

SPECIAL BOARD MEETING MINUTES – AUGUST 18, 2021

PUBLIC MEETING

Roll call:

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) Regrets	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

Chair Ruttan welcomed everyone to the Special Board Meeting of the Limestone District School Board of Trustees, which is being held virtually, as there is some work being done in the Board Room and Trustees and staff are unable to use it at this time. To keep the meeting as efficient as possible, Chair Ruttan indicated she would call a speakers' list for each item for discussion and decision throughout the meeting.

Chair Ruttan 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

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of Métis, Inuit, and other First Nations from across Turtle Island. We honour their cultures and celebrate their commitment to this land. As we complete the difficult work of truth and reconciliation, my hope is that it will always be done with respect, sensitivity and hope for the future.”

Chair Ruttan advised the viewing public that this Special Meeting of the Board has been called to update Trustees regarding provincial guidance for the September 2021 re-entry and the Limestone preparations for the new school year. This meeting is solely intended to deal with this single item. As such, no standing reports or agenda items will be included.

MOVED BY Trustee Godkin and seconded by Trustee McGregor that the agenda be adopted as presented. Carried.

2. DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Trustee Elliott declared that his wife is an employee of the LDSB and member of ETFO. Trustee Godkin declared that his daughter is an occasional teacher with another public school board and on the list for LDSB.

3. NOTICE OF MOTION

3.1 Motion brought forward by Trustee Elliott:

“That LDSB educators and education staff be allowed to provide their own Health Canada approved respirator, if desired, when that respirator is listed on the Health Canada [website](#). They must be put on and take off all respirators as described by the CCOHS ([see figure 2](#)). Any educator or education staff who wishes to wear the Ministry-provided medical masks will continue to have masks provided to them.”

Chair Ruttan reminded Trustees the motions are being received only and they will not be debated this evening, but rather at the Regular Board Meeting of August 25, 2021. She asked Trustee Elliott to read his motion for Trustees.

3.2 Motion brought forward by Trustee French:

“That the Limestone District School Board write a letter endorsing the Ontario Public School Boards’ letter of August 13, 2021, that the government act as quickly as possible to implement a policy addressing vaccination in schools.”

Chair Ruttan asked Trustee French to read her motion for Trustees.

After reading her motion, Trustee French indicated that she would be withdrawing her motion at this time, as there was a policy announcement from the Ministry on Monday, August 16, 2021.

Chair Ruttan thanked Trustee French and noted that, as this motion was withdrawn, Trustees would not be debating on this motion at the next meeting of August 25, 2021.

Trustee Elliott requested that another notice of motion, which is similar to the withdrawn motion, but slightly different, be inserted.

“That the Limestone District School Board write a letter endorsing the Ontario Public School Board’s Association’s statement of August 17, 2021, that the government act as quickly as possible to update the Immunization of School Pupils Act to determine whether COVID-19 should be added to the compulsory vaccination list.”

Chair Ruttan thanked Trustee Elliott. These motions will be debated at the Regular Board Meeting of August 25, 2021.

4. REPORTS FOR INFORMATION

4.1 September 2021 School Re-entry and Pandemic Protocols

Director Burra indicated family communication went out earlier this week and that did result in some media coverage on Tuesday, August 17, 2021. In the report before Trustees, staff tried to consolidate some of the different information, and while we continue to receive questions from different families and community members, staff will continue to update any additional information or changes from the Ministry and Public Health in the FAQs section on the website. Staff will indicate that there was a change, simply by adjusting the date.

Director Burra noted that boards received Operational Guidance in the spring from the Ministry, and then a couple of weeks ago, an updated guidance was received. This information continues to be fine-tuned by the Ministry and consequently, it is important to continue to be agile and adapt, as circumstances change. Director Burra stated that many of the protective strategies that were applied last year remain in place. Director Burra and Senior Staff summarized the key

highlights in the guidance, received to date.

Daily screening continues and on-site screening may be required if directed by local Public Health authorities based on the context of the pandemic.

Mandatory masking with some exceptions due to medical or special needs, is required for all staff and students in Grades 1-12. Students and staff are not required to wear masks outdoors, but distancing should be encouraged between cohorts. It was noted that the August 2020 motion continues to be in place to include the encouragement and expectation of masking for Kindergarten students.

Staff Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) guidelines remains the same as in 2020-2021.

Hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette guidelines remains the same as last year, however, there is less emphasis on the cleaning of share material. The focus instead is on maintaining good hand hygiene before and after use of shared materials.

Continued emphasis remains on distancing where possible. Elementary students (K-8) are to remain within their cohort while indoors. Updated guidance indicates students do not need to stay within their cohort during recess and breaks outdoors, but distancing should be encouraged between cohorts. As a precaution, elementary schools in LDSB will continue to cohort students outdoors to start the year and that is because that population is ineligible for vaccines. That being said, with the changes that were announced on Tuesday, August 17, students who turn 12, or born in 2009, those students are now eligible for vaccine, which is very good news.

For secondary students, more flexibility has been provided in the number of direct and indirect contacts students may have over the course of a week. Consequently, the operational guidance in May and August both recommended the utilization of quadmester model, two courses per day, for at least September to the end of January.

Additional cleaning of high-touch surfaces will be continued in the same manner as 2020-2021, although there is a reduction in the total number of hours distributed throughout the board with those hours only guaranteed for six months.

Shared spaces like libraries and cafeterias may be used. This includes the ability to hold

assemblies. As a precaution, to start the year, schools will not be organizing larger gatherings in the school.

Visitors are permitted; however, they must self-screen prior to entry, and wear a mask while on the premises. Public Health may restrict this access based on local health circumstances.

