

PRESENT:

Trustees: Vice-Chair Derek Robertson, 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, Ben Hazzard, Helen Lane, Mary Mancini, Mark Sherman and Public Relations Officer Heather Hughes

Regrets Chair Randy Campbell, Trustee Greg Agar

Student Trustees: Brianne Machan, Taryn Jacobs, Kate Martin

Recording Secretary: Bonnie Gotelaer, Executive Assistant to the Director

Call to Order: Vice-Chair Robertson called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

#2022-15 Moved by Lareina Rising, seconded by Jane Bryce,

Approval of the Agenda

“That the amended Agenda for the Regular Board Meeting of January 11, 2022 be approved.”

Vice-Chair Robertson noted in the absence of Trustee Agar, the Agenda for the Regular Board Meeting of January 11, 2022 will be amended to reflect that item 12 a) will be addressed in the subsequent agenda and move item 12 b) to become item 12 a) and item 12 c) to become 12 b).

CARRIED.

Vice-Chair Robertson read the Traditional Territorial Acknowledgement.

Declaration of Conflict of Interest None

#2022-16
Approval of the Minutes
Nov/23/2021

Moved by Ruth Ann Dodman, seconded by Jack Fletcher,

“That the Board approve the Minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of November 23, 2021.”

CARRIED.

#2022-17
Approval of the Minutes
Dec/7/2021

Moved by Jane Bryce, seconded by Dave Douglas,

“That the Board approve the Minutes of the Annual Organization Board Meeting of December 7, 2021.”

CARRIED.

Business Arising None

Motions Emanating from the Regular Board Private Session None

#2022-18
Action of the Regular
Board Private Session be
the Action of the Board

Moved by Jane Bryce, seconded by Jack Fletcher,
“That the Action of the Regular Board in Private Session be the Action of the Board.”

CARRIED.

Delegations

Vice-Chair Derek Robertson read LKDSB Procedural Bylaw 3.14 Any person from the community or community group wishing to address the Board shall give seven working days' notice electronically or in writing to the Secretary of the Board and shall indicate the matter or issue they wish to speak to and provide an electronic or printed copy of their presentation with their request. Requests received without supporting documentation will not be considered. The Chair, Vice-Chair and Director of Education will review all requests at the Agenda Review Meeting prior to the Board Meeting and determine if the request will be placed on the Board Agenda.
Vice-Chair Derek Robertson read LKDSB Procedural Bylaw 3.15 Approved requests from community members or groups shall have ten minutes to address the Board. If more than eight presentations are requested, the Chair may schedule a Special Board Meeting to hear the presentations/delegations. Director Howitt will assist with timing and will give notice of one minute left for the delegation.

Jolene Wellington presented her report Vaccine Clinics at LKDSB Schools and Vaccine Mandates. Ms. Wellington noted each slide as presented in the Agenda package with some additional comments as she delivered her delegation to the Board.

Questions from the Public

Vice-Chair Derek Robertson read LKDSB Procedural Bylaw 3.16 In addition to the foregoing, persons or groups may pose questions to the Board in accordance with the following procedure: a) the questioner shall submit the question either orally or in writing to the Chair of the Board; b) the Chair or their designate shall answer the question if the information is immediately available or send a written reply following the meeting; and c) the questioner may ask a follow-up question for clarification and read LKDSB Procedural Bylaw 3.17 The Board may limit the number of questioners as it sees fit. Vice-Chair Robertson noted Director Howitt would answer the questions received. Director Howitt noted he would answer questions in the order of submission.

Nick Wallace submitted the following questions:

1. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration was given eight months — not the 75 years it requested, to release all documents related to the licensing of Pfizer's COVID vaccine, a federal judge ruled Thursday January 06, 2022. This vaccine is used in Canada. Parents wish to obtain informed consent and this safety data is essential to do so. The school board must not mandate children 5 – 11 years old to be vaccinated before the clinical trials safety data is available. Does the Board intend to do so? If they do, how would parents and doctors be able to make an informed decision without the relevant safety data?

Director Howitt noted administration does not have plans to recommend a vaccine mandate to the Board at this time. He noted mandatory vaccines are listed in the Ontario Immunization of School Pupils Act. He indicated the mandatory vaccines that are required for students to attend school are not managed by trustees, school boards or Ministry of Education legislation. The

mandatory vaccines are the responsibility of the Ministry of Health. He noted the monitoring of mandatory vaccinations is completed by public health who has the responsibility to suspend students who do not have their vaccinations as outlined in the Immunization of School Pupils Act.

