

ANNUAL BOARD MEETING MINUTES – DECEMBER 1, 2021

PUBLIC MEETING

Roll call:

Trustees:	Staff:
J. Brown G. Elliott L. French T. Gingrich B. Godkin R. Hutcheon K. McGregor J. Morning S. Ruttan T. Duncan (Student Trustee) S. Johnson (Student Trustee) B. Roy (Student Trustee)	K. Burra, Director of Education J. Douglas, Communications Officer S. Gillam, Superintendent of Education P. Gollogly, Associate Superintendent S. Hedderson, Associate Superintendent A. McDonnell, Superintendent of Education S. McWilliams, Superintendent of Human Resources S. Sartor, Associate Superintendent J. Silver, Superintendent of Education K. Smith, Communications Officer C. Young, Superintendent of Business Services
Guests:	Recorder:
None at this time.	W. Moore, Executive Assistant to the Director and Trustee Liaison

1. CALL TO ORDER

Director Burra stated, "In accordance with Section 208 of *The Education Act*, and LDSB By-Laws Article II, and IV, and under the authority invested in me as the Secretary of the Board, I welcome everyone to the Annual Meeting of the Limestone District School Board for the term ending November 30, 2022.

I shall be the presiding officer of this Annual Meeting, pending the election of the Chair of the Board, and therefore call this meeting to order.

2. LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Director Burra read 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. Throughout this past year Trustees have taken turns personalizing the Limestone Land Acknowledgement and I commend them on their leadership in doing so. A common theme has arisen where we have all indicated we have more to learn because the Indigenous experience on this land was not something we learned when we were in school. This learning must continue and is a critical component on the path of reconciliation. Part of my more recent learning has been focused on morale and legal responsibilities we have as people who live on this land, but also on why reconciliation and learning from Indigenous ways of being, doing, and knowing may be critical to all of humanity’s survival. *Unsettling Canada* by Arthur Manuel and Grand Chief Ronald Derrickson make this critical point in their book, “Our Indigenous views which include air, water, land, animals and people, in a continually sustaining cycle is increasingly seen by both scientists and citizens as the only way to a sustainable future.” They go on to say, “As Indigenous peoples we must always keep in mind that taking care of Mother Earth is the most important contribution we can make.” While we are still embroiled in this pandemic, we must not lose sight of the looming environmental challenges all of humanity faces and how Indigenous ways of being, doing, and knowing provide insight into how we must address these challenges.”

3. OPENING GREETINGS AND INTRODUCTIONS

Director Burra called the roll:

Representing the Town of Greater Napanee: Trustee Laurie French

Representing the Townships of Addington Highlands, Central Frontenac, and North Frontenac:

Trustee Karen McGregor

Representing the Townships of Loyalist & Stone Mills: Trustee Robin Hutcheon

Representing the Township of South Frontenac: Trustee Suzanne Ruttan

From the City of Kingston:

Representing Countryside, Pittsburgh, and Frontenac Islands: Trustee Bob Godkin

Representing Districts of Williamsville and Sydenham: Trustee Joy Morning

Representing Kingscourt-Rideau and King’s Town: Trustee Tom Gingrich

Representing Portsmouth, Trillium and Meadowbrook-Strathcona: Trustee Garrett Elliott

Representing Loyalist-Cataraqui, Collins-Bayridge and Lakeside: Trustee Judith Brown

Indigenous Student Trustee: Breanna Roy

Rural Student Trustee: Shana Johnson

Urban Student Trustee: Tanesha Duncan

As the new term of office begins, Director Burra expressed his appreciation to Trustees for the important contributions and decisions made that support student achievement and well-being while ensuring the Board fulfills its duties under the Education Act.

