

RENFREW COUNTY DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING HELD VIRTUALLY ON JANUARY 26, 2021

at 4:00 p.m.

Chairperson B. Morris in the Chair.

TRUSTEES Present: M. Adam; L. Boland; N. Edge; M. Guenette; S. Humphries; D. Kaiser; D. Shields; H. Arbour & J. Abbott (Student Trustees)

TRUSTEES Absent (With Regret): J. Verch

STAFF: P. Buffone; B. McIntyre; J. Poirier; S. Blok; R. Cousineau; J. Barnes; J. Laderoute; S. McIntyre; H. MacMillan

STAFF Absent (With Regret):

GUEST: Dr. Robert Cushman - Renfrew County & District Health Unit

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson B. Morris called the meeting to order.

2. INVOCATION

The invocation was read by Student Trustee Hudson Arbour.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOVED BY N. EDGE seconded by L. Boland that the Renfrew County District School Board approves the agenda for today's meeting.

The motion was CARRIED

4. DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Chairperson B. Morris asked for declarations of conflict of interest. None were forthcoming.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOVED L. BOLAND seconded by M. Guenette that the Renfrew County District School Board approves the minutes of the December 8, 2020 Board Meeting.

The motion was CARRIED

6. PRESENTATION

Fall 2020 School Experience – Renfrew County & District Health Unit

Doctor Robert Cushman, Acting Medical Officer of Health for the Renfrew County & District Health Unit, provided a summary of the COVID-19 cases within Renfrew County. To date, 22 of 297 cases in the county have been school-related. 13 of the 22 cases were students and 9 were staff members.

The likely source of infection for cases have been acquired from outside of the school setting.

Since the provincial lockdown was put in place beginning on Boxing Day, there has been an improvement in positive cases, although not in Intensive Care Units or deaths, unfortunately. Dr. Cushman stated that public health measures and lockdowns prove to make a significant difference. Dr. Cushman added that children are less contagious than adults whereas adult transmission is more common.

Dr. Cushman was pleased to report that the first vaccine was administered in Renfrew County today.

RCDSB Website Renewal & Official Launch

Manager of Communications J. Laderoute and Communications Coordinator H. MacMillan was pleased to announce the official launch of the new RCDSB website earlier today – a 16-month project the Communications Department and many other departments have been involved in. Mr. Laderoute and Ms. MacMillan showed highlights and went through the main navigation page of the website. The new site has a modern appearance, is easier for visitors to navigate through, has an improved sitemap structure, social media connectivity, an enhanced accessibility feature, and is compatible with smartphones and tablets.

7. COMMITTEE REPORTS TO THE BOARD

Committee of the Whole Open Session Report – January 26, 2021

Vice-Chairperson D. Kaiser presented the Open Session Report of Committee of the Whole from today's Closed Session meeting.

MOVED BY D. KAISER, seconded by M. Guenette that the Renfrew County District School Board adopts the Open Session Report of the Committee of the Whole meeting.

The motion was CARRIED

Program & Student Achievement Committee

Trustee M. Guenette, Chairperson of the Program & Student Achievement Committee, presented the Open Session Report of the Program & Student Achievement Committee meeting held on January 12, 2021.

MOVED BY M. GUENETTE seconded by S. Humphries that the Renfrew County District School Board receives the Open Session Report of the Program & Student Achievement Committee meeting held on January 12, 2021.

The motion was CARRIED

Equity & Inclusion Committee

Trustee M. Adam, Chairperson of the Equity and Inclusion Committee, presented the Open Session Report of the Equity & Inclusion Committee meeting held on January 12, 2021.

MOVED BY M. ADAM, seconded by N. Edge that the Renfrew County District School Board receives the Open Session Report of the Equity and Inclusion Committee meeting held on January 12, 2021.

The motion was CARRIED

Finance & Resources Committee

Trustee L. Boland, Chairperson of the Finance & Resources Committee, presented the Open Session Report of the Finance and Resources Committee meeting held on January 12, 2021.

MOVED BY L. BOLAND, seconded by D. Shields that the Renfrew County District School Board receives the Open Session Report of the Finance and Resources Committee meeting held on January 12, 2021.

The motion was CARRIED

Special Education Advisory Committee

Trustee M. Guenette presented the Reports of the Special Education Advisory Committee meetings held on December 16, 2020 and January 20, 2021.

