

EDUCATION, POLICY AND OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES – MARCH 3, 2021

PUBLIC MEETING

Roll call:

Trustees:	Staff:
J. Brown G. Elliott L. French T. Gingrich (Vice-Chair) B. Godkin R. Hutcheon K. McGregor J. Morning S. Ruttan (Chair) A. Putnam (Student Trustee) N. Quadir (Student Trustee) Q. Traviss (Student Trustee) (Regrets)	M. Babcock, Superintendent of Education K. Burra, Director of Education S. Gillam, Associate Superintendent S. Hedderson, Associate Superintendent S. McWilliams, Superintendent of Human Resources A. McDonnell, Superintendent of Education S. Sartor, Associate Superintendent J. Silver, Superintendent of Education L. Strange, Records Management Coordinator C. Young, Superintendent of Business Services
Guests:	Recorder:
None at this time.	W. Moore, Executive Assistant to the Director and Trustee Liaison

Chair Gingrich stated: “Good evening Trustees, Senior Staff and the viewing public. Welcome to the Limestone District School Board’s Education, Policy and Operations Committee of the Whole Board Meeting. My name is Tom Gingrich. I am Vice-Chair of the Board, and act as Chair for this meeting.”

“As was the case with the earlier special meeting, tonight we are using a hybrid meeting model with some Trustees and staff attending virtually, and some attending in-person at the Education Centre in accordance with Public Health directives. We have regrets from Student Trustee Traviss. As a reminder to all and to keep the meeting as efficient as possible, I will call a speakers’

list for each item for discussion and decision throughout the meeting as required.

We normally begin with the Indigenous Acknowledgement of Territory, so thank you to Trustee Ruttan for providing that earlier this evening.”

Chair Gingrich called the meeting to order.

1. Adoption of Agenda

MOVED BY: Trustee Ruttan that the agenda, as presented, be approved. Carried.

2. Declaration of Conflict of Interest

Trustee Elliott declared a conflict as his wife is an employee of LDSB, and member of ETFO. Trustee Godkin declared a conflict as his daughter is an occasional teacher with two other public boards, and LDSB.

Section A – Matters Requiring Action at the Meeting

3. Reports for Information

3.1 International Education

Superintendent Silver advised Trustees that LDSB has operated an International Education department for over 20 years. One thing that sets Limestone’s program apart, is that Limestone runs its own Homestay program for students who wish to live with a local family. There are strict guidelines followed, and Homestay families provide responsible, high quality student care. The International Education office has Homestay staff who spend time in schools with students to closely monitor student’s academic progress, mental health and overall well-being.

The report provides background on students we have had, LDSB’s international markets, and current statistics for this year.

Students in Grades 7 to 12 choose to attend Limestone for a variety of reasons. Because Ontario is known for its high quality public education system, some students choose Limestone to learn English, some want to participate in school extra-curriculars, and some simply wish to graduate from an Ontario school.

Roughly 40% of international students in Limestone plan to graduate here, and about half of those, look to stay either in Ontario or in Canada for post-secondary options.

Superintendent Silver noted that the COVID-19 pandemic has greatly impacted international education throughout the world, and within LDSB. Typically, students number between 100 and 130 per year in Limestone, but this year the number is just over 60 students. We did have a number of students that were with us last year that stayed when the pandemic began. An additional 20 students joined Limestone in Semester 2.

Superintendent Silver stated that Trustees may remember a report from the September Board Meeting regarding Limestone's readiness to welcome international students. The International Education department has worked with Canada Immigration, the Ministry of Education and KFL&A Public Health to ensure travel protocols are in place and to ensure safe pre-arrival and post-arrival for students. She noted that many students changed their mind, or decided to remain in their home country this year and not travel abroad. A number of students decided to keep their spot in Limestone, and wait until travel restrictions are lifted. For those students, Limestone offered a spot in our virtual school for Semester 1 until travel restrictions opened and they were able to join Limestone.

Superintendent Silver stated that the International Education department is working virtually with agents in countries around the world, looking ahead to the 2021-2022 school year. At this point there are over 75 students scheduled to join Limestone next year. The number of homestays is down, based on COVID and the need to provide space for students to self-isolate. Limestone will start doing some marketing in the next while to try to increase the number of Homestays.

Chair Gingrich thanked Superintendent Silver and called upon Trustees for questions or comments.