4. DECLARATION AND OATH OF ALLEGIANCE

Trustees of the Limestone District School Board are committed to accountability and transparency. The Trustee Code of Conduct states: “Trustees shall declare any conflict of interest or involvement, financial or otherwise, between their personal life and/or business interests and their position of the Board.” In support of this Trustees annually declare their ongoing involvement with agencies, boards, and committees in organizations outside the Limestone District School Board and declare verbally at the Annual Board Meeting.

Trustees read their Declaration of Involvement with respect to what other community organizations they are members or volunteers.

5. ELECTION OF THE CHAIR

Director Burra called for nominations for the position of Chair of the Board.

Trustee Godkin nominated Trustee Ruttan and seconded by Trustee French.

Trustee Ruttan accepted the nomination.

Director Burra called for nominations two additional times. Hearing none, he stated that nominations would be closed.

MOVED by Trustee Godkin and seconded by Trustee McGregor that the nominations be closed. Carried.

Director Burra congratulated Trustee Ruttan on being acclaimed Chair of the Limestone District School Board for the session December 1, 2021 to November 30, 2022.

Trustee Ruttan assumed the Chair.

Chair Ruttan thanked Trustees for their support, and she hopes that everyone can work together through this pandemic and support staff the best that we can. She appreciates everyone's confidence.

6. ELECTION OF THE VICE-CHAIR

Chair Ruttan called for nominations for the position of Vice-Chair of the Board.

Trustee French nominated Trustee Gingrich and seconded by Trustee McGregor.

Trustee Gingrich accepted the nomination.

Trustee Elliott nominated Trustee Hutcheon and seconded by Trustee Godkin.

Trustee Hutcheon accepted the nomination.

Chair Ruttan called for nominations two additional times. Hearing none, she stated that nominations would be closed.

MOVED by Trustee Elliott and seconded by Trustee French that the nominations be closed. Carried.

Both candidates addressed the Board and thanked their colleagues for the nomination.

Trustees voted on their selection of Vice-Chair of the Board. Superintendent McWilliams and Associate Superintendent Sartor counted the votes. Chair Ruttan congratulated Trustee Gingrich on being voted Vice-Chair of the Limestone District School Board for the session December 1, 2021 to November 30, 2022. She thanked Trustee Hutcheon for putting her name forward.

Trustee Gingrich thanked Trustees for putting their trust in him to allow him to do this job once again. He hopes that he can do this well enough to one day step up to be Chair. He again thanked Trustees for putting their trust in him.

MOVED by Trustee Godkin and seconded by Trustee McGregor that the ballots be destroyed. Carried.

7. REPORTS FOR INFORMATION

Before proceeding with the reports for Information, Chair Ruttan asked if there were any additions to the agenda. Trustee Godkin asked for a COVID Update. Trustees agreed to add this item as number 7.3.

7.1 Director's Annual Report

Director Burra stated that the Director's Annual Report is a legislated regulatory annual requirement. The Annual Report is somewhat abridged as some of the data that would typically be in there, such as testing, has been on hold during the period of time for the 2020-2021 school year. The annual report does focus somewhat on the Strategic Plan – Strategic Areas of Priorities that highlight some of the initiatives supporting the Boards' strategic pillars of Wellness, Innovation and Collaboration. The report has been posted to the website on the "See Yourself in Limestone" page and will be submitted to the Ministry of Education in compliance with the January 31, 2022 deadline.

7.2 OPSBA Report – Trustee French

Trustee French stated that the Board of Directors met on Saturday, November 27, 2021. Further information on the Public Education Symposium (January 28, 2022) will be coming out this week or next. It will be virtual again this year and there is a single registration and fee for each Board. Trustee French hopes Trustees will be able to participate.

Planning is underway for an Advocacy Day, likely at the end of February 2022, so Trustees will need to watch out for preparation as far as moving forward the questions for candidates, as we head into a provincial election.

Platform meetings were held with Marit Stiles and Steven Del Duca and both of them kindly recognized the value of OPSBA and the value of submissions that inform policy. Our Trustees that sit on those committees can be pleased to see that work recognized as well.

