

## SPECIAL BOARD MEETING MINUTES – SEPTEMBER 29, 2021

### PUBLIC MEETING

#### Roll call:

<b>Trustees:</b>	<b>Staff:</b>
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) 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
<b>Guests:</b>	<b>Recorder:</b>
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.

Chair Ruttan called upon Superintendent Gillam to read the Acknowledgement of Territory: “To begin, let us acknowledge that the Limestone District School Board is situated on the traditional territories of the Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee peoples. For many across Turtle Island, this National week of Truth and Reconciliation comes at a time when over 6,000 children’s bodies continue to be brought home to their families and ancestors from the grave sites of former residential schools. We recognize that survivors, families, communities, and individuals including students, their families and community, and staff continue to be personally affected by the

residential school experience. These recent findings are a reminder of the many impacts the system has had and continues to have on Indigenous peoples across Turtle Island. As an Indigenous Education Team, we place our focus this week and, in the future, reaffirming our commitment and responsibility to teach our students, staff and educators not only the true history of Turtle Island and the impacts of settler colonialism, but also the ways in which Indigenous knowledge and approach to wellness and learning can enhance and enrich the experience of all students. We must help each other to become more empathetic and culturally aware so that we can recognize our roles and responsibilities as treaty people on Indigenous lands. Education rooted in equity, diversity and inclusion will prepare all students to build a better future for themselves and for the seven generations to come. Miigwetch.”

## **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 a full time teacher with another public school board.

## **3. MOTION**

### **3.1 Motion brought forward by Trustee Elliott:**

“That the LDSB write a letter to the Ministry of Education requesting the approval of masking better than level 2, and that the Ministry fund this enhanced PPE for all staff and students.”

Chair Ruttan asked Trustees to read the motion and called upon Trustees for comments on the motion.

Trustee French seconded the motion but asked if the mover would consider changing the word “approval” to “consideration” in his motion. This would make it clearer that the Ministry is considering it more broadly, then just Limestone DSB asking for approvals.

Chair Ruttan stated that an amendment has been brought forward, which seems fairly friendly, unless the mover believes it changes the context of the motion.

Trustee Elliott declined the amendment, however, would consider adding at the end of the motion “across Ontario,” to specify that it is not just specifically Limestone.

Trustee Elliott indicated that his rationale for the motion is that the Health Unit has said that as long as people are vaccinated and there is distance in classrooms, people should be safe with the

current level of masking, but we know those requirements are not being met in certain classrooms.

One-hundred per cent of students from K-Grade 6 are not vaccinated and we know that some classrooms are small, with students packed in them, so the more layers of safety we can add, the better.

Chair Ruttan called the question.

*MOTION: That the LDSB write a letter to the Ministry of Education requesting the approval of masking better than level 2, and that the Ministry fund this enhanced PPE for all staff and students across Ontario.*

*MOVED BY: Trustee Elliott and seconded by Trustee French.*

Roll call vote.

The non-binding recorded vote was as follows:

YEAS: Trustee Brown, Trustee Elliott, Trustee French, Trustee Gingrich, Trustee Godkin, Trustee Hutcheon, Trustee McGregor, Trustee Morning and Trustee Duncan (9)

NAYS: (0)

ABSENT: (2)

The binding recorded vote was as follows:

YEAS: Trustee Brown, Trustee Elliott, Trustee French, Trustee Gingrich, Trustee Godkin, Trustee Hutcheon, Trustee McGregor and Trustee Morning (8)

NAYS: (0)

The motion carried.

## **4. INFORMATION ITEMS**

### **4.1 KFL&A PH Recommendation to Consider Mandatory Vaccines for Extra-curricular Participants**

Director Burra indicated on September 21, 2021, KFL&A Public Health, jointly with HPE Public Health sent a letter to the three boards that comprise Tri-Board to ask us to consider mandatory vaccinations for those participants 12 and older, who do not have a medical exemption, who are

part of extra-curricular activities. Director Burra quoted a part in the letter, specifically: “We encourage school boards to consider policies of vaccine requirements for extra-curriculars either as a universal or risk-based policies.” He clarified that the risk-based part has to do with the likelihood of issues arising in the context of that activity.

Human Resources Lead Talya McKenna advised Trustees that in May of last year, three local doctors, Dr. Chris Booth, Dr. Kirk Leifso and Dr. Beth Rubenstein, as well as Ms. McKenna, Kingston Areas Secondary School Athletic Association (KASSAA) and Limestone Elementary Schools Athletics Association (LESAA), as well as Algonquin Lakeshore Catholic District School Board leadership met to discuss with a return to sport would look like. These ideas were shared with the local Public Health, then under the leadership of Dr. Kieran Moore, who was very supportive of these thoughts, plans and ideas. During the summer, these three doctors continued to have influence over the governing bodies, which were responsible for releasing the guidelines that came out in August 2021. When the guidelines came out Limestone was able to put a plan in place, but there was no guidance on the health and safety and operational guidance for the school year, and did not provide clear direction on extra-curricular activities which were deemed high or low risk, only guidance around high contact verses low contact activities. As a result, Limestone worked closely with KFL&A Public Health, HPE Public Health, local KFLA doctors, KASSAA and LESAA leadership to create protocols related to the safe return to extra-curriculars. As of September 22, 2021, proof of full vaccination is required for students to attend facilities where many of our extra-curricular competitions are held, for example, the gyms and fields at Queen’s and St. Lawrence College.

