

**YORK CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD
MINUTES
of the Regular Board Meeting**

Tuesday, June 18, 2024

PRESENT:

Members: In Person: F. Alexander, M. Barbieri, C. Cotton, E. Crowe, M. Iafrate, J. DiMeo, A. Grella, T. McNicol, A. Saggese, J. Wigston
Student Trustees J. James, M. Galstyan, A. Zamanifar
Virtual: N/A

Administration: In Person: J. De Faveri, J. Sarna, A. Arcadi, A. Battick, M. Brosens, J. Chiutsi, D. Candido, K. Elgharbawy, M. Fedrigoni, T. Laliberte, C. McNeil, L. Paonessa, J. O'Hara, L. Paonessa, T. Pechkovsky, L. Sawicky, S. Wright
Virtual: N/A

Absent with Notice: All present.

Recording Officer: S. Greco (In Person)

Presiding: E. Crowe, Chair of the Board

2024:417 OPENING PRAYER AND CALL TO ORDER

Chair of the Board, Elizabeth Crowe, welcomed everyone to the Regular Board meeting and welcomed L.A. Lavor (Area D), A. Comella (Area F) and M. Ponzio (Area E), Faith Ambassador Co-Chairs, to lead the opening prayer at 7:37 pm. The Land Acknowledgement followed.

2024:418 ROLL CALL: All Present.

Interim Director John De Faveri stated the following:
I would like to issue an apology to Trustee McNicol for the confusion created at our last Board meeting held on June 11, 2024, with respect to her attendance at the meeting. During roll call, I acknowledged all Trustees present in-person. There was some hesitation on my part as I was ascertaining the Trustees present virtually. I recognized Trustee Barbieri, however there was a pause before I recognized Trustee McNicol. As a result, there was question about whether or not Trustee McNicol was present from the start of the meeting. I wish to confirm for the record that Trustee McNicol was present from the outset of the meeting and attended for the entire meeting and to assure her constituents of that fact. The minutes of that meeting will confirm that. In future, and in order to avoid any confusion, roll call will be done without reference to whether Trustees are in attendance virtually, or in person.

2024:419 APPROVAL OF NEW MATERIAL

Add: Delegation, Item 14a) Policy Change to Policy 616 Community Use of Schools

Add: Item 18i) Annual Human Rights and Equity Advisor Report

MOTION: Grella/Barbieri

THAT the new material be approved.

– MOTION CARRIED –

2024:420 APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

MOTION: Wigston/DiMeo

THAT the agenda be approved as amended.

– MOTION CARRIED –

2024:421 DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST FOR CURRENT MEETING: NIL

2024:422 DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST FOR PREVIOUS MEETING: NIL

2024:423 a) APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS:

Joint Public EDC Meeting of May 21, 2024

Regular Board Meeting of May 28, 2024

Special Board Meeting of June 11, 2024

MOTION: Saggese/DiMeo

THAT the Minutes of the Joint Public EDC Meeting of May 21, 2024, Regular Board Meeting of May 28, 2024 and Special Board Meeting of June 11, 2024, be approved as presented.

– MOTION CARRIED –

2024:424 BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING: NIL

2024:425 CHAIR'S REPORT / UPDATE / INSPIRATIONAL MESSAGES:

Elizabeth Crowe, Chair of the Board, provided the Chair's Board Report as part of the June 18 2024 Regular Board Agenda. The topics included Excellence in Athletics, Survey for the Permanent Director of Education, Italian Heritage Month and Summer Blessings.

Recognition of Superintendent of Exceptional Learners, D. Candido

With the coming retirement of Diana Candido, Superintendent of Exceptional Learners, I want to take a moment to thank her for her incredible service. Since joining the YCDSB as a junior division teacher at St. Francis of Assisi CES, Diana has strongly advocated for all York Catholic students. She has always shown a gift for vision, innovation and leadership whether as a classroom teacher, special education teacher, administrator or superintendent. She has often used these gifts to promote equity, diversity and inclusion in our Board. In particular, in her role as Superintendent of Exceptional Learners she has reviewed Special Education programs and worked tirelessly towards supporting students in their educational journey at their home school. I know her work in these areas will leave a mark on York Catholic for years to come. I want to thank Diana for her tireless devotion to York Catholic and for sharing her vocation with us. I pray that you have a very happy retirement.