Four sessions are coming up for Project Compass and Trustee French hopes Trustees will take advantage of these four single sessions next week. Trustees will be able to provide input to the structure and processes that OPSBA represents us through, so it is a really important time with respect to input as to how the organization will look in the future.

There was financial approval for the CSBA with respect to a project that is happening to conduct research on the impact on the loss of school boards when school boards have been eliminated in those provinces.

A motion came forward, which has been deferred until such time that the Indigenous Trustee Council has reviewed this, that reads: “In the spirit of truth and reconciliation, it is recommended that OPSBA propose an appropriate variation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s Call to Action No. 94 for school board members to adopt as the voluntary oath affirmation of allegiance upon assuming their office as elected board members.” This reflects the recognition of treaties with Indigenous Peoples in the new Canadian Oath of Citizenship that was in effect since the National Indigenous Peoples Day on June 21 and so it is recommended that the same move forward for us at the Trustees and school board level. It was deferred to the Indigenous Trustee Council and the revision would be: “I swear or affirm that I will be faithful and bear allegiance to Her Majesty Elizabeth the Second, Queen of Canada, her heirs and successors, and that I will faithfully observe the laws of Canada, including the constitution, which recognizes and affirms the Aboriginal and treaty rights of First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples, and fulfils my duties as a Canadian Citizen.” Trustee French stated this is a very positive move to have this incorporated, but the consultation with the Indigenous Trustee Council still needs to happen.

Trustee McGregor advised that she works on the Education Team and over the last while they have been working on the Grants for Student Needs (GSNs) proposal. What she found most interesting was the complexity of all the different voices coming from all of Ontario. On every one of the funding priorities that OPSBA puts forward, there were so many viewpoints and that everyone had something important to contribute. The proposal that OPSBA has put forward that goes to the Minister, goes live tomorrow, and will be posted on the OPSBA website. The proposal is very well done, and in particular the last three pages, the Mental Health Support recommendations that OPSBA is putting forward.

Trustee Hutcheon concurred with Trustee McGregor that the OPSBA submission for the GSNs consultation has been well written and well thought out.

Trustee Hutcheon noted that the Code of Conduct piece has certainly been interesting. A lot of really interesting comments have come forward from Trustees around the province; things that she may not have expected. Will wait to see what the Ministry does with all that consultation. One of the biggest comments being, “Why are they making us do this now, in the middle of all

this?” Trustees around the province certainly stepped up and provided the Ministry with a lot of really good comments about Code of Conduct and she hopes they really take those to heart.

Chair Ruttan thanked Trustees French, Hutcheon, and McGregor for their updates.

7.3 COVID Update

Director Burra stated that he did share the data last week, as it relates to the number of cases in the 2021-2022 school year versus, the number of cases in the 2020-2021 school year and we have more than doubled the number of cases in the current year, even though we are only three months into the school year, versus all of last year. To this point, there are about 140 cases at the elementary level and 19 at the secondary level. Current active cases, which means cases which have been identified in the last week and a half or so, including today, at the elementary level we have 56, and at secondary we have eight. Of the 140 cases, under 50 per cent are active currently. Over the course of the last five weeks, we have seen the vast majority of these cases. It certainly is alarming to school communities, the overall community, but it is also alarming to staff and Trustees as well. A couple of Trustees have had cases in schools where their children attend and all three of the schools where the Director’s children attend have had cases at some point over past few weeks. There is a broad impact and a personal impact for people as well, including those around this table.

There are a number of additional measures that Public Health instituted last week. Some of those measures have been met with some hostility in some school communities and in others they have very much been embraced. The two in particular that came out last week was the increased screening requirements for students, going back to the single symptom screening that was in place for a good portion of last year, which strains the system in terms of the number of students missing school, but also the number of staff missing school because either they are screening out, or have children who are screened out as part of that process. The second was the recommendation to have students wear masks out on the yard, even if they were in cohorts, as an additional measure when they are at school. The last measure was requiring vaccination for those children 12 to 17 in the community who are participating in sporting activities. The Board chose to support the move that we made, through the recommendation of Public Health, to put in place vaccinations for extra-curricular activities in a phased-in approach earlier this year.