Ms. McKenna touched on some of the activities that have elevated risk based on the updated guidance and public health advisories and other activities which have lower risks because they are conducted outside and have limited contact between participants.

One of the challenges in managing extra-curricular activities is the mixing of cohorts within schools and across cohorts in different schools with inter-school competitions. Ms. McKenna indicated that Ontario Federation of School Athletic Association (OFSAA) guidelines specifically say that students need to be vaccinated when they are leaving their region. Even returning to competition within our schools lead to more contact tracing, leads to the mixing of cohorts and expands the outbreak management in the event of a positive COVID case. This is why the recommendation has come forward from Public Health, that vaccination is the most effective way to mitigate risk, and strongly recommends this happens for extra-curricular activities.

#### Limestone District School Board

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Director Burra provided an overview of the current status as outlined in his report.

Director Burra noted that under the *Reopening Act of Ontario* there are significant operational considerations that we have to put in place for either indoor or outdoor activities. While intuitively it may seem very simple to suggest that we should be opening up things and having spectators, and having three children in the system he wishes this was the case, but the reality is that the operational side of and the requirements under the *Reopening Act of Ontario* are quite strict around the requirements for different organizations and agencies to do these types of things. Certainly, as a school board and running our extra-curriculars, those run very differently than going to a Queen's or St. Lawrence College event, let alone a Toronto Blue Jays or Raptors game where there are operational staff for a whole range of different processes.

Director Burra stated that several local youth groups and clubs have mandated vaccines for all participants who are eligible for vaccines.

Director Burra indicated that with regards to next steps, notice needs to be provided to families of this move and setting up yard posts in terms of when that potential first vaccination has to be done and then the second vaccine. The plan is not to mandate this immediately as there has not been an opportunity for those students who have not chosen to be vaccinated or cannot be vaccinated to actually have an opportunity to engage in that process. There is also a possibility that we do not have enough rapid tests available to us on hand beyond staff who have to be involved in the testing process. Limestone could try to acquire additional tests to support these participants. Testing could occur through available health centres, at pharmacies at a cost to participants.

In conclusion, Director Burra stated that an online form will be provided to collect questions and/or considerations regarding the implementation of this measure. Based on the recommendation of Public Health, Limestone will begin the work required to implement mandatory vaccinations for extra-curricular participation to increase and maximize safety and minimize risk, and also mitigate the ripple effect that might impact educational programming as well as those extra-curricular activities in the region.

Chair Ruttan thanked Director Burra for the report and called upon Trustees for comments on the report.

Trustee Elliott brought the following motion forward:

*MOTION: The Trustees of the Limestone District School Board endorse staff moving forward with operationalizing mandatory vaccines for participants (age 12 and up) of extracurricular activities unless a documented medical exemption exists.*

*MOVED BY: Trustee Elliott and seconded by Trustee Godkin.*

Roll call vote.

The non-binding recorded vote was as follows:

YEAS: Trustee Brown, Trustee Elliott, Trustee French, Trustee Gingrich, Trustee Godkin, Trustee Hutcheon, Trustee McGregor, Trustee Morning and Trustee Duncan (9)

NAYS: (0)

ABSENT: (2)

The binding recorded vote was as follows:

YEAS: Trustee Brown, Trustee Elliott, Trustee French, Trustee Gingrich, Trustee Godkin, Trustee Hutcheon, Trustee McGregor and Trustee Morning (8)

NAYS: (0)

The motion carried.

## 5. CORRESPONDENCE RELEVANT TO SPECIAL MEETING OF BOARD

**5.1 Correspondence from KFL&A Public Health re: School Community Partners, dated September 21, 2021.** Provided further information regarding the Admin Report in Information Item No. 4.1

**5.2 Correspondence from Virginia Perry, a parent at École Rideau Public School re: vaccination disclosure among staff working within LDSB, dated September 21, 2021.**

Director Burra stated that there is an opportunity at the EPOC Meeting for Superintendent McWilliams to share an update as it relates to data, and at the October 27 Board Meeting we can share in Private Session as well as Public Session to provide Trustees with a wider

perspective on this particular issue, which is quite complicated and does have a number of ramifications that must be considered.

## 6. **ADJOURNMENT**

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

The meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

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