2. Will you please advise if the School Board (or any of its employees) is receiving any financial aid to incentivise school closures, screening, physically distancing, masking, handwashing, hand-sanitising, antigen testing, contact tracing, and /or vaccinating of children and/or teachers? If so, what is the level of funding?

Director Howitt confirmed there are no financial incentives sent to any member of the LKDSB.

3. Dr. Ranade states on January 04, 2022 Blackburn news (*audio file attached, see 2:52 min mark*), "Omicron is everywhere, and the situation has changed so much that we all need a massive mind-set switch around this. We need to stop thinking about Omicron as a preventable risk, or an avoidable risk; we have to start thinking about it as an inevitable risk." At 5:52 min states, "Kids are not particularly more likely to spread this than other people, and in fact kids who are less than ten seem to spread it less dramatically than others". <https://soundcloud.com/blackburnradio-sarnia/covid-19-lambton-medical-officer-of-health-dr-sudit-ranade-jan-4th-2022> In this regard, is the school board required to maintain masking children in school? If so, who continues to mandate the masking and what incentive does the school board have to implement it?

Director Howitt confirmed there is no incentive for the LKDSB to implement the masking mandate. He noted the expectation for masking is outlined in the COVID-19: Health, Safety and Operational Guidance for Schools and is available on the LKDSB website which was reaffirmed by the Ministry of Education on December 30, 2021.

4. Does the school board have to prove they are following a protocol to mask children? If so, who requires it, what is the protocol, and what are they giving in return?

Director Howitt noted the LKDSB is expected to follow legislation and guidance from health officials and confirmed nothing is given in return. The Ministry of Labour does conduct visits to schools to ensure adherence to the provincial guideline.

5. There appears to be a trend of parents begging for kids to be unmasked across Ontario, yet school board officials and Trustees everywhere sit unnaturally glassy eyed and silent, as if they don't have a say in the matter. Director John Howitt states in his email dated December 14, 2021 to Nick Wallace that "The School Board has implemented its policies consistent with its legal obligations as outlined by the Ontario Ministry of Education and in accordance with its legal requirements as identified by provincial and local Medical Officers of Health." If there is a legal obligation forcing the school board to mandate COVID-19 measures, will Mr. Howitt please make the legal details available to the public?

Director Howitt acknowledged there are parents who have expressed they would not like students to wear masks and there are parents who have expressed they would like students to wear masks and extend masking requirements to the kindergarten level. He noted the LKDSB continues to follow the Ministry of Education guidance document, COVID-19 Health and

Safety Guidance for Schools. He confirmed all legislated responsibilities are available on the LKDSB website.

6. If COVID-19 is believed to be so deadly and masks are necessary to stop the transmission, can you please explain how schools dispose of these hazardous masks to contain these potentially life-threatening hazardous germs from spreading? And does this procedure match the concern of the threat?

Director Howitt noted masks are not hazardous and have not been identified to be hazardous. Custodians are well trained in dealing with any hazardous materials wearing appropriate PPE (Personal Protective Equipment).

CUPE 1238 President Michele Lalonge-Davey submitted the following questions:

1. How have the continued Covid-19 funds been utilized within the LKDSB, other than with the creation of four Temporary C2 positions?
2. Has the LKDSB accessed up to 2% of reserves and if so, how are these funds being used in relation to Covid -19?

Vice-Chair Robertson noted the questions should be answered by Superintendent McKay. Superintendent McKay noted he was informed by the Ministry of Education that the LKDSB would receive operational and custodian funding and were given access to half of the amount, \$160,773. He noted enhanced cleaning custodial positions were funded September to December, 2021. Superintendent McKay noted a revised estimate was prepared and were informed the second portion of funding of \$160,773 was received for a total of \$321,546. He noted enhanced cleaning positions had gone over the budget and there was difficulty in filling the positions as they were very short time periods.

He indicated four custodial floater positions were created to cover areas where there were absences. Superintendent McKay noted the expenses would reach \$441,259 which is \$119,000 over the amount received. He confirmed that two percent was moved from reserve spending to cover overages due to COVID-19.

Shauna Ward-Carver submitted:

1. Is the board aware of the 9 reported deaths associated with the vaccine in Ontario and the 27 reported deaths in association with the vaccine in Ontario that are still under review?
2. With the study conducted and the findings, our children are protected, according to these findings, so why would vaccination mandates for an be experimental drug even be considered among these youth?

