

PEEL DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board, held in the Board Room, the H. J. A. Brown Education Centre, 5650 Hurontario Street, Mississauga, Ontario on Wednesday, April 29, 2020 at 19:35 hours. The meeting was held by electronic means, under Ontario Regulation 463/97, as amended.

Members present:

Brad MacDonald, Chair	Will Davies
David Green, Vice-Chair	Sue Lawton
Carrie Andrews	Kathy McDonald
Susan Benjamin	John Marchant
Stan Cameron	Balbir Sohi
Robert Crocker	

Member absent (apologies received):

Nokha Dakroub

Student Trustees:

Kenisha Arora, Student Trustee South
Prabhleen Nar, Student Trustee North

Administration:

Tania Alatishe-Charles, Controller, Finance Support Services
Harjit Aujla, Superintendent of Education
Donna Baptie, Executive Assistant
Liz Cook, Superintendent of Education
Paul Da Silva, Superintendent of Education
Patrika Daws, Superintendent of Education
Lawrence De Maeyer, Superintendent, Leadership Development and School Support Services
Anthony Edwards, Superintendent of Education, Alternative Programs
Jaspal Gill, Associate Director, Operational Support Services
Soni Gill, Acting Superintendent of Education
Adrian Graham, Superintendent, Curriculum and Instruction Support Services
Mark Haarmann, Associate Director, School Support Services
Antoine Haroun, Chief Information Officer, Learning Technology Support Services
John Hartzema, Controller, Facilities and Environmental Support Services
Nina Jaiswal, Superintendent of Education
Peter Joshua, Director of Education
Michael Logue, Superintendent of Education
Matthew McCutcheon, Superintendent of Education
Patricia Noble, Superintendent of Education
Carla Pereira, Director, Communications and Community Relations Support Services
Jamie Robertson, Superintendent, Human Resources Support Services
Dana Sheahan, Superintendent of Education
Gale Solomon-Henry, Superintendent of Education

Administration:

Michelle Stubbings, Superintendent of Education
Thomas Tsung, Controller, Corporate Support Services
Darren Van Hooydonk, Superintendent of Education

Marina Amin, Board Reporter

1. Open Session

The Open Session commenced with the acknowledgement that the meeting is being held on the traditional territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation and singing of O Canada.

2. Approval of Agenda

The following changes were made to the agenda:

Item 9.2 Appointment of Student Trustees (circulated)
Item 12.2 OPSBA Connects – April 27, 2020 (added)

Resolution No. 20-120 moved by Balbir Sohi
seconded by Carrie Andrews

Resolved, that the agenda, as amended, be approved.

..... carried
2/3rds' majority

3. Central Peel Secondary School Regional Strings

Vice-Chair Green commented positively on the remarkable strings presentation, "Nothing's Gonna Stop Us Now," by Central Peel Secondary School's students in the Regional Strings Program, which was broadcast on April 12, 2020 via social media, and featured on the CBC News Network. The music video featured a virtual participation of the students in concert.

4. Conflict of Interest

There were no declarations of conflict of interest.

5. Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board, April 15, 2020

Resolution No. 20-121 moved by John Marchant
seconded by Kathy McDonald

Resolved, that the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board, held April 15, 2020, be approved.

..... carried

6. Written Questions

1. Trustee McDonald submitted the following question:

How are we going to regain the trust of employees, families and community when the Human Rights Commissioner and the Human Rights Commissioner's Office have been protecting the interest of the Director and Board when their mandate is supposed to be supporting employees, families, and the community?

2. Trustee McDonald submitted the following question:

What has the Human Resources department done to ensure that interviews currently taking place are not being reverse engineered for preferred candidates and how will hiring manage accountability?

3. Trustee McDonald submitted the following question:

When a student is excluded from a classroom for any reason, is the parent not contacted? Are in-school suspensions happening and are they permitted under the Education Act?

4. Trustee McDonald submitted the following questions:

Do the lawyers we use have a deep understanding of anti-black racism? Can we get reasons from a lawyer as to why the public does not have a right to get a deeper understanding of the kind of lawyers the Board is using?

