

PRESENT:

Trustees: Chair Randy Campbell, Vice-Chair Derek Robertson, Greg Agar, Janet Barnes, Jane Bryce, Ruth Ann Dodman, Dave Douglas, Jack Fletcher, Malinda Little, Scott McKinlay, and Lareina Rising

Staff: Director of Education John Howitt, Superintendent of Business Brian McKay, Superintendents of Education, Angie Barrese, Gary Girardi, Helen Lane, Mary Mancini, Mark Sherman and Public Relations Officer Heather Hughes

Regrets Superintendent Ben Hazzard

Student Trustees: Aurora Bressette, William Locke and Lucia Shultz-Allison

Recording Secretary: Jaime Shannon, Executive Assistant to the Director

Call to Order: Chair Campbell called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

#2021-41 Moved by Malinda Little, seconded by Dave Douglas,

Approval of the Agenda

“That the Agenda for the Regular Board Meeting of February 23, 2021 be approved.”

CARRIED.

Chair Campbell read the Traditional Territorial Acknowledgement.

Declaration of Conflict of Interest None

#2021-42
Approval of the Minutes
Feb/9/2021

Moved by Janet Barnes, seconded by Derek Robertson,

“That the Board approve the Minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of February 9, 2021.”

CARRIED.

Business Arising

Director Howitt followed-up on business arising from the February 9, 2021 Board Meeting. He confirmed that while O. Reg 463/97 allows for virtual attendance by Trustees at all Board Meetings until November 14, 2022, LKDSB By-Law 10.3 indicates that missing three meetings in a row would vacate their seat. Excused absences are allowed as per the LKDSB By-laws.

Motions Emanating from the Regular Board Private Session

None

#2021-43
Action of the Regular
Board Private Session be
the Action of the Board

Moved by Derek Robertson, seconded by Jack Fletcher,

“That the Action of the Board in Private Session be the Action of the Board.”

CARRIED.

Presentation
Director of Education’s
Snap Shots of Excellence

Director Howitt presented the Director of Education’s Snap Shots of Excellence for February 2021. The presentation included examples STEM/STEAM activities in schools; community engagement by schools with continuation of fundraising through COVID-19; experiencing the trades; student participation in Hour of Code; innovative learning opportunities in the arts; Adopt a

Grandparent program; students providing examples of their experience with the pandemic through duct taped messages in the Chatham-Kent region; creative ways education workers are continuing to meet the curriculum; biodiversity; various tools used in the virtual world; Number Talks with LKDSB Math Coach; virtual art lessons; skilled trades and a real example of wiring a switch in a wall outlet; Black History/African Heritage Month and examples of celebrating black authors and African Canadians in our history and society; SHSM automotive students and the Rebuilding Wheels Rebuilding Lives program in partnership with United Way Chatham-Kent; PSW programs in LKDSB schools; and a virtual art gallery.

Director Howitt presented a Tweet from a thankful parent and reported that the LKDSB has 5,600 Facebook followers and 3,400 Twitter followers, and 18 COVID-19 specific messages have been posted to parents/guardians, with 11 in January and February alone, and 22 messages through SchoolMessenger. He recognized Public Relations Officer Heather Hughes and thanked her for her incredible work.

Director Howitt shared a picture of the Great Lakes Secondary School auditorium that is nearing completion. He looked forward to a more formal grand opening of the auditorium and noted that the project could not have happened without the hard work and perseverance of staff and difficult decisions made by Trustees.

Trustee Rising joined the meeting.

Delegations

None

Questions from the Public

None

#2021-44
Canceling the April 13,
2021 Regular Board
Meeting
Report B-21-27

Moved by Derek Robertson, seconded by Lareina Rising,

“That the Board cancels the Regular Board Meeting of April 13, 2021 due to the change in date of Spring Break.”

Director Howitt noted that as per LKDSB By-law 3.2, the cancellation of a Board Meeting requires a two-thirds majority.

CARRIED.

#2021-45
2021/2022 Student trustee
and Indigenous Student
Trustee Appointments
Report B-21-28

Moved by Jack Fletcher, seconded by Malinda Little,

“That the Board approve the election of Taryn Jacobs, Indigenous Student Trustee and, Kate Martin and Brianne Machan, Student Trustees, for the 2021/2022 school year.”