Director Howitt noted he was not familiar with the article and noted as non-medical practitioners, LKDSB follows the Ontario Immunization of School Pupils Act. He noted there have been articles in the media from other school boards encouraging the Ministry of Health to add COVID-19 vaccinations to the Ontario Immunization of Schools Pupil Act and stated LKDSB administration is not seeking this legislation and will continue to follow the Ministry of Health and Chief Medical Officer of Health.

#2022-19
Notice of Motion
Single Use Water Bottles
Report B-22-06

Moved by Jack Fletcher, seconded by Malinda Little,

“That the Lambton Kent District School Board not provide plastic water bottles at our board meetings.”

Trustee Fletcher noted the motion is part of the long view of climate change. He noted some history including a motion on October 8, 2019 and then on April 28, 2020 a detailed plan was outlined by Superintendent McKay to establish a committee to develop a viable reduction strategy of waste and single use plastics with a timeline for actions to occur. Jack Fletcher noted there are single use water bottles being provided for board members who do not have a water bottle to drink from. He noted it would set an example in reducing the use of single use plastics if plastic water bottles were not distributed.

Lareina Rising noted to be unsupportive of motion that limits healthy choices if the preference is water. She noted people attend meetings after work and stated this has been addressed in the plan to reduce plastics and encouraged the recycling and purchase of recycled plastic. She encouraged different avenues of reducing personal consumption and a pandemic is a difficult time to reuse items others may have used.

Jack Fletcher noted there are better products that will come forth due to concerns to reduce plastics.

No action taken.

#2022-20
2022/2023 School Year
Calendar
Report B-22-07

Moved by Scott McKinlay, seconded by Janet Barnes,

“That the Board approved the 2022-2023 School Year Calendar and that this calendar be forwarded to the Ministry of Education for approval as required.”

Superintendent Hazzard noted the modified 2022-2023 School Year Calendar maximizes student learning time. An unmodified calendar allowed the first day of the academic year to be prior to Labour Day and with the modification, the first academic day would be September 6, 2022. The template provided by the Ministry of Education was modified for the Winter Break to occur December 26, 2022 to January 9, 2023. June 29, 2023 is the final day for students and the final Professional Activity Day is June 30, 2023. Superintendent Hazzard noted the modified 2022-2023 School Year Calendar will be sent for approval by the Ministry of Education if approved by trustees.

Director Howitt noted this is a tentative calendar pending Ministry approval.

CARRIED.

Indigenous Liaison
Committee Report
Report B-22-08

Trustee Rising noted the ILC meeting was held November 17, 2021 with school reports sharing Remembrance Day and Treaties Recognition Week activities. She noted the Indigenous Lead provided an update regarding his Indigenous Lead responsibilities while completing the Indigenous Teacher Education Program. She noted Superintendent Lane has been meeting with communities regarding the voluntary self-identification brochures gathering feedback. Trustee Rising noted meetings continue to be held via an online format and 55 schools submitted their school reports.

Special Education Advisory
Committee Report
Report B-21-09

Trustee Barnes noted presentations including Understanding the Gifted Learner, the LKDSB Assistive Technology Team and the Voluntary Demographic Data Student Census. She noted Exceptional Pupil Numbers were discussed and noted the next meeting will be January 20, 2022.

Ontario Public School
Boards' Association
Update (OPSBA)

Trustee Fletcher noted the November 27, 2021 OPSBA board meeting minutes have been sent to trustees. He noted OPSBA has hired a staff lead for Equity Diversity and Inclusion. He noted nominations for school board

elections begin May 22, 2022 until August 19, 2022 and October 24, 2022 is voting day. The new school board will begin their term November 15, 2022. He noted the Ontario Student Trustee scholarship and encouraged the Student Trustees to inquire with their principals. Trustee Fletcher noted the OPSBA Public Education Symposium will be held January 28, 2021 and encouraged attendance. Trustee Bryce asked for clarification regarding the date for the beginning of the new school board and noted it is different than the typical cycle. Trustee McKinlay noted the date of provincial elections has changed which could be resulting in a school board date change. Trustee Fletcher will look for further information to clarify.

