

PRESENT:

- Trustees: Vice-Chair Kelley Robertson, Greg Agar, Janet Barnes, Jane Bryce, Ruth Ann Dodman, Malinda Little (joining virtually), Roberta Northmore, Angela Richards, David Shortt
- Student Trustees: Darshan Shah (joining virtually)
- Staff: Director of Education John Howitt, Associate Director Brian McKay, Superintendents of Education Angie Barrese, Emily Dixon, Gary Girardi, Ben Hazzard, and Mary Mancini
- Regrets: Chair Randy Campbell, Trustee Jack Fletcher, Student Trustees Graysen Bathe-Minard and Makaiyah Stonefish
- Recording Secretary: Bonnie Gotelaer, Executive Assistant to the Director
- Call to Order: Chair Robertson called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.
- #2024-57
Approval of the Agenda Moved by Greg Agar, seconded by Janet Barnes,
"That the Agenda for the Regular Board Meeting of April 9, 2024 be approved."
CARRIED.
- Declaration of Conflict of Interest Chair Robertson read the Traditional Territorial Agreement.
None.
- #2024-58
Approval of the Minutes
Mar/26/2024 Moved by Malinda Little, seconded by David Shortt,
"That the Board approve the Minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of March 26, 2024."
CARRIED.
- Business Arising from the Minutes None.
- Motions Emanating from the Regular Board Private Session None.
- #2024-59
Action of the Regular Board Private Session be the Action of the Board Moved by Janet Barnes, seconded by Ruth Ann Dodman,
"That the Action of the Board in Private Session be the Action of the Board."
CARRIED.
- Presentation – International Education Superintendent Dixon introduced Kirsten Ramsay, Administrator International Education. Superintendent Dixon explained Kirsten Ramsay has been leading the LKDSB in International Education for the past nine years and noted the supports provided to the students, partners and agencies and has earned great global respect for the LKDSB.

Kirsten Ramsay explained to be proud of the LKDSB International Education team and their work and noted that the international students trust the welcoming team who oversees flight details, transportation from the airport to the Lambton Kent area and are welcomed into LKDSB schools where they excel academically, socially and in the community.

Kirsten Ramsay relayed international students are encouraged to use their skills and talents and shared a TikTok video reel produced by some students where they used their voice to explain their experience of being an LKDSB international student.

Kirsten Ramsay indicated students were welcomed from twenty-one different countries in the 2023-2024 school year and explained the program continues to rebound from the pandemic, changing immigration rules and global political uncertainty which has impacted diversity including travel from Spain, Vietnam, and China.

Kirsten Ramsay relayed in the 2023-2024 school year the LKDSB welcomed students from Cambodia and Philippines for the first time. She explained most international students travel from Italy, Taiwan, France, and Germany and explained there have been increases in Turkey and Thailand and in 2024-2025 international students will be welcomed from Japan.

Kirsten Ramsay explained international students have an awareness of larger urban centres and she has continued to work to increase the awareness of Lambton Kent and recently visited Vietnam demonstrating an in-person presence.

Kirsten Ramsay indicated goals were set to increase the number of students in the program, the diversity and the number of schools the international students were placed in to bring the world to LKDSB classrooms and LKDSB students. She explained the international students are divided into different schools based on course requirements, homestay placements and the availability to be placed in schools where desired sports, clubs and hobbies are available.

Kirsten Ramsay noted there has been an increase of elementary inquiries (grade 8) and is developing a support system for this age group. She relayed that the LKDSB is well known abroad for the supports provided, post-secondary education advising including applying to post-secondary and applying for scholarship funds noting there were fifty grade 12 students in the 2023-2024 school year and twenty of those students plan to attend post-secondary education in Canada. Kirsten Ramsay explained there have been students accepted at a variety of post-secondary institutions and relayed an international student who attends Chatham Kent Secondary School has excelled both in school and in the community and has received several acceptances and scholarships including acceptance at Queens University and a \$60,000 scholarship, University of Toronto Commerce and a \$130,000 scholarship, University of Waterloo and a \$5000 scholarship and Wilfred Laurier University with a \$6000 scholarship. She explained the students are excited and accomplishments are celebrated by the International Education team with students enrolling in various areas such as early childhood education, teaching, business, engineering and other various programs. Kirsten Ramsay explained the International Education department is comprised of an International Education Academic Coordinator who also assists in student exchange programs and two International Student

Coordinators who, as front line supports for international students, visit every international student every second week in school to ensure the wellness of the students and enabling them to receive help they may need. She explained everyone on the International Education Team has lived or worked abroad which makes them relatable to the international students.