MOVED BY M. GUENETTE, seconded by D. Kaiser that the Renfrew County District School Board receives the Reports of the Special Education Advisory Committee meetings held on December 16, 2020 and January 20, 2021.

The motion was CARRIED

8. UPDATES

(a) Director

Director of Education P. Buffone presented his Director's Report. See Appendix "A".

(b) Chair

Chairperson B. Morris presented his Chair's Report. See Appendix "B".

(c) Student Trustees

Student Trustees H. Arbour and J. Abbott presented their Student Trustees Report. See Appendix "C"

(d) OPSBA

Trustees Adam, Humphries and Shields provided a few updates that included: GSN submission to the Ministry of Education, the Ministry's recent announcement of discontinuing support of the Ontario Software Acquisition Program Advisory Committee (OSAPAC), the Public Education Symposium will be virtual this week, and Trustee participation at the OPSBA Education Labour Relations and Human Resources Symposium.

9. CORRESPONDENCE

None to report.

10. OTHER BUSINESS

This Thursday, January 28th is the annual *Bell Lets Talk Day* in support of mental health initiatives in Canada.

11. ADJOURNMENT

MOVED BY D. SHIELDS seconded by S. Humphries that the Renfrew County District School Board meeting of January 26, 2021 be adjourned. Time: 5:42 PM

The motion was CARRIED

RENFREW COUNTY DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
VIRTUAL

OPEN SESSION REPORT
January 26, 2021

TRUSTEES: D. Kaiser (Chair); M. Adam; L. Boland; N. Edge; M. Guenette; S. Humphries; B. Morris;
(Present) D. Shields; H. Arbour & J. Abbott (Student Trustees)

TRUSTEES: J. Verch
(Regrets)

STAFF: P. Buffone; B. McIntyre; J. Poirier; S. Blok; R. Cousineau; J. Barnes; J. Laderoute;
(Present) S. McIntyre; H. MacMillan; T. Hoffman; M. McCaw

STAFF:
(Regrets)

GUEST: B. White (RCJTC)

The Committee of the Whole of the Renfrew County District School Board met virtually on January 26, 2021 and discussed the following items in Open Session:

1. Renfrew County Joint Transportation Consortium (RCJTC) Update: Staggered Bells Zone 4 Madawaska;
2. Year to Date Financial Status for 2020-2021;
3. Community Use of Schools;
4. Policy Review Committee Update:
 - (1) Policy 2: Board of Trustees Job Description
 - (2) Policy 3: Director of Education Job Description

D. Kaiser, Chair of the Committee of the Whole, stepped down as Chair during Item 4 to present the Policy Review Committee Update. Board Chairperson B. Morris assumed the role as Acting Chair of Committee of the Whole during this agenda item.

The following recommendation was made:

1. **Renfrew County Joint Transportation Consortium (RCJTC) Update: Staggered Bells Zone 4 Madawaska**

THAT the Board of Trustees with the Renfrew County District School Board adopt the report for the implementation of staggered bells for the Zone 4 Madawaska region starting in the 2021-2022 school year.

I move that the Board adopts this report.

D. Kaiser
Chairperson

ADOPTED - January 26, 2021

PROGRAM AND STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT COMMITTEE

Open Session: x

Closed Session: _____

REPORT TO BOARD

January 12, 2021

PRESENT: Committee Members: M. Guenette (Chair), L. Boland, M. Adam, S. Humphries,
(Virtual) D. Shields, B. Morris, D. Kaiser, N. Edge, J. Verch
J. Abbott & H. Arbour (Student Trustees)

Administration: P. Buffone, R. Cousineau, J. Poirier, B. McIntyre, J. Barnes,
S. Blok, J. Laderoute, S. McIntyre, H. MacMillan, L. Sluiman

Guests: M. Manwell (ACES), D. Fiebig, S. Gagne, T. Nelson

ABSENT: (With Regrets) J. Smith (CASS)

The Program and Student Achievement Committee met on Tuesday, January 12, 2021 to discuss the following items:

1. ICT Update
2. District's Achievement Strategy – Update for Current School Year

No recommendations were made

M. Guenette
Chairperson

ADOPTED - January 26, 2021

FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Open Session: X

Closed Session: _____

REPORT TO BOARD

January 12, 2021

PRESENT:

Committee Members: L. Boland (Chair), M. Adam, N. Edge, M. Guenette, S. Humphries, D. Kaiser, B. Morris, D. Shields, J. Verch, J. Abbott and H. Arbour (Student Trustees)

Administration: P. Buffone, J. Barnes, S. Blok, R. Cousineau, B. McIntyre, J. Poirier, J. Laderoute, S. McIntyre, H. MacMillan

Guests:

ABSENT: (With Regrets)

The Finance and Resources Committee met on Tuesday, January 12, 2021 to discuss the following item(s):

1. Stakeholder Consultation Related to Renewed Strategic Planning Process; and
2. Lockdown Update.

No recommendations were made.