5. Trustee Benjamin submitted the following question:

Is it possible for the Family of Schools superintendents to organize community events in every Family of Schools, like parade of cars, food drives, sending thank-you cards to frontline workers, police, health-care workers, and other groups, to boost positivity, connectivity, and promote school spirit, while also maintaining social distancing?

7. Notices of Motion and Petitions

There were no notices of motion or petitions.

10. Ministry Review Directives

Chair MacDonald reported on work done so far to address the Ministry of Education Directives. He noted that mediation and interviews with trustees have commenced. In keeping with the mediation process and confidentiality, information cannot be disclosed at this point in time. He advised, however, that the Mediator will be submitting an interim report on May 14, 2020 and a final report on June 19, 2020 to the Ministry, as per Directive 1. Chair MacDonald reported on the retention of services of an external Parliamentarian and Governance Expert, who began work on April 20, 2020. As per Ministry Directive 5, she will identify procedures and practice for effective, respectful, and transparent governance, and will provide a report to the Ministry on June 1, 2020. The Chair confirmed the Board's intent to comply with each of the 27 Ministry Directives, noting that, as of March 13, 2020, the Board has made progress on a number of directives and timelines, while supporting students and staff through this difficult time with COVID-19. Regarding the Minister of Education's appointment of Arleen Huggins to conduct an investigation into the Board's compliance with the Directives, Chair MacDonald expressed eagerness to share progress on the deliverables and timelines with the Investigator. He acknowledged that much work is needed to rebuild relationships to improve staff and student outcome, and expressed hope this can be achieved by working cohesively with the Mediator and Investigator to eliminate anti-black racism and systemic discrimination.

Director of Education, Peter Joshua, encouraged members of the public to access the Board's website for progress updates on the Ministry Directives. He highlighted the importance and value of community consultation, especially with black students, staff, and families with lived experiences, to support the Board's action plan for the future. Director Joshua provided information regarding action taken and timelines for submission of a draft plan for consultation on the Anti-Racism Policy, development of a de-streaming program consultation plan, hiring of a Superintendent of Equity and a team of outreach workers. He stated that, due to the current COVID-19 pandemic, plans are being developed to carry out virtual consultation and collaboration with the community. Director Joshua confirmed the commitment of senior leadership to reviewing and analyzing the Directives, and participating in professional learning and conversations, so as to understand the importance of and embrace changes in practice that will address racism and disproportionality in the system.

In response to a trustee's question, Chair MacDonald clarified that copies of the above-noted oral report were not circulated to trustees. He indicated that, in view of the significant number of deliverables forthcoming, a decision was taken to bring update reports on the Ministry Review Directives to every Regular Meeting of the Board and, as such, a new placeholder entitled Ministry Review Directives has been added to the agenda. The trustee requested that written reports be provided in advance for review, so that trustee questions if any, can be addressed at the meeting.

Resolution No. 20-123

moved by David Green
Seconded by Susan Benjamin

Resolved, that the oral report regarding Ministry Review Directives, be received.

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11. Appointment of Student Trustees - 2020-2021

Chair MacDonald congratulated incoming student trustees for the 2020-2021 school year, Shivohum Nar from Harold M. Brathwaite Secondary School, representing schools north of Highway 401, and Pragyan Malhotra from T.L. Kennedy Secondary School who will represent schools south of Highway 401, and wished them success in their new roles. On behalf of the Board, Chair MacDonald thanked Kenisha Arora and Prabhleen Nar for their outstanding support and leadership during their tenure as student trustees. Kenisha Arora and Prabhleen Nar introduced the new student trustees, briefly highlighting their leadership experience, and involvement in various extra-curricular activities at school.

Resolution No. 20-124 moved by Sue Lawton
seconded by Balbir Sohi

Resolved, that Shivohum Nar and Pragyan Malhotra be appointed as Peel District School Board Student Trustees for the 2020-2021 school year. (APPENDIX I)

..... carried

12. Notice of Motion: Trustee McDonald re Response to Letters sent to the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Board

Resolution No. 20-125 moved by Kathy McDonald
seconded by Balbir Sohi

Be it resolved, that all letters that have been sent to Chair Brad MacDonald and Vice-Chair David Green from community members, and any letter sent out on behalf of the Board since December 1, 2019, be shared with all trustees and that all letters be responded to by the Chair by April 30, 2020.

