

EDUCATION, POLICY AND OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES – APRIL 13, 2022

PUBLIC MEETING

Roll call:

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| Trustees: | Staff: |
| J. Brown G. Elliott L. French T. Gingrich (Vice-Chair) B. Godkin R. Hutcheon K. McGregor J. Morning S. Ruttan (Chair) T. Duncan (Student Trustee) S. Johnson (Student Trustee) (Regrets) B. Roy (Student Trustee) | K. Burra, Director of Education S. Gillam, Superintendent of Education P. Gollogly, Associate Superintendent S. Hedderson, Associate Superintendent A. McDonnell, Superintendent of Education J. Silver, Superintendent of Education C. Young, Superintendent of Business Services |
| Guests: | Recorder: |
| Y. Abdulkareem, Equity and Human Rights Officer A. Barrows, Equity Teacher Consultant R. McDonald, Equity Teacher Consultant | W. Moore, Executive Assistant to the Director and Trustee Liaison |

Chair Gingrich welcomed everyone to the meeting. He began the meeting by reading the Acknowledgement of Territory: “The Limestone District School Board is situated on the traditional territories of the Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee. We acknowledge their enduring presence on this land, as well as the presence of Métis, Inuit, and other First Nations from across Turtle Island. We honour their cultures and celebrate their commitment to this land.”

1. Call to Order

Chair Gingrich called the meeting to order.

2. Adoption of Agenda

Trustee Hutcheon requested a motion be added to the agenda, under New Business:

“In light of the significant increase in COVID-19 cases in the KFL&A area and the subsequent impacts on students and employees including increased staff absences and bus cancellations, and recognizing recent statements from Dr. Kieran Moore and from South East Region’s hospital Chiefs of staffs and Medical Officers of Health, including Dr Oglaza, strongly recommending continued wearing of masks in all public indoor settings, the recommendation from Public Health Ontario to temporarily re-instate masking requirements in schools, and local calls from Kingston Health Sciences Centre urging our community to be COVID safe, that the LDSB staff be directed to require, from an operational health and safety perspective, mask use in all LDSB buildings for staff, students and visitors, beginning April 19 2022.”

Chair Gingrich advised a two-thirds vote would be required to place this on the agenda.

Roll Call Vote:

The non-binding recorded vote was as follows:

YEAS: Trustee Brown, Trustee Elliott, Trustee Godkin, Trustee Hutcheon, Trustee Morning, Student Trustee Duncan and Student Trustee Roy (7)

NAYS: Trustee French, Trustee McGregor, Trustee Ruttan, and Trustee Gingrich (4)

ABSENT: Student Trustee Johnson (1)

The binding recorded vote was as follows:

YEAS: Trustee Brown, Trustee Elliott, Trustee Godkin, Trustee Hutcheon and Trustee Morning (5)

NAYS: Trustee French, Trustee McGregor, Trustee Ruttan, and Trustee Gingrich (4)

The motion was lost.

Trustee Godkin requested that Trustees have the opportunity to discuss, with no motion, and not expecting any information from our Director, the current impact of COVID in our schools and communities in Eastern Ontario, and be added to the agenda under New Business. In response to a question, Trustee Godkin clarified that he would like each Trustee to have the opportunity to make a statement about the current COVID situation in our community.

Chair Gingrich noted that again, a two-thirds vote would be required to place this on the agenda.

Roll Call Vote:

The non-binding recorded vote was as follows:

YEAS: Trustee Brown, Trustee Elliott, Trustee Godkin, Trustee Hutcheon, Trustee Morning, Trustee Gingrich, Student Trustee Duncan and Student Trustee Roy (8)
NAYS: Trustee French, Trustee McGregor and Trustee Ruttan, and (3)
ABSENT: Student Trustee Johnson (1)

The binding recorded vote was as follows:

YEAS: Trustee Brown, Trustee Elliott, Trustee Godkin, Trustee Hutcheon, Trustee Morning and Trustee Gingrich (6)
NAYS: Trustee French, Trustee McGregor and Trustee Ruttan (3)

The motion carried.