L. Boland
Chairperson

ADOPTED - January 26, 2021



INSPIRE. EMPOWER. ACHIEVE.

SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Open Session: x

Closed Session:

REPORT TO BOARD

December 16, 2020

PRESENT: Committee Members: M. Guenette, B. Morris, C. Smith, L. Hunt, N. Tabbert,
L. Cobb

ADMINISTRATION: J. Poirier, B. Smith, M. Ingram, L. Rigby, C. Barber,
S. Smith, A. Hiltz

GUEST: Liz McKendry Teacher of Deaf/Hard of Hearing

ABSENT: (With Regrets) A. MacKenzie, L. Costello, D. Root, A. MacDougall-Popke

The Special Education Advisory Committee met on Wednesday December 16, 2020 and discussed the following:

1. Supports for Deaf/Hard of Hearing students
2. Staff Update
3. Report from the Board
4. Association Report

No recommendations were made.

Cheryl Smith,
Chairperson

ADOPTED - January 26, 2021



INSPIRE. EMPOWER. ACHIEVE.

SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Open Session: x

Closed Session:

REPORT TO BOARD

January 20, 2021

PRESENT: Committee Members: M. Guenette, B. Morris, C. Smith, L. Hunt, N. Tabbert, A. MacKenzie

ADMINISTRATION: J. Poirier, B. Smith, M. Ingram, L. Rigby, C. Barber, S. Smith, A. MacDougall-Popke, A. Hilts

ABSENT: (With Regrets) L. Costello, D. Root, L. Cobb

The Special Education Advisory Committee met on Wednesday January 20, 2021 and discussed the following:

1. Staff Update
2. Report from the Board
3. Association Report

No recommendations were made.

Cheryl Smith,
Chairperson



**Board Meeting
Director's Update - Pino Buffone
26 January 2021**

The past month has demonstrated, once again, the adaptability, ingenuity and resourcefulness of our students, staff and school communities as we transitioned from in-person learning at school to on-line learning at home, as a result of the province-wide public health recommendations, at the start of the holiday break...for the majority of our student population, beyond those students enrolled in remote, synchronous learning. In spite of the challenges this transition provided, especially as the holiday break had already started, our system has responded admirably, as always. Examples of wonderful adaptations have included...

- the sharing of "140 moments in history" over the next 140 days at Renfrew Collegiate Institute in celebration of the school's 140th year of existence... with a series of tweets as a 'virtual thread' posted for the school community, and the entire county, that began on Friday 01 January 2021; as well as,
- the real-time, on-line witnessing and thoughtful debrief of a Presidential Inauguration in Mrs. Toner's Grade 8 class on Wednesday 20 January 2021 at A.J.Charbonneau Public School.

Our gratitude goes out to all of our dedicated students and their supportive parents/guardians, as well as our committed staff, for their incredible efforts over the past month. We are excited to be returning to schools and central departments as of Monday 25 January 2021... working alongside one another in the resumption of public education across our system.

Third Quarterly Transition Point - Winter 2021

The third quarterly transition point for both elementary and secondary levels begins on Tuesday 02 February 2021. To date, the numbers of students engaged in in-person learning at school and remote, synchronous learning at home have remained relatively stable through the second quadmester, with approximately 85% learning in schools and approximately 15% learning at home. It appears, at this point in time, that the choice in 'mode of delivery' made by parents/guardians earlier in the school year remains in place for their child(ren), for the most part, with some minor variances in both directions.