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The mover of the motion, Trustee McDonald, highlighted importance of trustees being aware of community concerns addressed to the Board, and responses delivered on behalf of the Board, so as to enable trustees speak to those responses when contacted by a community member. She clarified that her motion pertains to communications sent to the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Board since December 1, 2019. Upon clarification by the mover on the deadline for responses by April 30, 2020, trustees in favour affirmed their support for receiving copies of all correspondence disseminated on behalf of the Board. Indicating his disagreement, a trustee stated that some requests are received that cannot be shared, and he confirmed his reliance on the judgement of the Chair and Vice-Chair in this regard. Vice-Chair Green expressed disappointment with the motion which, in his opinion, appears to be confusing and accusatory, and he explained his inability to discuss or share matters that are embargoed, such as in his capacity as representative of the Board on labour agreements.

In closing, Trustee McDonald clarified that her intention was not to accuse or request embargoed information. The motion was initiated as a result of her inability to respond to community questions raised on statements or letters disseminated on behalf of the Board of Trustees, and she requested colleagues to support her motion in the interest of transparency.

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12. Notice of Motion: Trustee McDonald re Response to Letters sent to the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Board (Continued)

Chair MacDonald requested a recorded vote. The result of the vote was:

Resolution No. 20-125

Yeas	Nays	Abstentions
Trustees Sohi, Marchant, McDonald, Benjamin	Trustees MacDonald, Andrews, Green, Crocker, Cameron, Lawton, Davies	(4-7-0) defeated
		Student Trustees Arora, Nar
		(0-0-2) (Non-binding)

13. Items for Receipt

Resolution No. 20-126 moved by Robert Crocker
seconded by Kathy McDonald

Resolved, that the following items be received:

1. Minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee, February 18, 2020
2. Recommendations of the Special Education Advisory Committee, February 18, 2020
3. Retirements

Helen Baxter	David Kosonic	Margaret Pratter
Amy Cundari	James Lajoie	Lori Schenk
Yvonne Delahunt	Pamela Lone	Alan Shoesmith
Pat Hare	John Maguire	Anne Streit
Sheila Hunt Coates	Harry Nikoletos	Paul Taylor
Gabriela Ionescu-Simionescu	Margaret Patterson	
4. Response to delegation by Kola Iluyomade regarding anti-black racism (Regular Meeting of the Board, April 15, 2020)
5. Response to written question submitted by Trustee McDonald regarding review and expungement of Black student suspensions (Regular Meeting of the Board, April 15, 2020)
6. Response to written questions submitted by Trustee McDonald regarding the capability of black students to change streaming pathways (Regular Meeting of the Board, April 15, 2020)

13. Items for Receipt (Continued)

7. Response to written question submitted by Trustee McDonald regarding the plan for more Black male guidance counsellors (Regular Meeting of the Board, April 15, 2020)
8. Response to written questions submitted by Trustee McDonald regarding COVID-19 monitoring and check-in processes (Regular Meeting of the Board, April 15, 2020)
9. Response to written questions submitted by Trustee McDonald regarding student grades during the COVID-19 pandemic (Regular Meeting of the Board, April 15, 2020)
10. Response to written questions submitted by Trustee McDonald regarding teacher/student check-ins (Regular Meeting of the Board, April 15, 2020)

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Trustee McDonald stated that the responses provided do not address the questions she raised. She referred to Item 13.5 of these minutes regarding the review and expungement of black student suspensions, and stated that her question was about the decision making process, and suspensions under the “other” category. She asked whether the administration would be reviewing these suspensions, and expunging them from the record of students who do not warrant them. Referring to the response provided in Item 13.6, regarding the capability of black students to change streaming pathways, and queried how the Board intended to address inappropriate streaming of students, and allow students to change pathways in the new school year. On her query about black guidance counselors, Item 13.7, the trustee asked whether the administration will direct principals to consider greater representation of black guidance counselors during staffing, or provide mentors at schools who can provide guidance to black students upon request.

Director Joshua acknowledged the comments and perspectives shared by Trustee McDonald on the responses provided to her questions. Indicating that, despite the criticality of these issues, and need to move forward on how to address them, it is necessary to hear the voice of the community, to consult and collaborate with them in the development of a roadmap for the future. Director Joshua spoke of useful data obtained through the student census that will inform a systematic and strategic action plan developed in collaboration with community members.

