

PEEL DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Minutes of an Extraordinary Meeting of the Board, held electronically under Regulation 463/97 of the Education Act, coordinated from the Churchville Room, the H. J. A. Brown Education Centre, 5650 Hurontario Street, Mississauga, Ontario on Wednesday, September 21, 2016, at 17:00 hours.

Members present:

Janet McDougald, Chair
Suzanne Nurse, Vice-Chair
Carrie Andrews
Robert Crocker
Sue Lawton
Rick Williams

Members present electronically:

Stan Cameron
Nokha Dakroub
Kathy McDonald
Harkirat Singh

Members absent: (apologies received)

David Green
Brad MacDonald

Administration:

Jeff deFreitas, Coordinating Superintendent
Jaspal Gill, Associate Director, Operational Support Services
Scott Moreash, Associate Director, Instructional Support Services
Tony Pontes, Director of Education

Nicole Fernandes, Board Reporter

1. Approval of Agenda

Resolution No. 16-185 moved by Rick Williams
seconded by Suzanne Nurse

Resolved, that the agenda be approved.

..... carried

2. Conflict of Interest

There were no declarations of conflict of interest.

3. Classroom Closures

Providing background information, Director of Education, Tony Pontes, recalled that the Board was apprised through the budget process about reduction in top-up funding for schools not operating at capacity. This is the second year of reduction, and the impact of these cuts by the Ministry for 2016-2017 is \$2.8 million, and for 2017-2018 is approximately \$2.2 million. This is a decrease of approximately \$5 million over three years. Director Pontes indicated that, after reviewing possible solutions, staff recommended closure of unfunded classroom spaces. Acknowledging that the administration could have initiated a more in depth discussion on this recommendation, he explained that vacant classroom spaces are in under-capacity schools. He referred to emails from staff and parents, and the delegation from music teachers that commented on the negative impact which closure of vacant classrooms will have on music and French programs. Stating that he does not support this opinion, Director Pontes pointed to schools at capacity that run excellent music and French programs without dedicated classroom spaces. He recognized that running these programs 'on wheels' would certainly be an inconvenience after experiencing the luxury of space.

Director Pontes noted that the budget announcement may not have provided principals and the system with sufficient time to prepare for vacant classroom closures. He advised that the exercise should have begun earlier, in January or February, along with a more in depth discussion during the budget process. He reported that, in response to Chair McDougald's request, staff have looked again at options to cover the costs to keep vacant classrooms open to some extent of the reduced top-up funding, and have indicated there is an opportunity to delay the closure of some vacant classrooms for one year. He advised that, based on 140 vacant classrooms remaining open and cleaned, the cost will be approximately \$800,000 to \$1 million. This will allow up to two vacant classrooms in most schools, or three classrooms in exceptional circumstances. Associate Director of Operational Support Services, Jaspal Gill, added that in instances of one vacant classroom being available at a school, the principal will make the decision as to whether the music or French program will be accommodated. He advised that only internal permanent classroom space is being considered, and portables cannot be used for this purpose, even if vacant.

Chair McDougald and the administration responded to trustees questions of clarification. It was confirmed that programs will be 'on wheels' if there is no vacant classroom space, and that before and after school programs will be moved off the stage. Director Pontes clarified how in-year savings can occur during the school year, and that they are typically allocated to reserves. He explained that these in-year savings could be used to cover the costs of keeping classrooms open in 2016-2017. Associate Director Gill added that last year's decline in enrolment may not produce much savings, but this year, enrolment has increased. Chair McDougald stated that, if in-year savings will not be sufficient to cover costs, money from the uncommitted Working Fund Reserve may be used. Associate Director Gill provided details about the Working Fund Reserve, and expenditure budgeted for 2016-2017 from the uncommitted Working Fund Reserve. He noted that \$20 million, or 1% of the Board's overall expenditure, is considered a healthy balance in uncommitted Working Fund Reserves.

(Continued overleaf)

3. Classroom Closures (Continued)

Explaining that funding for classrooms is based on having a core grade taught in the space, Chair McDougald stated that there are other programs which benefit students, such as music and French, and she affirmed that she will be advocating with the Ministry regarding amending the definition of a classroom. She confirmed that the motion is not intended to be a permanent and ongoing expenditure, and the matter will be reviewed again during the next Budget cycle.

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As this is a budget motion, a recorded vote is required. The result of the vote is as follows:

Resolution No. 16-186

Yeas	Nays	Abstentions
Trustees Crocker, McDonald, Williams, McDougald, Nurse, Cameron, Andrews	Trustees Lawton, Dakroub	Trustee Singh
	 carried (7-2-1)

Chair McDougald retired from the meeting (17:55).

4. Comments or Questions from Board Members

There were no comments or questions.

5. Public Question Period

There were no questions.

6. Adjournment

Resolution No. 16-187 moved by Robert Crocker
seconded by Carrie Andrews

Resolved, that the meeting adjourn (18:00 hours).

..... carried

..... Chair Secretary