Director Howitt reported that the Student Senate met via Google Meet on February 22, 2021 and elected three Student Trustees to serve on the Board for the 2021/2022 school year. He remarked that the candidates were outstanding and delivered a brief presentation to the Student Senate outlining their interest in the position and had an opportunity to respond to questions from the committee members following the presentation. He announced that Taryn Jacobs, from Wallaceburg District Secondary School, was acclaimed to the position of Indigenous Student Trustee, and Kate Martin, from Wallaceburg District Secondary School, and Brianne Machan, from the Virtual Learn at Home Secondary School, were elected to the position of Student Trustee.

CARRIED.

#2021-46
Tender Award – Roof
Recoating – Tilbury District
H.S.
Report B-21-29

Moved by Lareina Rising, seconded by Jane Bryce,

“That the Board award the tender to the successful bidder, Horizon Roofing Ltd. for the gym roof recoating at Tilbury District High School.”

Superintendent McKay reported that Horizon Roofing Ltd. was successful for the Tilbury District High School roof recoating project with a bid of \$940,900. The total project cost is \$1,009,284.62 which will be funded from School Condition Improvement funding.

Superintendent McKay confirmed that the Board has worked with Horizon Roofing Ltd. in the past and were pleased with the results.

CARRIED.

#2021-47
Tender Award – Parking
Lot Improvements –
Winston Churchill P.S.
Report B-21-30

Moved by Janet Barnes, seconded by Jane Bryce,

“That the Board award the tender to the successful bidder, Elric Contractors of Wallaceburg Limited, for the parking lot expansion at Winston Churchill Public School.”

Superintendent McKay reported that Elric Contractors of Wallaceburg Limited was successful for the Winston Churchill Public School parking lot expansion project with a bid of \$734,992.36. The total project cost is \$806,807.88 which will be funded from School Condition Improvement funding.

CARRIED.

Student Senate

Student Trustee Lucia Schultz-Allison reported that the February 22, 2021 Student Senate meeting was well attended, and five Trustee nominees were given 10 minutes to present speeches and answer questions from Student Senators. Two Student Trustees, Kate Martin and Brianne Machan, were elected and one candidate, Taryn Jacobs, was acclaimed. Student Senators were reminded of the May 5 budget presentation with Superintendent McKay.

Parent Involvement
Committee
Report B-21-31

Director Howitt reported on the February 8, 2021 Parent Involvement Committee (PIC) meeting that was held via Microsoft Teams. He highlighted that a Thoughtexchange was sent to families in order to gather feedback on the Virtual Schools, but in error, was not sent to parents/guardians of Virtual School students. In addition to this, some respondents understood the question to be in relation to Learning at Home and not the Virtual School. Since then, a separate survey has been sent to families of students in the Virtual Schools, which had a high response rate and more than 50% responded they are either likely or very likely to register again. This was excellent feedback for the Board and a plan moving forward will now need to be determined. The Board is unsure at this time if the Ministry will permit this type of program to continue or if it will be required.

Director Howitt reported there was confusion in regard to the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT), which is a requirement for students to achieve their Ontario Secondary School Diploma. Normally the test is taken by students in the Spring of Grade 10 and if they are not successful, have the option to take the test again or complete a course that is equal to successful completion. The OSSLT could not be completed in the 2019-2020 school year, so it was removed

as a graduation requirement for the class of 2020. It has now been removed as a graduation requirement for the class of 2021, but there is an expectation that a field test will be run this Spring for Grade 10 and 11 students. Those successful will have completed the graduation requirement. A concern brought forth by PIC members is that the field test is not being offered to students attending the Virtual Learn at Home Secondary School. There may be a need for additional OSSLT writing opportunities next school year and Superintendent Mancini has been working to ensure there are practice opportunities available.

LKDSB Update on Face to Face and Learn at Home Program
Report B-21-32

Director Howitt explained that a themed report is brought to each Board Meeting in order to update Trustees on what is going on in LKDSB schools. The theme of the February 12, 2021 report was focused on asymptomatic testing and program delivery of activity-based course during COVID-19.

Director Howitt provide Trustees with an update on asymptomatic testing, a Ministry directive that is completely voluntary for staff and students and requires parental consent. A vendor will be provided to the Board to complete the testing outside of school hours using a hub model with a single school welcoming feeder or neighbouring schools. Chatham-Kent Lambton Administrative School Services (CLASS) will be coordinating the asymptomatic testing program for the LKDSB and the local Catholic, French Catholic, and French Public school boards. There will be no cost to the Board for the testing and all reporting will be managed by the vendor. The schedule for the asymptomatic testing was in process at the time of the meeting and the target is to test 5% of schools per week. LKDSB staff also have the option for asymptomatic testing at pharmacies approved by the province.