Recognition of Student Trustee J. James

I also need to say thank you to Senior Student Trustee Jonah James, who is graduating this year. We will all remember Jonah's energy and enthusiasm, which he used to advocate for others. Whether it was organizing the return of Relay For Life at Sacred Heart CHS, or fundraising for the Newmarket Food Pantry, or helping create an Indigenous representative position at the YSCPC, Jonah has shown a drive to make the world a better place. Jonah has personified the Catholic School Graduate Expectation of being a responsible citizen who gives witness to Catholic social teaching by promoting peace, justice and the sacredness of human life. In the fall, Jonah will attend Western University to study Philosophy, Politics, and Economics, with a pathway to the Ivey School of Business. Thank you, Jonah, and good luck!

Recognition of Student Trustee A. Zamanifar

We must also express our gratitude to Senior Student Trustee Amira Zamanifar, who is also graduating. Amira has shown remarkable leadership and work ethic while at the YCDSB. On top of playing on St. Maximilian Kolbe's senior girls' basketball team, she was the president of the school's student council, organizer of an inaugural Afro-Caribbean Gala, and co-creator of the Indigenous Influencer's Handbook. She has shown a dedication to social justice as the treasurer of a Best Buddies Council, co-host of York Catholic's first-ever Changemakers Summit, and an advocate for an Indigenous mural that will appear at St. Max. In the fall, Amira will study Biomedical Science at the University of Ottawa and will be a Legislative Page at the House of Commons – I doubt the meetings in Ottawa will be as exciting as the ones in Aurora. Thank you, Amira, and good luck!

2024:426 OCSTA BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S UPDATE:

Trustee Jennifer Wigston OCSTA Regional Director representing York Catholic District School Board, advised a fulsome report will be included in the August 27, 2024 Board agenda.

2024:427 DIRECTOR'S REPORT/ UPDATE:

Interim Director of Education, J. De Faveri, provided the Director's Report in the June 18, 2024 Regular Board Agenda package. Interim Director De Faveri's topics included Relay for Life, YCPIC Meeting, Archives Committee, Graduation, Summer.

2024:428 STUDENT TRUSTEES' REPORT:

Student Trustees Monica Galstyan, Jonah James and Amira Zamanifar provided their Student Trustee Report to Board report in the June 18, 2024 Regular Board Agenda package. Topics included OSTA-AECO AGM, YSCPC Awards Ceremony, YCDSB Pow/Wow, Exams/End of Term, Congratulations Graduates, Note from your Student Trustees.

2024:429 RECOGNITIONS / OUTSIDE PRESENTATIONS:**a) 2024 Skills National Competition**

Superintendent of Curriculum & Assessment, A. Arcadi, presented the award for the 2024 Skills National Competition for Workplace Safety. A. Movashehi, Cardinal Carter CHS student, received a gold medal.

b) OFSAA Medal Winners

Superintendent of Curriculum & Assessment, A. Arcadi presented the awards to the OFSAA Medal Winners for Wrestling, Senior Tennis, Senior Boys Triple Jump, Cross Country, Senior Badminton, Snowboarding and Swimming.

2024:430 DELEGATIONS:**a) Policy Change to Policy 616 Community Use of Schools**

Elvio Rasile from Italo Bambini Italian Summer Camp presented his delegation requesting a policy change to Policy 616 to allow users to use the kitchen facility in YCDSB schools. (Speaking Notes - see Appendix A)

The trustees asked staff and the presenters questions of clarification. There was no direction to staff to review the policy. Chair Crowe thanked the presenters.

Trustee McNicol raised her hand and when recognized by the Chair, asked , why the Board had two security guards in place given the board's deficit, even though CFO McNeil had not yet presented

2024:431 JOURNEY TOWARDS OUR VISION:**a) Multi-Year Strategic Plan Update / S.M.A.R.T. Goals 2024-2025**

J. Sarna, Associate Director presented the Multi-Year Strategic Plan (2023-2028) update and with a summary report of SMART goal attainment for Year One (2023-2024). She also presented the SMART goals for Year Two (2024-2025) and explained on how they built on the 2023-24 goals. .providing the opportunity for reflective accountability. A comparison of Year One and Year Two SMART goals, with colour-coded evaluation was included. It was noted that some of the goals were not achieved as they were attached to one person and not to the position. Once that person is not present, the goal is not fulfilled. This will be addressed by putting better goals in place so that the team who develops the goal are confident to attain their objective.