Board Meeting
Chair's Update - Bryon Morris
26 January 2021

Our 'Pivot' to Synchronous Learning

To say that this past year has been tumultuous is an understatement to say the least. As I write this 'Update' (Thursday, Jan. 21) the news on Television is reporting that it is exactly one year ago today that the first case of COVID-19 was identified in the United States. Canada reported its first case at about the same time. So much has occurred in these past twelve months. COVID-19 has been - and is - ravaging our countries. Here in Ontario we currently are under a 'Stay -at Home' order, severe restrictions have been placed on the business and social lives of our communities and, of course, how our education system functions has seen tremendous change.

Just as we were to begin our Christmas holidays schools were told to 'pivot' from in-class to 'on-line' learning. Much stress was placed on our students, their families, our teachers and all the other education workers that make our schools work, Principals, and central staff. Pivot they did and they all did their part to make it work.

One thing did not change as we all faced the challenge of a lifetime. That was the dedication of all staff to make this work for students. We on the Board of Trustees extend our heartfelt thanks to all for going beyond the call of duty to do their best to make sure that our students are able to continue to learn. This truly has been Public Education at its best. We thank all employees of the Board for what they do and for the selfless way they do it. We now are back to in-class learning thanks to all in Renfrew County who have heeded the advice of Public Health and through their actions have kept the incidence of COVID-19 in our community to a low enough level to allow schools to reopen. To all of you, thank you.

Teleconferences with Minister Lecce

Every Monday afternoon the Minister of Education (along with the Deputy Minister and officials from Public Health) hosts a conference call with all Board Chairs across Ontario. Directors of Education also are invited to be part of them. Typically, the Minister takes ten minutes or so to give an update and then takes questions from Board Chairs for 20 minutes or so. This is an important opportunity to learn what is happening, why it is happening, and to question the Minister on a variety of items. Past Chair Humphries, Vice-Chair Kaiser, and I value these calls as important two-way communication with the Ministry of Education.

The Work of the Board

While we focus on the health, and rightly so, of all our students and staff, we also firmly keep in mind the mental health of all in this existential crisis. We are taking all possible measures to ensure the mental health of everyone in our system. Thirdly, we are focused on student achievement. Whatever the mode of learning as we go through the COVID-19 experience, we work hard to make sure that our students have the necessary knowledge and skills to be successful in whatever they choose to do, whether that be in the world of work, the trades, college or university. We are engaging in a Secondary Review to better focus our efforts in preparing the students in our high schools. Also, we are engaging in a review and ‘rethink’ of our Strategic Plan, the document that directs the work of the Board for the next 4 years. Over the next month or so we will be seeking input in this process from a variety of stakeholder and community groups.

On a final note, we will get through this together. Education is a partnership between home and school. Collectively, we will do the very best possible for our young people!

Stay well. Stay safe.

Student Trustee Abbott:

Our Student Senate meeting was very productive and the Senators were able to contribute excellent ideas. A key point from the meeting that I would like to highlight is our discussion about Student Trustee application advertisement. We came up with the ideas to have each school have one grade 10, or 11 staying for a victory lap, to attend our virtual meeting. This gives them a chance to see what the senate is like, as well as have a presentation about the role of a Student Trustee. Hudson and I will make a short promotional video to advertise what the role is, and our senate offered to share it on their video announcements. We also have a plan for social media advertisement. We hope to encourage as many students as possible to explore the role of Student Trustee, and to spread knowledge about the role.

Student Trustee Arbour:

We also had a few presentations at our meeting. Director Buffone led a presentation on the results of the thought exchange that started in March of last year, which included a follow up discussion. The director also led us in a brainstorming exercise surrounding the new strategic plan. Amy Johnson joined us to give a brief rundown of her new role, as well as some of the upcoming projects she has on the go. We wrapped up the meeting with a brief conversation about a pen pal initiative with members of long term care, an idea that Trustee Adam brought to our attention.

Student Trustee Abbott:

The OSTA-AECO executive council is on it's way to a big project, called the Volume of our Voices. Tomorrow, Wednesday the 27th our story submission form will be published. The form gives students the chance to share their experiences with the impacts of COVID-19, Race and Inclusion, as well as Gender and Sexuality. This is a new type of project for OSTA, since typically the surveys are for data collection. These stories will be shared in three volumes, one for each category. The stories will then be shared on our website with an interactive page. We will also make recommendations to the Ministry and School Boards based on the stories shared. The Public Affairs coordinator and I put together a social media marketing campaign to promote student's to share their stories, and the outreach team has a plan to get the form out to Student Trustees as well as students from each board.