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Resolution No. 20-126 carried

14. Ontario Public School Boards’ Association – OPSBA Connects

Resolution No. 20-127 moved by Kathy McDonald
seconded by Carrie Andrews

Resolved, that the following report, be received:

- OPSBA Connects – April 21, 2020
- OPSBA Connects – April 27, 2020

..... carried

15. Reports from Trustee Representatives on Councils/Associations

There were no reports.

16. Questions from Board Members

Trustee Sohi inquired as to how the Board will support the learning and counseling needs of the significant number of special needs students in Peel. Expressing appreciation for the considerable efforts of Shawn Moynihan, Superintendent of Special Education Support Services, his team, and the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC), Director Joshua stated that special needs students are being supported in a variety of ways that include guidance by classroom teachers, teaching assistants, special education support staff, professional student services personnel, social workers, speech and language pathologists, and psycho educational consultants. Additionally, staff is moving forward with a video conferencing format that will provide the interaction required for student learning, and he spoke of plans to commence In-School Review Committee case conferences and the Identification, Placement and Review Committee. Director Joshua outlined the work undertaken, in collaboration with SEAC, to determine staff and student need, and reported on the distribution of student specific equipment through Special Equipment Amount funding

Trustee Sohi spoke positively about the wellness parade organized recently by Mount Royal Public School and asked about similar ways to encourage schools to engage students and the community, until schools reopen. Director Joshua expressed appreciation for school activities that promote positivity and interaction while social distancing. He noted that, in addition to highlighting such activities on the Board's website, superintendents are working with principals to share and model best practice, and encourage the implementation of such activities and approaches.

Trustee McDonald queried as to who determines what is displayed on the Board's website and social media. Director Joshua reported on the process followed for types of publications posted on the Board's website and social media. Trustee McDonald asked whether trustees and the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Board have the ability to post statements on the website. Chair MacDonald clarified that individual trustees cannot post statements on the Board's website. He stated that, under the Education Act, the Chair, in conjunction with the Vice-Chair, is the spokesperson for the Board, and he outlined the process followed to develop communications for posting on the website and social media. Chair MacDonald also clarified regarding the statement issued on behalf of the Board, by the Chair and Vice-Chair, in response to Minister Lecce's comments on social media.

Trustee McDonald asked whether the names of individuals hired as a result of the Directives can be posted on the Board's website. Chair MacDonald took the question under advisement.

Trustee McDonald asked why trustees were not told when the apology letter would be released. Chair MacDonald stated he had indicated at the last Regular Meeting of the Board that the letter would be released shortly.

16. Questions from Board Members (Continued)

Trustee McDonald inquired as to which area of the budget funds the \$1.7 million spent on lawyers' fees. Associate Director of Operational Support Services, Jaspal Gill, advised that most funding is received through Ministry grants. Additionally, there are other avenues of revenue, such as international student fees, and interest received on some Board investments. He stated that all revenue is consolidated, and legal fees are defrayed from these funds.

Trustee McDonald asked whether all trustees are made aware of the Board's responses to parent concerns brought forward to the Chair and Vice-Chair. Chair MacDonald advised that, generally, all trustees are copied on responses made on behalf of the Board. He noted that, in some cases, due to private information included, those responses cannot be shared so as to remain in compliance with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

Trustee McDonald indicated that there is no current mechanism to appeal a trespass letter, and she asked whether a process for appealing trespass letters can be outlined by the Board. Chair MacDonald took the question under advisement.

Vice-Chair Green spoke about feelings of isolation experienced by children in the younger grades, and he asked about exploring online possibilities for students to see each other and feel connected. Director Joshua recalled information provided earlier on video conferencing approaches being used by educators to support children with special needs, and he confirmed that online resources and platforms for interaction and sharing are available to support all teachers and students.

Student Trustee Arora queried as to how the Board intends to conduct examinations during the current situation. Director Joshua reported that there has been no specific direction from the Ministry regarding approach to final culminating tasks, examinations, or determination of final mark. He stated that educators are being encouraged to consider culminating tasks and student demonstration of ability in a course, recognizing the unique needs of students in regard to ability to access and keep up with school work. He confirmed that there will be no penalty for students experiencing difficulties with online engagement.