The Board of Trustees thanked Ms Sarna and all the staff throughout the system that align the goals with local school improvement plans. Success can only be achieved by setting smart clear goals and then measuring outcomes so that adjustments in strategy can be made if needed. Trustees also expressed how they liked the reporting format.

b) 2024-2025 Budget Development – Preliminary Operating Budget

C. McNeil, Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer of the Board, presented the “2024-25 Budget Development – Preliminary Operating Budget”. Information shared included the 2023-24 Forecast, 2024-25 Budget Pressures, 2024-25 Financial Position and Next Steps.

The 2024/25 projected compliance in-year operating position amounted to a \$19.1M deficit. The accumulated deficit at the end of 2024-25 is projected at \$25.7M.

A summary of the school board specific challenges was provided including information on declining enrolment, supply costs and the special education deficit.

A request to the Ministry for use of POD (\$10.6M), made in June 2023, to fund the 22-23 Pay Equity remains outstanding. An additional POD request to fund the 23-24 Pay Equity pressure of \$7M was recommended. A request for non-compliant in-year deficit approval will be requested, and a Multi-Year Financial Recovery Plan will be developed in the fall 2024.

The Board of Trustees expressed concern with the reduction of schools GSB to fund technology centrally.. It was agreed that further detailed information would be provided to trustees on the implementation criteria and process.

Revenue Estimates for 2024-25**MOTION: Alexander/Wigston**

THAT, the Board, subject to Minister’s approval, approve the submission of the Revenue Financial Estimates to the Ministry of Education for the fiscal year September 1, 2024 to August 31, 2025, in the total amount of \$687,722,856 (based on Operating \$639,935,244 and Non-Operating \$47,787,612) as presented.

- **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY-**

Chair Crowe passed the gavel to Vice-Chair lafrate and remarked as follows:

“Fellow trustees, tonight we have to make a very difficult decision, the approval of a deficit budget of \$19.1 M which is over 3% of our operating allocation, or triple of the 1% compliance position allowed under the Education Act. As trustees, one of our primary roles is fiscal responsibility and approval of the annual budget within the parameters set out in the Education Act and its regulations. Our CFO has made it very clear that we cannot actually approve a non-compliant budget, that is why we need Ministry approval, and we have not yet received approval of last year’s non-compliant budget. When we eventually do get approval it will be subject to developing a multi-year recovery plan with the goal of having an accumulated surplus of 1-2% of our operating budget, ie \$6-12M , achieved in a 2-3 year timeframe.

Tonight’s proposed budget is like running up your credit card to the max and then going into bankruptcy and having to restructure to become solvent. We have compared ourselves to other boards and said the issue is structural and the funding is insufficient, but the minister has been very clear that the expectation is for Boards to balance their budgets. In the fall, when we develop our MYFRP we will be faced with making critical cuts to the system to items in our budget that are not driven by collective agreements and Ministry regulations. Innovative programs that we are so very proud of, like STREAM centers, further reductions in transportation and possible bell time changes, further cuts to Special Education, even the on-going support of our digital Religion program license, will all be vulnerable. If we refuse to make the cuts, we will face a Ministry take over. They will make the cuts and we will watch powerless, and that is not what we were elected to do. Possibly we will get some POD money to help us address the \$25.7 M shortfall, but the \$17M annual deficit will need to be addressed sooner than later.

As such, I cannot in all conscience, after much reflection, vote to approve this budget because the cuts we will have to make will only be deeper.”

A recorded vote was requested.

Trustee Cotton noted that she was not in favour of the Motions as written and that it be revised to remove "*approve the submission of*", as the Board of Trustees are not approving the existing budget but rather only submitting for Ministry approval.

Chair Crowe advised that if the Motions were being revised as suggested by Trustee Cotton, , then she would be able to vote for the Motions, to submit rather than approve.

Salaries and Benefits Estimates for 2024-25

MOTION: Cotton/Wigston

THAT the Board, subject to Minister's approval, submit the Salary and Benefits Expenditures Estimates to the Ministry of Education for the fiscal year September 1, 2024 to August 31, 2025, in the total amount of \$584,559,480 (Salaries \$499,599,471 and Benefits \$84,960,009) as presented.

- **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY-**

Other Expenses Estimates for 2024-25

MOTION: Cotton/Wigston

THAT the Board, subject to Minister's approval, submit the Support Cost Expenditures Estimates to the Ministry of Education for the fiscal year September 1, 2024 to August 31, 2025, in the total amount of \$122,247,139 (based on \$72,356,919 Operating Expenditures, \$2,102,608 of PPF and Other Grants/Programs expenditures and \$47,787,612 of Non-Operating expenditures) as presented.