Director Howitt confirmed that the Board is in regular contact with the local Medical Officers of Health but could not speak to whether they are in favour of the asymptomatic testing. He noted that some people are in favour of asymptomatic testing as there are concerns someone could be positive with no symptoms and attending school. There are concerns that rapid testing provides a false positive more frequently and that the testing only represents a snapshot in time. The Board will share information with its communities and allow families to make the best decision for their children.

Director Howitt reported that elective classes require significant creativity from teaching staff, school administration, and parents/guardians in the case of learning at home. The report highlighted art, dance, music, drama, foods, skilled trades, Physical Education, and the Science Education Partnership, which includes a hands-on science kit borrowing for classrooms, and scientist visits to classroom. He remarked that Senior Administration was proud of the work efforts and innovations from staff to ensure all curriculum subjects continue to be offered.

Ontario Public School Boards' Association Update (OPSBA)

Trustee Fletcher reported on the November 7, 2021 OPSBA Western Regional Meeting, and highlighted discussions around asymptomatic testing, the use of retired teachers by boards, the role of Public Health nurses in schools post-pandemic, and HVAC systems.

Trustee Dodman remarked that she was impressed with the meeting and noted that Directors and Superintendents were highly praised. She thanked the LKDSB Director and Superintendents for their work in helping Trustees be successful.

Director Howitt confirmed there are retired teachers on the occasional list. Superintendent Girardi added that the Board has been relatively successful in ensuring school buildings are staffed appropriately, but there are concerns with changes to the self-assessment and potential unfilled jobs. Additions to the occasional teacher roster are planned and the use of teacher candidates is being investigated.

Correspondence

None

New Business

None

Trustee Questions

Superintendent McKay confirmed that 650 portable HEPA air filters have been installed across the Board in classrooms. The units were purchased with funding received from the Ministry. The Board is also looking at opportunities to install air filters in other areas of schools and is working to procure an additional 500 units. He added that fresh air intake is another area to improve air quality and the Board has gone above the fresh air intake standard of 5-10% to 20-25%. The period of time the ventilation units run has also been increased, which run from 6 a.m. until 11 p.m. In the longer term, the number of large HVAC projects has been increased and 10 major projects have been added to the capital project list for this year. He noted that the projects will be shared with Trustees as the tenders come in.

Superintendent Barrese confirmed that the Board is not an appropriate place to diagnose and treat mental illness for students and staff; however, it supports students and staff with access to resources outside of the school institution, works in collaboration with community partners, and provides the Employee and Family Assistance Program (EAP). To help develop positive mental health and well-being for students, the LKDSB takes its lead from the Ministry of Education and School Mental Health Ontario. Supports put in place for students are Good for All Tier 1 promotion strategies that can be extended to support staff and families. Senior Administration is continuously looking at strategies to put in place to reduce the stress of staff and students in order to help them cope and be mentally well. Eight social workers were introduced to secondary schools, who work with Tier 2 or 3 behaviours, which require treatment and therapy. Social Workers in schools increase professional understanding and knowledge to support all students and staff throughout schools. Senior Administration supports schools by being resourceful with the allocation of staff, providing guidance and information to schools, and implementing health and safety structures, and all of these structures and strategies work together to support a sense of positive mental wellbeing. There is no one program for ~~one~~ a person to follow to feel better, but the Board will share a variety of strategies and structures to support mental health.

Director Howitt added that the mental health of staff and students is very important to Senior Administration and is constantly on its decision table. Senior Administration supports are provided at schools when needed, such as in situations with trauma and confirmed COVID-19 cases, and positive messaging is used in information publicized to avoid creating anxiety. An example of a decision made by Senior Administration to alleviate stress of staff is the approach for asymptomatic testing, choosing to use a vendor for the testing and holding it outside of the school day avoided additional work for administrators. Another example is declining requests to discontinue the Attendance Support Program

(ASP) during COVID-19. He explained that the ASP helps recognize staff who may be struggling and need support attending work. He noted the Board also advocated for staff regarding the change in date for March Break, and said staff needed and deserved a break but would support the direction of health officials.

Director Howitt confirmed that mental health needs of staff can be detected through attendance, assisted with the ASP, Senior Administration and School Administrator check-ins with staff, and staff being in touch with colleagues and recognizing changes in others.

Notices of Motion

None

Announcements

The next Regular Board Meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 30, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. at the Sarnia Education Centre.

Adjournment

There being no further business of the Board, Chair Campbell declared the Meeting adjourned at 8:39 p.m.

Chair of the Board

Director of Education and
Secretary of the Board