Virtual meetings are still preferred where possible, but in-person meetings can occur when attendance is confirmed in advance to ensure adequate spacing in the meeting space. All meetings and/or gatherings must comply with current public health requirements.

Guidelines pertaining to International Students remain the same as 2020-2021.

Tri-Board Student Transportation did put their 2021-2022 Pandemic Guidelines on their website, however after their document was uploaded, further clarification came from the Ministry, so they will be making some changes to that document regarding vaccination requirements. They will continue to operate much the same as last year. Changes for this year will include mandatory masking of all students from Grade 1 to 12 and the expectation that Kindergarten students will also be masked.

With respect to ventilation, LDSB will continue with the additional measures that were implemented for the 2020-2021 school year to ensure the optimal air quality of all the occupied spaces within our schools. Building automation will be reprogrammed with extended run times, to ensure additional flushing of the air within the building. Fresh air dampers are moved to the maximum positions to increase the amount of fresh air that comes into the facilities. The HVAC contractors are performing an operational audit of the HVAC systems in every school. On August 4, 2021, the Ministry sent out a memo regarding \$25 million for the installation and purchase of HEPA filtration units. Limestone will be provided with 820 HEPA units and \$49,000. These units will be installed in occupied spaces that currently do not have a mechanical filtered fresh air supply. These spaces may include classrooms, libraires, lunchrooms, child-chair spaces, administration spaces and portables. All Kindergarten rooms, regardless of the type of HVAC units that supply the space, will be provided with a HEPA filtration unit. Superintendent Young clarified that 60 more units are required and have been ordered.

Limestone DSB is committed to supporting students who require special education supports and services to successfully engage in learning. Staff will begin to work with families as they begin to

prepare for back to school. Transitional meetings are ongoing, following public health guidelines, so that students with significant special education needs are discussed and plans put in place once school does start. We will certainly be very active in monitoring and ensuring that needs are being met in the return to school to ensure a smooth transition to back to in-person learning or virtual school, when this option has been chosen.

Ensuring the mental health and well-being of students and staff remains a priority for Limestone. Superintendent Gillam noted *The Mentally Health Back to School Support Package* link in their package. This will be shared with principals and staff prior to the start of school.

Some key changes to in person learning noted in the Ministry's guidance is permitted use of school areas such as lockers, cafeterias, and libraries. Music programs are permitted indoors provided ventilation and distancing protocols are followed including use of wind instruments and singing. Field trips are permitted this school year following the requirements under the *Reopening Ontario Act*.

EQAO Assessments will resume for Grades 3 and 6 in the new digital format for math, reading and writing and students in Grade 9 will write the Grade 9 math digital adaptive assessment. The literacy graduation requirements are waived for students graduating in 2021-2022 but will be restored for students graduating in the 2022-2023 school year. The community involvement graduation requirement has been reduced to a minimum of 20 hours of community involvement activities for students graduating in the 2021-2022 school year.

Kindergarten through Grade 8 will remain in one cohort for the full day. However, students may access small instructional groups with students from other cohorts when required, such as special education supports or English-language learning. Specialized education staff, for example French teachers, special education teachers and educational assistants are permitted to go into classrooms and multiple schools to provide necessary programming and supports.

A staggered entry may be used for all students in Kindergarten. This staggered entry may occur on Tuesday, September 7, Wednesday, September 8 and Thursday, September 9, 2021. By Friday, September 10, 2021, the full Kindergarten class should be attending school.

Secondary schools will open with a Quadmester model, as opposed to the Octomester model which was utilized last year. There are two "quads" during semester 1, which is from September

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to January. Students will attend two classes per day, one in the morning and one in the afternoon, during the first quad, and then change to two new classes in the second quad.

Families who, since June, have decided that Elementary Virtual School is the best learning environment for their student, have the opportunity to register at Elementary Virtual School until end of the day, August 26, 2021. Elementary Virtual School will continue to follow Program & Policy Memorandum 164 (PPM 164), as with the 2020-2021 school year.

There are currently 140 students enrolled in Secondary Virtual School. Secondary Virtual School will follow the same quadmester schedule as all other secondary schools. The Grade 9 and 10 timetables for students include a set number of 8 courses, which are primarily compulsory credits. Grade 11 and 12 students will be taking a mix of virtual courses and LDSB e-learning or e-learning consortium courses that most closely align with their course selections. Families may continue to indicate an interest in attending Secondary Virtual School up until August 26, after which they will be put on a wait list. Students will be considered for entry at the start of each of the next three quadmesters - November 15, 2021, February 3, 2022, and April 20, 2022.

Extra-curricular clubs, activities, sports teams, and bands will be allowed. Students may interact outdoors with no masks and physical distancing encouraged, and cohorts may interact indoors with masking and appropriate physical distancing. The guidance does allow for high and low contact activities permitted outdoors without masking, whereas high and low contact activities are permitted indoors with masking encouraged for indoor sports where they can be worn safely based on the activity. Although before/after school programs and community use of schools are permitted within the updated guidance, both require compliance with current, local public health guidance. At this point in time Limestone is holding off with community use of schools in the evenings.

Case and contact management will continue with Public Health as the lead agency. Asymptomatic contacts of confirmed or probable cases are not required to isolate if they are fully vaccinated – second dose plus 14 days. High-risk contacts who are not immunized are required to isolate for 10 days – previously 14 days from the last exposure to the case. Testing is recommended on or after day 7 of their isolation period.

Director Burra noted that families are invited to send unanswered questions to our Communications Department. The quick reference guide will be released in the coming weeks

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as plans and fact sheets are confirmed with KFL&A Public Health.

Chair Ruttan thanked Senior Staff for their update and called upon Trustees for questions.

5. ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:20 p.m.