- **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY-**

In-Year Budget for 2024-25

MOTION: Cotton/Wigston

THAT the Board, subject to Minister's approval, submit the \$19,083,763 non-compliant deficit to the Ministry of Education for the fiscal year September 1, 2024 to August 31, 2025 as presented.

- **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY-**

Elizabeth Crowe, Chair of the Board, resumed her position as Chair.

Ministry Request for POD

MOTION: Iafrate/Barbieri

THAT the Board request that the Minister of Education allow the Board to use uncommitted Proceeds of Disposition to offset the increased costs due to Pay Equity in the 23/24 fiscal year of \$7.3M.

- **MOTION CARRIED -**

-

It was stated that using POD funds is only a band-aid solution and not a solution to the increased cost of pay equity.

Ministry Request for Online Learning Funding Consideration**MOTION: Cotton/Saggese**

THAT the Board request that the Minister of Education consider additional funding for online learning since the funding does not reflect actual students enrolled in online learning courses and that the additional supervision required is not funded.

- **MOTION CARRIED** -

2024:432 ACTION ITEM(S) (including Committee Reports)**a) APPROVAL OF REPORT NO. 2024:21 COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE - JUNE 18, 2024**

Vice-Chair Maria Iafrate presented, for approval, Report No. 2024:21 of the Committee of the Whole private session held on June 18, 2024.

(i) **DECLASSIFIED (Action Items for Approval): NIL**

(ii) **CLASSIFIED:**

MOTION: Iafrate/Barbieri

THAT the confidential action items from the Private Session held June 18, 2024, be approved as presented.

- **MOTION CARRIED** -

b) APPROVAL OF REPORT NO. 2024:03 POLICY REVIEW COMMITTEE - JUNE 4, 2024

Committee Chair, M. Iafrate, presented for approval, Report No. 2024:03 of the Policy Review Committee meeting held on June 4, 2024.

Board Chair Elizabeth Crowe asked that *Policy 808 Travel, Meals & Expense Reimbursement* be lifted from the report and that it be deferred to the August 27, 2024 Regular Board Meeting as further changes are required.

MOTION: Crowe/Grella

THAT Policy 808 Travel, Meals & Expense Reimbursement be deferred to the August 27, 2024 Regular Board Meeting.

- **MOTION CARRIED** -

Board Chair Elizabeth Crowe brought forward minor changes to some of the policies on the Report to Board.

MOTION: Iafrate/DiMeo

THAT the Board approve the following revised policies:

Policy 205 Student Government

Policy 208 Student Disability Accommodation

Policy 229 (formerly 402) Accommodations for Students with Moderate to Severe Needs

Policy 307 Opening Exercises

THAT the Board approve the following revised policy as draft and send for stakeholder consultation:

Policy 610 Cannabis, Electronic Cigarettes, Tobacco - A Smoke-Free Environment

Policy 617 (formerly 117) Code of Conduct

- **MOTION CARRIED** -

c) RECEIPT OF REPORT NO. 2024:03 YORK CATHOLIC PARENT INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE - JUNE 10, 2024

Committee Member, F. Alexander, presented for receipt Report No. 2024:03 of the York Catholic Parent Involvement Committee meeting held on June 10, 2024.

MOTION: Alexander/Wigston

THAT Report No. 2024:03 of the York Catholic Parent Involvement Committee meeting held on June 10, 2024, be received as presented.

– MOTION CARRIED –

d) RECEIPT OF REPORT NO. 2024:02 AD-HOC INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION EXTENDED DAY COMMITTEE - JUNE 12, 2024

Committee Chair, A. Saggese, presented for receipt Report No. 2024:02 of the Ad-Hoc International Language Extended Day Committee meeting held on June 12, 2024.

MOTION: Saggese/Barbieri

THAT Report No. 2024:02 of the Ad-Hoc International Language Extended Day Committee meeting held on June 12, 2024, be received as presented.

– MOTION CARRIED –

e) RECEIPT OF REPORT NO. 2024:08 SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Committee Chair, A. Grella, presented for receipt, Report No. 2024:08 of the Special Education Advisory Committee meeting held on June 17, 2024.

MOTION: Grella/DiMeo

THAT Report No. 2024:08 of the Special Education Advisory Committee meeting held on June 17, 2024, be received as presented.

– MOTION CARRIED –

f) APPROVAL OF SPECIAL EDUCATION PLAN

D. Candido, Superintendent of Exceptional Learners presented the Special Education Plan (June 2024), for endorsement, to submit to the Ministry.