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

3. Declaration of Conflict of Interest

Trustee Elliott declared that his wife is an employee of LDSB, and member of ETFO. Trustee Gingrich advised that his daughter is an emergency relief employee of LDSB.

4. Reports for Information

4.1 Expanded Opportunities Report

Associate Superintendent Hedderson stated that the Ministry of Education's Student Success Strategy helps students in Grades 7 to 12 customize their education to their individual strengths, goals, and interests creating different pathways that will ensure smooth transitions to the post-secondary destinations of their choice. These destinations include apprenticeship, college, universities, and the workplace. In Limestone we value all post-secondary destinations and all sectors of employment. While striving to ensure every program pathway leads students to a rewarding career of choice, while also ensuring they become valued and contributing members of our community. Building a successful pathway through school requires planning, and is a cooperative effort involving students, families, teachers, guidance counsellors, and administrators.

In Limestone the following program options are included for credit under the Expanded Opportunities umbrella as part of secondary program:

- Cooperative Education
- Dual Credit
 - School Within a College
 - WITTS (Women in Trades)
- Specialist High Skills Major programs (SHSM)
- Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP)

Associate Superintendent Hedderson provided an update to Trustees on each of the program options. He noted that staff will continue to seek opportunities to enhance programming under the current expanded opportunities umbrella and will continue to promote expanded opportunities to students and families and share information about the skilled trades, SHSM programming and early, flexible, pathway planning. Additional information will be shared regarding Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM) programs and the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP) in the form of a presentation at the April 27, 2022 Board Meeting.

Chair Gingrich thanked Associate Superintendent Hedderson for the report and called upon Trustees for questions.

4.2 Equity Action Plan 2020-2023

Superintendent McDonnell introduced the Equity Team, Rae McDonald, an Equity Teacher Consultant, focused on Kindergarten to Grade 8 age range and Andrea Barrow, Equity Teacher Consultants that works within the Grades 7 – 12 age range. They work very collaboratively together in a variety of areas related to Equity. Andrea Barrow began her central position in February 2022. Also in attendance is Yusuf Abdulkareem, the new Equity and Human Rights Officer, who began his position in November 2021. Talya McKenna, Human Resources Lead and Superintendent Susan McWilliams are also present.

Superintendent McDonnell advised that back in November 2020, Trustees received the draft LDSB Equity Action Plan that was drafted based on input from Trustees, data collected from a variety of sources from within the community and within the system and based on the Ontario Equity Action Plan 2017. This draft plan was shared with Trustees for review, and at that meeting it was identified that next steps would include meeting with students, staff and community for their feedback around the draft plan. In spring of 2021, consultation occurred with a variety of stakeholders under the direction of now retired Superintendent Michele Babcock.

Superintendent McDonnell reinforced that the work that is highlighted in the Equity Action Plan is all very important work. As areas of focus are addressed in the system, new areas of focus are added and much of what is new in the plan presented tonight, is in response to new barriers that have been identified and require dismantling. She noted that since Trustees have received this report, there have been a number of new additions and the Equity Team will share these in a version three very shortly.

Superintendent McDonnell acknowledged that in some areas of the Plan it has been very difficult to engage in the work due to the pandemic, particularly the work around Professional Learning. It has not been possible over the past year and a bit to release teachers and other staff members during the work day, and this has been a barrier to focusing on some pieces.

The Equity Team shared areas of focus that they have been working diligently on within Limestone and within the community.

Yusuf Abdulkareem advised that the Community Equity Advisory Committee has been developed to support LDSB in determining strategies for systemic implementation of the Equity Action Plan and in identifying and eliminating barriers to an equitable and inclusive environment. Draft terms of reference have been developed and are currently under review. He reviewed some of the highlights in the terms of reference.