Kirsten Ramsay explained the Teach-Abroad Taiwan project which includes two LKDSB principals and two groups of LKDSB teachers who will travel to Taiwan in summer 2024 to conduct an English as a Second Language (ESL) summer program. She explained the students in this project work in a classroom similar to a Canadian classroom style which is different than the classrooms in Taiwan. Kirsten Ramsay explained the 2 + 1 Program – Blessed Imelda began as a pilot program in the LKDSB in 2021 and explained there are full year ESL programs from elementary to grade 9 in the Taiwan system for students interested in studying abroad. She explained support for grade 10 students who are interested in studying abroad attend English speaking workshops, Canadian Culture workshops and studying abroad online workshops every Saturday as an extra-curricular activity. She noted to have recently met the students in-person who have completed the program and continued to explain there are four grade 11 students who are now completing the Year 2 program who are welcomed to live abroad for a month gaining experience in homestay, establishing a timetable and visits to post-secondary campuses to determine if they would like to pursue a year in LKDSB. She explained the first international student to fully complete the 2 + 1 Program has been accepted at the University of Waterloo by using the building blocks provided by the LKDSB to reach their goal.

The LKDSB Outbound experiences provides opportunities to LKDSB teachers and students to experience the world by providing different types of experiences including Taiwan Teach-Abroad a reciprocal exchange in Sweden, restarting exchange resulting in co-op experiences to countries visited prior to the pandemic.

Kirsten Ramsay explained the International Certificate Program (ICP) for Canadian students develops global awareness and competencies through learning language, interaction, hosting or being a buddy in the school to international students and noted students guide their own learning which is recognized by some post-secondary for scholarships.

Kirsten Ramsay relayed there are reciprocal benefits for the LKDSB students by bringing the world to their classroom. LKDSB students interact and learn about international students, where they come from and their culture and noted the opportunities should be provided to enable all LKDSB students to become global citizens.

Kirsten Ramsay explained challenges for the LKDSB include being a more rural location and people not knowing the location of Lambton Kent. She explained the integration and supports provided by the LKDSB verifies it is a valuable area for international students to learn in. She explained the recent immigration announcements do not affect LKDSB schools and international students who graduate from the LKDSB can renew their immigration documents allowing them eligibility to apply to post-secondary education in Canada. She explained the increase in flights and marketing fairs to recruit international students is necessary but costly and the LKDSB needs to be strategic to be remembered. Kirsten Ramsay indicated there have been

strategies to overcome these challenges including enlisting the assistance of a Lambton College cooperative education student to help on an awareness campaign who spoke with community groups to recruit families, face to face meetings with agents and partners overseas, and demonstrating student supports.

Kirsten Ramsay relayed the LKDSB has been selected to attend the Canadian Association of Public Schools International (CAPSI) South Korea Mission, the CAPSI Turkey Mission, the Ontario Association of School Districts International (OASDI) Germany Mission and an exploratory mission to Dubai. She explained with her credentials, that currently the LKDSB is the only board in Ontario with a Registered International Student Advisor on staff which is usually a role in post-secondary but is a role that is valuable to the LKDSB. She explained there has been feedback from provincial and national conferences noting the support students receive from the LKDSB International Education Coordinators. She indicated her role as the Vice-President of the OASDI allows firsthand information in discussions regarding next moves in international education. She noted the support of the LKDSB is important to all students and for those interested in international education.

Chair Robertson thanked Kirsten Ramsay and noted enthusiasm for the program is evident.

A Trustee asked where students stay while attending LKDSB.

Kirsten Ramsay indicated approximately 90% of students stay with Homestay Network families with the remainder staying with family or friends. A Trustee noted the budget of the board and asked if this is a net revenue, a break even, or a negative.

Director Howitt noted to maintain status quo, the break-even is approximately 70 full time equivalent (FTE) students and the goal is to improve beyond that. Director Howitt noted there are a great deal of empty classroom spaces and tuition paying students enrolling with the LKDSB employs more teachers and education workers and uses classroom space. Director Howitt relayed that the programs that are not paid tuitions such as student exchange and the 2 +1 encourage international students to enrol. He explained in 2023-2024 there were students from 21 different countries and explained typically there are 23-26 countries represented every semester. A Trustee noted this is an invaluable program and invaluable to our students and great to be a leader globally.