17. Public Question Period

Gurpal Singh Dhaliwal inquired as to how the Peel DSB is addressing the issue of campaign rule violation in the recent Peel student trustee elections, and the investigation being done. Superintendent of School Support Services, Mark Haarmann, responded.

Jazmin Kaur-Singh queried whether schools are being asked to monitor the number of students participating and accessing their learning activities online, and whether the Board is identifying the reasons, if participation is low. Director of Education, Peter Joshua, responded.

Omiya Goel asked whether the Board is willing to explore the best structure for school start times in the District, keeping in mind strong scientific evidence that delaying school start times to at least 9 a.m. in Middle and Secondary Schools will result in significant improvement in the student's academic performance and well-being. Director of Education, Peter Joshua, responded.

17. Public Question Period (Continued)

Kellie Rodrigues asked about action the Board will take to rebuild the guidance system. Director of Education, Peter Joshua, responded.

Rey Alita inquired as to how the Peel DSB will address hiring, transfer, staffing and promotion processes to create transparency and accountability. The administration responded.

Koonal Pandya asked whether the Board was considering implementing a policy that enforces teachers to conference on a daily basis with groups of students, if it is not feasible with the entire class. Director of Education, Peter Joshua, responded.

Sean Simms asked as to why lived experience and ability to relate to black and racialized students is not valued in the Peel DSB at every level of employment. Director of Education, Peter Joshua, responded.

Jordan Grewal inquired as to why the Peel DSB always finds problems with questions asked by one trustee to help black students. Chair MacDonald responded.

Eduarda Rodrigues asked why almost nothing has been done over a month and a half since the report on the Directives was released publicly, except for rewording the Directives. The Chair and Director of Education responded.

18. Adoption of the In Committee Report

Resolution No. 20-128 moved by David Green
seconded by Will Davies

Resolved, that the report of the In Committee Session regarding: Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board (In Committee – Part A), April 15, 2020; Negotiations Update (oral); Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board (In Committee – Part B), April 15, 2020; Retirements; Response to Trustee McDonald’s Written Question re Trustee Communication and Decision-Making Process; Response to Trustee McDonald’s Written Question re Trespass Appeal Process (oral), and Question Period, be received, and that the recommendations contained therein, be approved.

..... carried

19. Adjournment

Resolution No. 20-129 moved by Stan Cameron
seconded by Sue Lawton

Resolved, that the meeting adjourn (21:40 hours).

..... carried

..... Chair Secretary

April 29, 2020
Regular Meeting of the Board:ma

RESOLUTIONS APPROVED IN IN COMMITTEE SESSION – APRIL 29, 2020

Members present:

Brad MacDonald, Chair
David Green, Vice-Chair
Carrie Andrews
Susan Benjamin
Stan Cameron
Robert Crocker

Will Davies
Sue Lawton
John Marchant
Kathy McDonald
Balbir Sohi

Member absent: (apologies received)

Nokha Dakroub

Student Trustees:

Kenisha Arora, Student Trustee South
Prabhleen Nar, Student Trustee North

Part A

1. Approval of Agenda

That, the agenda be approved.

2. Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board (In Committee – Part A), April 15, 2020

That, the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board (In Committee – Part A), held April 15, 2020, be approved.

3. Negotiations - Update

That, the oral update report re Negotiations, be received.

Part B (Not including Student Trustees)

1. Approval of Agenda

That, the agenda, as amended, be approved.

2. Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board (In Committee – Part B), April 15, 2020

That, the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board (In Committee – Part B), held April 15, 2020, be approved.

3. Retirements

That, the report of retirements of staff, be received.

4. Response to Trustee McDonald's Written Question re Trustee Communication and Decision-Making Process

That, the response to written question submitted by Trustee McDonald re Trustee Communication and Decision Making Process (April 15, 2020 Regular Meeting of the Board), be received.

5. Response to Trustee McDonald's Written Question re Trespass Appeal Process

That, the response to written question submitted by Trustee McDonald re Trespass Appeal Process (oral) (April 15, 2020 Regular Meeting of the Board), be received.