Talya McKenna advised Trustees in order to get a better understanding of the current composition of our workforce with a goal of creating a more inclusive, representative staff, at all levels across the organization, that mirrors equity, the Workforce Census and Belonging Survey will be launched. This survey will be available to all employees of Limestone between April 29 and June 10, 2022.

Superintendent McWilliams highlighted the partnership between the board and KEYS in the context of the development of the Workforce Census and Belonging Survey. Working in partnership with our various organizations in the community it is important to advance the work in creating inclusive and equitable workplaces. The opportunity to engage with KEYS through their Inclusive Charter was an important step for Limestone. The importance of Limestone signing the charter allowed Limestone to work with experts in the field and individuals with lived experiences are able to support the work that we are trying to advance. As signatories on the charter, we have had access to a number of supports from their inclusive coaching team.

Andrea Barrow advised Trustees that in order to build staff capacity on human rights and equity, there are a variety of professional learning opportunities that have been available to support staff in their journey. A few include the Allyship Workshop in collaboration with OSSTF in April; virtual school assemblies for schools to attend on Inclusivity; creation of lessons for Civics classes on anti-Black racism and 2SLGBTQ+; “Be the Change” lessons for Grades 5 and 6.

Rae McDonald provided an update to Trustees on the three Staff Affinity Networks that have been established to ensure that input is received from multiple stakeholders on all organizational levels to

help prioritize and guide equity, anti-oppression, and Human Rights work throughout the system. These include a Black, Indigenous and Racialized staff network, a 2SLGBTQ+ staff network and a staff living with disabilities network. The Affinity Networks have been consulted and have provided feedback on the Workforce Census and Belonging Survey and will continue to be consulted on future equity initiatives/actions.

Superintendent McDonnell advised that the Umoja Black Advisory Committee is a collaboration between Family and Children’s Services of Frontenac Lennox and Addington (FACSFLA) and the Limestone District School Board. Its purpose is to improve supports and services for families from the Black community who interact with the LDSB, FACSFLA and other organizations within the KFL&A community.

Trustee Brown, who sits on the Committee provided a personal perspective, advising that ‘Umoja’ is a Swahili word, meaning unity. Truly this group has unified many in the Black community. More than a few of those who attended have commented how amazing it is to have so many Black people together here in this Kingston community; it gives a certain warm feeling. Trustee Brown indicated that the group has been meeting monthly and have set up a modus operandi. The group will continue to meet monthly and have a focus at each meeting.

Superintendent McDonnell advised that in terms of next steps LDSB will be collecting, analyzing, and sharing data with Trustees, staff and the broader school communities to demonstrate progress toward the goals. Outcomes will be shared with Trustees at the start of each school year on an annual basis.

Chair Gingrich thanked Superintendent McDonnell and the Equity Team for the report and called upon Trustees for questions.

5. Reports for Action

5.1 Housekeeping Policy Updates

Director Burra advised Trustees there are two updates to the bylaws and/or policies. The first stems from revisions to the Municipal Elections Act, adjusting the start of the term of School Board Trustees from December 1 to November 15. Subsequently, a change in date is required for the Inaugural and annual meeting to reflect this provincial change in legislation. This impacts Article IV in the Bylaws, and Policy 11 (Board Committees). Given this is a legislative change, this is an automatic amendment under Article VIII of the Bylaws and is provided to Trustees for information.

The second change is based on the approval of the LDSB Bylaws, and the Agenda Setting Committee, Trustee Selection Committee, and Nomination Committee have now been added to the list of Standing Committees outlined in Policy 11 – Board Committees.

MOTION MOVED BY Trustee French that the policy changes outlined in the report be approved. Carried

6. Unfinished Business

None at this time.