Superintendent Barrese noted appreciation for the program and shared a reflection on the impact and influence hosting International Students and the continuance of friendships made beyond the time spent in the LKDSB and noted the influence and impact for LKDSB students has a far greater impact than can be imagined and it does make a difference and is a wonderful opportunity for LKDSB students to build friendships and companionships.

Director Howitt indicated to gain a full appreciation of the LKDSB International Education program when interacting with parents and feedback about the reputation of the LKDSB on a global stage with the personal connections developed by Kirsten Ramsay and her team. Director Howitt informed that Kirsten Ramsay also takes on the role of custodian for the international students and this responsibility is appreciated by the students' parents and the LKDSB.

Director Howitt continued to say the Homestay Network opportunity may be of interest for families of the LKDSB. International students receive transportation to school and personal appointments and there is a stipend to help cover some costs of hosting.

A Trustee asked what the curriculum would you expect and how are families determined to host.

Kirsten Ramsay explained there is a partnership with Homestay Network in screening and selecting homestay families whose process includes interviews, home visits, orientation and training to understand cultural differences and ask that students have their own bedroom, a good place to study, nutrition and treated as a family member including family meals, celebrations and if they are on a school team or in an activity, that homestay families attend and support.

Delegations

None.

#2024-60 Tender Award - Two Portable Classrooms – Various LKDSB Locations Report B-24-62

Associate Director McKay indicated to have a tender for two portable classrooms and confirmed the portables will be located at Indian Creek Road Public School and Errol Village Public School. Tenders were received electronically by the Purchasing Department on Thursday, February 29, 2024 by Shawn Unsworth, Purchasing Supervisor. Associate Director McKay explained the costs are noted in the Project Bidder table and these costs are per portable. Associate Director indicated Fero International Inc. had the lowest bid at \$133,810 and an additional cost to ensure it is AODA compliant with a cost of \$11,860 net HST \$18,937.10, with a total of \$164,607.10 for one portable making it \$329,214.20 for two portables and includes bringing the portables to the site. He relayed that the funding sources cannot be School Condition Improvement or School Renewal funding sources for portables and would draw from Temporary Accommodations funding to either purchase or lease portables and noted in research found purchasing to be a lesser cost over time. He noted the interest rates create high lease prices. The Temporary Accommodations funding is not sufficient to purchase portables and have used general Grants for Student Needs (GSN) funding sources and when operating in a surplus position since other accounts could allow the portables to be affordable but in the expected deficit, the cost will flow through Accumulated Surplus for capital purchase items.

Moved by Greg Agar, seconded by Ruth Ann Dodman.

“That the Board award the tender to the successful bidder, Fero International Inc. for the Portable Classrooms at Various LKDSB Locations.”

CARRIED.

A Trustee asked if the portables are needed due to growth or are they replacements.

Associate Director relayed these portables are being purchased due to growth in the Indian Creek Road Public School and Errol Village Public School.

Ontario Public School
Boards' Association
Update (OPSBA) Oral
Report

Associate Director McKay indicated that Errol Village Public School has tenders being finalized for additions and currently has two portables on that school site. He explained the school will have a two-classroom addition and it is possible the third portable will be needed in the future due to enrolment pressures resulting from growth.

Director Howitt relayed boundary changes may need to be reviewed due to the moratorium on closing schools not being lifted in the near future and empty spaces in the classrooms. He explained boundary changes can occur as they do not include consolidation of schools and noted the Pupil Accommodation Report will be presented to Trustees in June.

Chair Robertson provided an oral report regarding the OPSBA West Region meeting that occurred on April 6, 2024 with strong representation from LKDSB Trustees with nine in attendance and thanked those for their dedication.

Chair Robertson relayed the day began with participation in contributing to the OPSBA Annual Operational Plan with four posters placed around the room noting items in the OPSBA Annual Operational Plan needing feedback on each poster which included Student Success, Equity and Well-Being; Local School Board Governance; Truth and Reconciliation and Effective Relationships and Sustainable Resourcing.

Chair Robertson noted that an overview of the Ontario provincial budget was presented and encouraged Trustees to read updates.

Chair Robertson explained there were updates from various OPSBA committees.

A Trustee noted the carpentry program toured and the work that has been done for students and it pushes the students in mathematics and attitude and is beneficial to families that may not be able to afford post-secondary schooling and would like something similar brought to the LKDSB.

Chair Robertson noted the carpentry program was hosted by the Woodworking Union and Carpentry Union.

A Trustee noted that it was evident that school board Trustees across the province feel their remuneration is not sufficient.