Director Burra noted that there are frequently situations, when there are reported cases, there is more information that we have, but cannot publicly disclose to specific schools because it is a situation where there are multiple members of that household, children/students in schools, who are positive. There have been at least two occasions, one more recently, and one previously, where there are families with upwards of five children in a school and all of them have become positive in a very short period of time. This has a significant ripple effect impacting multiple cohorts. While we have been alarmed certainly with the number of cases, and it tends to be up and down, as of Monday we reported one case and today, we reported out 13, there is certain information that Public Health possesses that we cannot disclose for privacy reasons. That might temper some of the concerns at any rate, with some of the cases, as there are multiple siblings who become positive, which then looks as if it was totally independent and would create more concern than if they were closely related to each other.

Director Burra reiterated that staff is in regular daily contact with Public Health, multiple times per day. There is certainly understandable concern in the community as it relates to what has been happening as far as COVID cases in Kingston, Frontenac, Lennox and Addington having the highest rates that we have had over the course of the last two years, as well as the highest number of active cases in any point in time, over the course of the last couple of weeks. There is no question that COVID continues to have an impact on the system. It is certainly impacting the activities that we can offer to the elementary students, in particular those in Kindergarten to Grade 6, and it is obviously affecting the operations of schools as we have additional students or additional staff who are unable to be at school, for the reasons explained earlier.

Chair Ruttan thanked Director Burra for his update and called upon Trustees for questions.

8. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

8.1 Correspondence from Jennifer Kehoe, Parent of past Sistema Kingston participants, School Advisory Council Member of Molly Brant Elementary School, dated October 26, 2021. Director Burra noted that in fairness to Ms. Kehoe, this letter was written at the end of October, and Limestone was having discussions with Public Health around opening Community Use of Schools (CUS). Shortly thereafter cases of COVID, particularly in the elementary panel, started to rise, and Public Health made it clear that in settings where students aged 5 to 11 year-olds are interacting, Public Health wanted a limit on those interactions, and this has been the case for a few weeks now. The reason for this is once students start crossing over between cohorts, the situation is such that not only is one class impacted, but multiple classes in the school are

impacted. Director Burra suspects, that based on context, there will be no further conversation around opening CUS for 5 to 11 year-olds, until we see cases decline and vaccination impact for that particular population. That will be an ongoing discussion Limestone will have to have with Public Health in terms of determining whether we can open schools for those types of activities for 5 to 11 year-olds. There is no question, everything else being equal, that those types of activities are absolutely essential for young people. The feedback received from students in Grades 7 to 12, with all of those activities starting again in schools, has been a real game changer, as far as those students' attitudes and their approach to things, and the feeling like their lives are getting back to somewhat normal. We must remain agile and continue to adjust depending upon circumstances as far as local community health and the number of cases in schools right now. The Director stated that while he understands everyone would like to see these activities start as soon as possible because of their importance, right now, unfortunately, health and safety and making sure regular day school can continue with the least number of interruptions as possible trumps the need for these types of activities unfortunately in the short term.

Director Burra did clarify that school-based CUS (such as Sistema Kingston) receives priority over other CUS categories such as sporting groups, e.g., Kingston Impact or the Lakers Basketball, which are a lower priority.

Chair Ruttan indicated that the Board would send correspondence summarizing that Limestone would not be opening up things to CUS right now, even though we value all the programming, until things change from a Public Health point-of-view.

9. ADJOURNMENT

MOVED BY: Trustee McGregor and seconded by Trustee Hutcheon that the meeting adjourn. Carried.

The meeting adjourned at 7:27 p.m.