3.2 Equity Action Plan and Census Update

Superintendent Babcock shared a short presentation featuring highlights from the report in the agenda package. A draft of the Limestone Equity Action Plan was brought to Trustees in the fall. The presentation will include update on the actions that were identified for this school year, an update on the student census that closed on January 4, 2021, and an update on the Trustee motions that were brought in November 2020.

Superintendent Babcock advised she will only highlight a few things, because the Equity Team will

present in a more detail at the March 24 Board Meeting. The first thing she highlighted is the Limestone Lens newsletter that Trustees would be fairly familiar with because it arrives every month by email. The purpose of the Limestone Lens is to work on making, not only educators and school staff aware of the learning around equity, but all staff. The rationale for creating the Limestone Lens was to share our work with educators, classrooms teachers, educational assistants; mostly school leaders. However, additional frontline office staff such as office coordinators, secretaries, even custodians and other staff in Limestone, also need to participate on this journey of unlearning and then learning. Superintendent Babcock indicated that Program Team members Rae McDonald and Suche James conduct research, provide blogs, articles or YouTube videos, and other helpful information. They encourage Administrators to use this information and embed it in their staff meeting. Department managers, as well as Department Heads at the secondary level, can also do the same.

Next, Superintendent Babcock highlighted was the Culturally Relevant Responsive Pedagogy, an approach to planning for teaching that puts student identity at the centre of instruction. It is knowing the learner and it recognizes that all students' learning connect to their background, language, their family structure, and their social or cultural identity. It encourages family and school relationships, and it builds strong community connections. Culturally Relevant Responsive Pedagogy (CRRP), recognizes that culture encompasses aspects of social and personal identity and they need to acknowledge the student's multiple social and personal identities, especially where they intersect, so that when they are planning programming, learning strategies and activities for students, they are meeting them where they are at, and using information and resources that connect with the student, based on their identities.

Superintendent Babcock touched on the Grade 9 and 10 Resource allocation including a text selections audit and the purchase of diverse texts that speak to a range of lived experiences. The Equity Team is working with English teachers, especially around looking at the kinds of texts and literature they are using in classrooms to ensure that they are being diverse and using Canadian authors. Similarly, they are looking at the texts that have traditionally been used through an anti-depression and anti-racist lens.

Superintendent Babcock shared some examples of student learning during Black History month that included lots of evidence of engaging in learning activities, such as the Periodic Table of Canadian Black History. Trustee Brown wrote a wonderful letter for staff to encourage and exhort them to consider how they will continue to learn about this rich Canadian history and make change.

Superintendent Babcock stated that a critical step for ensuring equity is to gain a clearer understanding of who students are and of their school experiences. The See Yourself in Limestone Student Census survey took place November 23 - December 18, 2020. While the pandemic required project planning to be adapted, this planning provided the ability to include opportunities for families of students in Kindergarten to Grade 3 to participate. Families were already familiar with student online account logins due to remote learning and the survey was now more easily accessible by families. Secondary students were able to access the survey during class time. The Student Census was closed January 4, 2021. Superintendent Babcock shared the response rates with Trustees: Grades 9-12: 66%; Grades 7-8: 86%; Grades 4-6: 84% and Grades K-3: 12%. She indicated that data verification and validation occurs prior to any analysis, to ensure the integrity of the data. In order to better understand the data, the team will engage in an analysis process involving conversations with stakeholders. Following a preliminary report of results, a series of themed reports will be created to help share the data with families, students, community partners and staff.

With respect to a motion that was brought in November 2020 that staff undertake to engage the Black community to provide input and advice on actions to address racism in schools and barriers to equitable experience, Superintendent Babcock advised that Limestone is co-chairing with Family & Children's Services of Kingston, Frontenac, Lennox & Addington, Manager of Equity and Transformation, at two spring meetings. Black community members will be coming together, and the Team will listen and learn; and get feedback and direction. A follow up meeting is scheduled for June and additional participation would then have a similar kind of framework to glean feedback on direction and vision for their planning. In the fall, membership will include allies and so they will look forward to the direction and the vision that folks who participated in March and June provided to them. There was a second motion regarding a report to Trustees on the use of the racialized achievement data for students with a focus on results of Black and Indigenous students to inform strategies to provide their experience in their learning outcomes. And of course, this is very much the work of the Equity Action Plan. The action plan in the agenda package includes the goals of the census and Steps 1 – 4.

Chair Gingrich thanked Superintendent Babcock for the report and provided an opportunity for Trustees to ask any questions or make any comments.