Chair Robertson acknowledged that there were some items on the posters that clearly showed issues and concerns.

A Trustee indicated the carpentry program toured was the result of work a teacher began with the Carpentry Union and has been able to place students as apprentices in the community noting that skilled trades are very meaningful at an LKDSB school.

A Trustee noted the criteria used to recruit students included attitude, attendance and math ability and appreciated the program toured. The Trustee asked if the LKDSB has anything at the same depth as what is offered in Windsor and noted applications for funding is available.

Director Howitt relayed there are connections in the private sector through the union sector and noted there is an extensive training centre in Sarnia and noted co-operative education that accepts students in the workplace. Superintendent Mancini noted the strong connection with welding and the Canadian Welding Bureau where students earn welding credits. She explained several students engaged in a competition with a welding

company and students shared their welds with the Board and community connections are similar.

Director Howitt indicated these opportunities occur at schools across the board and are not isolated to one school in the LKDSB system. He explained the LKDSB Student Achievement Plan indicates that the LKDSB has 31% of students who participate in skilled trades at the senior level of secondary school which is greater than the provincial average of 17% and displays an extensive skilled trades program in LKDSB and is a very legitimate pathway. Chair Robertson indicated the carpentry tour provided a centralized model and our board is a disseminated model as a summary.

Superintendent Mancini noted there are SHSM programs in all our secondary schools across the board that supports this work and referred to the Canadian Welding Bureau program and is available at Alexander Mackenzie Secondary School, Chatham Kent Secondary School, Great Lakes Secondary School, John McGregor Secondary School, Lambton Central Centennial Vocational Institute and North Lambton Secondary School.

Special Education
Advisory Committee
(SEAC) Report
Report B-24-63

Trustee Little indicated the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) meeting was held on March 21, 2024 and explained a presentation from Student Support Services / Well-Being Coordinator Jeff Brosh regarding the philosophies of Educational Assistant supports providing information on who Educational Assistants support, why they may be moved around to different schools and what their 7-hour workday entails. She relayed that the Educational Assistants provide supports for students to gain their own independence.

Trustee Little noted the presentation provided by LKDSB Applied Behaviour Analysis staff Mariah Walker and Josalyn Lyons explained Philosophies of Universal Supports and noted similar to tiered support they use a triangle of intervention which includes understanding how to identify behaviours, highlighting student strengths and support safety planes which has helped in the reduction of behaviours and the rise of success in classrooms.

Trustee Little explained there was information regarding the role of the resource teacher and will be undergoing a comprehensive review with feedback from the committee and community agencies.

Trustee Little noted the next meeting will be held on Thursday, April 18, 2024 at Wallaceburg District Secondary School.

A Trustee asked if the presentations are done routinely in different locations. Superintendent Barrese suggested a workshop could be considered and could be included as an orientation topic.

Director Howitt relayed the School Climate Survey was sent to staff, students, and families of LKDSB students and is sent out every two years with consistency in the majority of questions and will be processed by Lambton College to be reported back in the fall. He explained a great deal of the LKDSB Operational Plan relates to the data in the School Climate Survey obtain this data every second year.

Director Howitt explained that before the Grants for Students' Needs (GSN) are released, the LKDSB has been reviewing budgetary issues and challenges working with the assumption the LKDSB will receive similar dollar

amounts as this year and if so, the LKDSB would need to make some cuts to avoid being in a deficit position.

Director Howitt noted bell time changes taking place in the fall are savings for the board and these changes are models of transportation that currently take place elsewhere in our board. Director Howitt noted there was some feedback when shared and concerns were discussed. He indicated there was a complaint that the community was not consulted and confirmed that was true and explained it would have been disingenuous consultation as this was a model that exists in the board presently and the decision was a budgetary focus. Director Howitt noted it was shared as early as possible with the communities so they could be prepared in the fall.

Director Howitt indicated there are currently students who have been riding a bus since September due to construction in the area and communication will be shared confirming that these students will resume walking to and from school since construction is now complete.

Director Howitt explained that meetings have been held with Associate Director McKay and his budget team with all departments in the LKDSB including indicating methods to reduce budgets without reducing personnel. He explained the goal is 5% savings from each department and if achieved would go a long way to meeting the deficit pressures felt last year. Director Howitt noted these reductions are separate from transportation as this is a separate item. Superintendents of Education were accompanied by System Coordinators and Administrative Assistants to assist in identifying areas to cut and to indicate pressure areas.