MOTION: Wigston/McNicol

THAT the Board endorses the Special Education Plan (June 2024) for submission to the Ministry of Education.

– MOTION CARRIED –

g) ESTABLISHMENT OF A CHARITABLE FOUNDATION FOR THE YCDSB

J. De Faveri, Interim Director of Education, presented an update on the establishment of a charitable foundation for the York Catholic District School Board. The Committee considered the next steps which is to engage Legal Counsel to incorporate the Charitable Foundation. The report also stated the cost would be covered by the existing budget.

MOTION: Iafrate/Barbieri

THAT the Board authorize the Director of Education to engage Legal Counsel and approve the expenditure of up to \$20,000 for the establishment of a Charitable Foundation in compliance with the Ontario Not-for-profit Corporations Act.

– MOTION CARRIED –

2024:433 DISCUSSION ITEM(S):**a) TRUSTEE MOTION: CONTINUATION OF MENSTRUAL HYGIENE PROGRAM (J. Wigston)**

WHEREAS *Period poverty impacts the most vulnerable students;*

WHEREAS *Menstrual hygiene products are basic necessities;*

WHEREAS *A report by Plan International Canada noted that “34 percent of women and girls have had to regularly or occasionally sacrifice something else within their budget to afford menstrual products.”¹;*

WHEREAS *According to a government of Ontario news release, “Students who cannot afford menstrual products may experience a higher rate of absenteeism from school, challenges to engage fully in the classroom, and negative health effects, such as infections and toxic shock syndrome. It can also affect their social and emotional well-being.”²;*

WHEREAS *Convenient access to free period products helps promote gender equality and removes barriers to learning;*

WHEREAS *The Province of Ontario launched the Free Menstrual Products in Schools initiative in October 2021;*

WHEREAS *The three year agreement with Shoppers Drug Mart through the Province is set to expire in the fall of 2024;*

MOTION: Wigston/Saggese

THAT the Board write a letter to the Ministry of Education requesting that the Free Menstrual Products in Schools initiative become a permanent program, thereby ensuring continued and free access to period products for elementary and secondary students across Ontario.

- MOTION CARRIED -

2024:434 INFORMATION ITEM(S):**a) Semi Annual Development Report**

T. Pechkovsky, Coordinating Manager of Planning & Operations provided a summary of major development applications received during the period of January 2024 to June 2024.

b) Truth and Reconciliation Projects' Update

A. Arcadi, Superintendent of Curriculum & Assessment and N. Galatianos, Student Success Specialist and Principal of Indigenous Education provided a summary of the Truth and Reconciliation Projects that took place in each of the secondary schools. Chair Crowe thanked staff and students for all the initiatives that took place in our schools.

c) Menstrual Hygiene Products in Elementary Schools

J. Sarna, Associate Director, provided information with regard to menstrual hygiene products in YCDSB Elementary schools. Staff would ensure that all YCDSB Elementary schools will have menstrual products available free of charge.

d) Math Achievement Action Plan

A. Arcadi, Superintendent of Curriculum & Assessment provided an update on the Math Achievement Action Plan that supports student achievement and results in math to meet provincial standards.

e) YCDSB Letter re: TRUSTEE MOTION: An Audience with Ontario Bishops to Discuss Growing Secularism in Catholic Schools

Further to Trustee Alexander's Motion that was approved on May 28, 2024, E. Crowe, Chair of the Board provided a copy of the YCDSB letter sent to the Archbishop of Toronto and the Chair of the Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario.

f) International Education Program Updates

I. Faraone, Principal, International & Continuing Education Programs provided information on the 2024-2025 programs currently in development.

g) Dismantling Anti-Black Racism Advisory Committee Updates

A. Battick, Human Rights and Equity Advisor shared an update on the progress of the Dismantling Anti-Black Racism Advisory Committee.

h) August 2024 Calendar

The August 2024 calendar was provided.

i) Annual Human Rights and Equity Advisory Report

A. Battick, Human Rights and Equity Advisor shared the 2023-2024 yearly report. Chair Crowe thanked Mr. Battick for a comprehensive report.

2024:435 NOTICES OF MOTION: NIL

2024:436 FUTURE AGENDA ITEM(S) / REQUEST FOR INFORMATION:

Chair Crowe advised there would be a Special Board Meeting on Thursday, June 27, 2024 at 8:30 am.

2024:437 PRAYER TO ST. MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL

2024:438 ADJOURNMENT – 10:31 PM
ON MOTION: Wigston/Barbieri and CARRIED

Secretary of the Board

Chair of the Board