3.3 Budget Development

Superintendent Young indicated that the Ministry has yet to announce details of the 2021-2022 Grants for Student Needs (GSN); however, from past experience, and current discussions with the Ministry, we understand that they are working toward an announcement by early April 2021.

Last year, the GSN was announced on June 19, 2020 with specific details and grant calculation forms being made available to school boards at the same time. The Priority Partnership Funding announcements were also released at the same time. This late release was a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

It is expected, based upon prior year reporting timelines, that school boards will be required to submit their 2021-2022 Estimates by June 30, 2021.

Superintendent Young stated that the multi-year enrolment projections prepared last year are now predicting a slight decrease in enrolment for 2021-2022. It is our practice to have current enrolment and demographic data reviewed each year. LDSB updates enrolment projections by February, so that school principals and Board staff can review in early March to begin the school staffing process for the upcoming school year.

The following budget development schedule has been established to ensure that the Board will be able to submit the 2021-2022 Estimates to the Ministry by the end of June 2021.

Wednesday April 21, 2021 (4:30 pm) <i>Prior to SEAC</i>	Review of 2021-2022 Budget Overview, Enrolment Projections, Budget Survey Review
Wednesday June 2, 2021 (4:00 pm) <i>Prior to EPOC</i>	GSN Overview Preliminary Operating Revenue
Wednesday June 9, 2021 (4:30 pm)	Preliminary Operating Expenditures/Preliminary Capital Revenue/Expenditures/Consolidated Budget Draft Budget Review
Monday June 14, 2021	<i>Date held if meeting required</i>

Superintendent Young noted that as per previous years, the budget development schedule will be provided to all committees of the Board, so that budget issues can be identified and discussed, where applicable.

In addition, the Superintendent of Business Services and/or the Manager of Financial Services will make themselves available to attend the April 21, 2021 Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) meeting to share the details of the GSN.

Chair Gingrich thanked Superintendent Young for the report. Before moving to Trustee questions, Chair Gingrich highlighted for Trustees, further engagement on the upcoming budget. He noted, that as indicated in the report, all Board committees will have an opportunity to identify budget issues for 2021-2022. Staff have also prepared a brief survey seeking feedback from students, families, staff, and community partners on priorities for the equitable, successful, and fiscally responsible use of LDSB's finite financial resources. This information will assist the Board throughout the budgeting process to ensure students' needs are best served next school year. All information collected will be summarized by staff and reviewed at the Budget Committee meeting on April 21, 2021. The survey, which is voluntary and anonymous, will be open until March 19, 2021. The survey will go live tomorrow, March 4, 2021. He thanked staff for their work on gathering this information for the Board.

Chair Gingrich called for Trustees to ask any questions or make any comments.

3.4 COVID-19 Funding Allocation Update

Superintendent Young stated that the Ministry of Education has continued to make funding announcements to address the COVID-19 concerns within the province. With the latest announcement on February 1, 2021 staff have assembled an updated budgetary template of revenues and expected expenses that will be incurred in the current school year. These expenses will continue to address the COVID-19 pandemic pressures within the system, as well as meet the expectations of our various collective agreements.

Due to the pandemic, Limestone has experienced a reduction in the estimated enrolment of approximately 170 students at both the elementary and secondary level. The Ministry is addressing the concerns of reduced enrolment and the added pressures of staffing two different models of learning. Memo 2020:B22 that was released on November 26, 2020 provides for a 2020-2021 GSN "funding floor." This stabilization funding guarantees a minimum GSN revenue based upon the lower of the 2020-2021 GSN projections or 2020-2021 School Board Estimates.

Superintendent Young reviewed the tables, with Trustees that showed the total COVID-19 funding that has been announced, as well as the actual and projected COVID-19 expenditures for

2020-2021. The funding, as well as the utilization of the accumulated surplus, has allowed LDSB to be nimble, adaptive, and responsive to the ever-changing needs within the system at this time.

Chair Gingrich thanked Superintendent Young for the report and provided an opportunity for Trustees to ask any questions or make any comments.

4. Reports for Action

None at this time.

Section B – Information

5. Internal Reports and Other Communications

None at this time.

6. External Reports and Other Communications

None at this time.

7. Other Business

None at this time.

8. Next Meeting Date

Regular Board Meeting: March 24, 2021.

9. Adjournment

MOVED BY: Trustee McGregor that the meeting adjourn. Carried

The meeting adjourned at 7:26 p.m.