Director Howitt explained Grants for Students' Needs (GSN's) have not been released and noted that the technical paper which accompanies the GSN announcement outlining specific funding details for the LKDSB may not come at the same time and will begin budgetary meetings after the technical paper has been received.

Director Howitt noted the Human Resources team has been working with principal groups and union partners and it is not yet known about hiring or redundancies at this stage.

A Trustee asked if the K-12 integrated service model for transportation was being used for the first time.

Associate Director explained this has been used in the Forest family of schools and explained the K-12 integrated service model represents all students from kindergarten to grade 12 ride the same bus and is very efficient from a funding model and has support from parents in the Forest and North Lambton communities.

A Trustee asked if there would be a decrease in number bus used in that area so there is a cost savings.

Associate Director McKay indicated the cost savings to be between \$300,00 and \$350,000 with a decrease in kilometres and amount of buses.

A Trustee indicated these buses are shared with the coterminous board.

New Business

None.

Trustee Questions

A Trustee asked if the boundary changes are operational or community involvement.

Director Howitt explained the boundary changes are operational and there are some guidelines where the Senior Team could make decisions and there are those that require community involvement with consultations and may be presented to Trustees for decisions. He explained that some guidelines are very regulated such as if the impact is greater than 50% of student body. He relayed that it would depend on the decision, the magnitude and the number of students affected.

A Trustee asked if the Pupil Accommodation Regulation would need to be updated.

Director Howitt noted the series of policies and regulations and administrative procedures for accommodation review have been on hold awaiting the lifting of the moratorium on school closures and explained guidelines will change and noted there may be a review of the current series to enable the Board to be prepared for any upcoming changes.

A Trustee noted a social media anonymous participant posted that LKDSB teachers are not being allowed to have permission to take a Friday leave of absence to attend their children's ringette tournament on Prince Edward Island and it stated these same teachers/parents have been denied Friday leaves to attend their children's spring games. The Trustee asked what the regulations are regarding staff taking leaves and how does it affect the issues the board faces with teacher shortages.

Director Howitt explained leave requests are very challenging and the Human Resource Department makes decisions following the collective agreement. He explained that staff can make leave requests if permitted under the collective agreement, paid or unpaid, for personal reasons, faith reasons, bereavement and that there are multiple leaves in the collective agreement. He indicated that generally as many leaves as possible are approved but when it rises to the threshold creating classrooms, the day is closed off for approvals. He explained the obligation is to the students who are attending school on a school day and the need to have LKDSB staff in front of those students. Director Howitt explained the LKDSB cannot knowingly create a vacancy that is known to remain unfilled and understands how it is difficult for parents who are teachers who are not approved for leave indicating the need to have staff present for students attending on a school day. He explained that student attendance and student learning is being increasingly affected by the movement of tournaments further into the school week and for teams that include teachers as coaching staff, it creates a greater challenge as students need the educators, the clerical staff and education workers. Director Howitt explained the threshold to close the day has been in existence for LKDSB staff and indicated that in this particular event there were 32 leaves granted to staff and LKDSB could not approve any further. He relayed that having a staff member agree to cover a classroom does not follow the collective agreement and that the Human Resources Department who does an incredible job must follow the collective agreement. He explained Human Resources provide information with as much notice as possible when reaching the threshold and notifies the union partners that that day is no longer available.

Superintendent Girardi explained that Human Resources keeps track of progress and explained that unlike some other boards the LKDSB has held the position that accommodations are made when possible.

A Trustee asked about technical courses being mandatory in grade 9 and the possibility of having non-technical teachers teach these courses and if we are prepared.

Director Howitt noted that the LKDSB has twice the provincial average of students enrolled in skilled trades courses at the senior level.

Superintendent Mancini noted that the new mandatory technical course is not a challenge in our board as we had a significant number of students enrolled in grade 9 technology and the new grade 9 technology course will be covered by qualified teaching staff.

Superintendent Girardi added that student numbers for accommodation are being tracked and the LKDSB is in a good position and commended the hard work LKDSB secondary programs and student services complete providing a depth of knowledge for pathways students are taking.

Notices of Motion

None.

Announcements

Chair Robertson noted the hyperlink to the Public Sector Salary Disclosure that was present in the package.

The next Regular Board Meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 23, 2024 at the Sarnia Education Centre at 7:00 p.m.

Adjournment

There being no further business of the Board, Chair Robertson declared the Meeting adjourned at 8:33 p.m.

Chair of the Board

Director of Education and
Secretary of the Board