education performance appraisal policy and procedures; code of conduct, conflict of interest, integrity commissioner; and labour market needs for French as a second language instruction. The Honorable Stephen Lecce spoke at the opening of the Public Education Symposium. Ziya Tong, former host of Discovery Channel's Daily Planet, spoke about how we can learn lessons from behaviours in the animal kingdom, so that we become better leaders. You might think that she was talking about being a lion, but it would be better to simulate slime mold, as it may live freely, but can aggregate and work together to find its way through a path or maze to a common goal. Nouman Ashraf talked about moving away from being knowledge holders and move toward being experienced creators for learning. The conference culminated with regional meetings where local board concerns were discussed. The next Board of Directors' meeting is scheduled to be held February 21/22, 2020 and the next OPSBA Central East Regional meeting is scheduled to be held on March 28, 2020 in Trillium Lakelands.

9. Committee Reports

(a) Equity & Diversity Ad Hoc Committee Meeting of January 22, 2020

Trustee Patrice Barnes provided trustees with an overview of the Equity & Diversity Ad Hoc Committee meeting held on January 22, 2020.

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10. Correspondence

There was no correspondence at this time.

11. Other Business

There was no other business at this time.

12. Adjournment

2020:04

MOVED by Trustee Patrice Barnes

THAT THE MEETING DOES NOW ADJOURN.

CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:35 p.m.

Chair

Secretary