LKDSB Director's Annual
Report
Report B-21-10

Director Howitt noted the Director's Report is submitted annually to the Ministry of Education and posted on the LKDSB website by January 31. Director Howitt noted the report design has been updated and it is organized following the LKDSB Strategic Priorities. He highlighted graduation rates with special and unique pathways from kindergarten to graduation. He noted an increase in graduation rates from previous reports and areas needing improvement to reach students still remain. Director Howitt indicated there are programs including the Personal Support Worker program and Summer Learning Program in elementary and secondary. He noted the support provided to students in their transitions throughout their academic years. Director Howitt noted the Strategic Priority Inclusive Diversity requires significant learning system wide throughout the LKDSB. He explained although the majority of professional development has been cancelled due to COVID-19, focus remains in this area. He noted the mental well-being of students was a focus of the Student Senate and the Parent Involvement Committee provided a virtual presentation to support parents. Director Howitt noted the report highlights trusting relationships and noted the balanced budget. He noted projects of improvements to school buildings are being completed. Director Howitt indicated technology was purchased to support students and provided students in need with internet connectivity. Trustee Fletcher noted the thoroughness of the report with links to further details included. Jane Bryce noted the use of colours from the Strategic Priorities and asked how this report is sent out and who is it sent to. Director Howitt noted it is available on the website, in social media and indicated there is a mailing list the report is sent to.

LKDSB COVID-19 Update
– Impact of Omicron
Variant
Report B-22-11

Director Howitt noted a number of changes have taken place since this report was created. He explained there has been no official notification from the Ministry of Education regarding what the announcement will contain after the meeting scheduled between the Ministry of Education and the Chief Medical Officer of Health. He noted the report included in the agenda has captured remote learning and items put in place for the return to face to face learning. He noted the Omicron variant is changing the challenges and noted some challenges may include a higher than normal student and staff absence. Guidelines will continue to be followed including hand washing, masking, hepa filters and distancing. Director Howitt noted the COVID-19 school screener follows public health advice. He noted there may be families who may request remote learning and noted this is not live synchronous learning. Director Howitt noted as cases decrease, students will start to return to the classroom and will continue learning with their teacher.

Trustee Fletcher indicated the Omicron variant results in many more cases of COVID-19. He asked if absenteeism will be reported which will help parents, staff and students to make decisions. Director Howitt noted the data will not be live data and that parents and staff will need to make decisions based on the completion of the COVID-19 school screener.

Trustee McKinlay asked if the director received any information regarding the Delta variant and if there is information regarding the difference in approaches. Director Howitt noted public health states the Delta is present but does not have complete data due to difficulty in completion of PCR (Polymerase Chain Reaction) testing. He noted the protective strategies currently in place in schools are effective with the Delta variant and have high success rates with previous variants and these protective strategies will be kept in place and noted they may not be as effective with the Omicron variant. Director Howitt noted there are different variations of isolation times in the screener depending on each individual person's situation.

Trustee McKinlay thanked Director Howitt for his clarification.

Trustee Bryce asked if absenteeism is the wording to be used if a staff is unable to come to work due to COVID-19 and is a word that suggests a choice. Director Howitt noted absenteeism is a word that could have negative judgment and to not be able to attend work due to COVID-19 is not a choice.

Correspondence

None

New Business

None

Trustee Questions

Trustee Fletcher asked if there are any updates on Specialist High School Major (SHSM).

Superintendent Mancini noted secondary school leads have been met with and there are schools completing applications for SHSM sectors such as manufacturing, construction and transportation sectors. She noted there is a new education and non-profit sector and there is interest by schools to submit applications when applications are accepted.

Trustee Bryce noted the Director receives questions emailed to the board to be addressed at board meetings and noted some questions were about education and some were about mandates being followed in education. Trustee Bryce asked if the Director has an opportunity to share these questions with local MPP's.

Director Howitt noted he is often copied into emails and continues to meet with superintendents, the coterminous board, public health and does bring some questions forward. He explained he has twice monthly meetings with the Deputy Minister of Education and weekly meetings with the Chairs of school boards and the Minister of Education. He noted there are opportunities to ask questions and share information and explained other boards sometimes have different approaches and requests. He noted he is comfortable to ask questions to understand the legislation for the LKDSB throughout the pandemic.

Trustee Bryce noted MPP's and the public health are aware of these questions from the constituents and noted constituents often feel school boards have more power than what is reality in changing public health mandates.

Notices of Motion

None

Announcements

The next Regular Board Meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 25, 2022 at 7:00 p.m. at a location to be determined.

Adjournment

There being no further business of the Board, Vice-Chair declared the Meeting adjourned at 8:43 p.m. Be safe be kind, wish you all well. Meeting adjourned.

Chair of the Board

Director of Education and
Secretary of the Board