7. New Business

7.1 OPSBA Policy Resolution Submission

Trustee Godkin advised Trustees that the OPSBA Policy Resolution has been revised from the agenda package and Trustees are asked to consider the shortened, revised submission as follows:

“Whereas, the physical and mental well-being of students and children are significantly impacted by circumstances they face outside of the school; and

Whereas, student poverty, homelessness, family stress as a result of rising debt, and unaffordable housing have a significant impact on the mental and physical well-being of students; and

Whereas, well established affordability guidelines recommend that housing not exceed more than 35% of a household income, but now have significantly exceeded that threshold for many families; and

Whereas, it is well established that home and food security directly impacts a student’s ability to succeed at school, and exacerbates inequities within communities, depriving every child the necessary conditions to succeed at school; and

Whereas, this will dramatically impact the physical and mental well-being of children, leading to an increased likelihood of long-term poverty, poor health and premature death; and

Whereas, the mental and physical well-being of children is a joint responsibility of all levels of government.

Be it resolved that OPSBA recognize that housing is a fundamental right, and a lack of affordable housing can be detrimental to the mental and physical well-being of children, students, and families across Ontario; and exacerbates inequities which have a lifelong impact.

And be it resolved that OPSBA advocate for increased funding from all levels of government to ensure affordable housing and housing security, so all students have the necessary conditions to succeed.

A friendly amendment was brought forward to change: “And be it resolved that OPSBA advocate for increased funding from all levels of government to ensure affordable housing and housing security...” to “And be it resolved that OPSBA advocate for strategies by all levels of government to ensure affordable housing and housing security...” Trustee Godkin agreed with the friendly amendment.

MOTION MOVED BY Trustee Godkin that Trustees approve the revised OPSBA Policy Resolution Submission, as follows, which will be submitted by end of day April 13, 2022:

“Whereas, the physical and mental well-being of students and children are significantly impacted by circumstances they face outside of the school; and

Whereas, student poverty, homelessness, family stress as a result of rising debt, and unaffordable housing have a significant impact on the mental and physical well-being of students; and

Whereas, well established affordability guidelines recommend that housing not exceed more than 35% of a household income, but now have significantly exceeded that threshold for many families; and

Whereas, it is well established that home and food security directly impacts a student’s ability to succeed at school, and exacerbates inequities within communities, depriving every child the necessary conditions to succeed at school; and

Whereas, this will dramatically impact the physical and mental well-being of children, leading to an increased likelihood of long-term poverty, poor health and premature death; and

Whereas, the mental and physical well-being of children is a joint responsibility of all levels of government.

Be it resolved that OPSBA recognize that housing is a fundamental right, and a lack of affordable housing can be detrimental to the mental and physical well-being of children, students, and families across Ontario; and exacerbates inequities which have a lifelong impact.

And be it resolved that OPSBA advocate for strategies by all levels of government to ensure affordable housing and housing security, so all students have the necessary conditions to succeed.” Carried.

Chair Gingrich advised that after adjournment of the EPOC meeting, Trustees would vote with a two-thirds majority to convene a Special Meeting of the Board, immediately, to approve the policy resolution.

7.2 Trustees' Opportunity to Provide a Statement on COVID

Trustees who wished to do so, provided a personal statement on the current impact of COVID-19 in LDSB schools and communities in Eastern Ontario, and in particular, the current COVID-19 situation in the broader community.

It was noted that on the KFL&A Public Health website there is a joint message from the South East Region's Hospital Chiefs of Staff and Medical Officers of Health, which was released today, addressing increased transmission of COVID-19 and how individuals can protect themselves and others. Trustees may wish to view this messaging.

Director Burra provided Trustees with a bit of an analysis on some of the information brought forward, and in particular with regards to absences and bus cancellations. He also advised Trustees, with respect to what was articulated earlier around the enforcement of masking, and that there are some challenges around legal and human resources on the ground to do that. He noted that if there was any notion of going in that direction, Trustees would be advised to have a more in-depth legal consultation to better understand all implications.

8. Correspondence

None at this time.

9. Next Meeting Date

June 1, 2022

10. Adjournment

Moved by Trustee French that the meeting adjourn. Carried.

The meeting adjourned at 7:57 p.m.