



Jay Aspin, Chair

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Craig Myles, Director of Education

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The March 16, 2021 **Public Session Board Meeting** of the Near North District School Board was held via teleconference and videoconference.

**Trustees Present:**

Jay Aspin, Chair  
John Cochrane, Vice-Chair  
Al Bottomley  
Bill Steer  
Donna Breault  
Harry Fry  
Louise Sargent  
Nichole King  
Rob Learn  
Student Trustee M. Paradis \*

\* *Joined the meeting following the roll call. Entrance noted within the minutes.*

**Administrative Staff Present:**

Craig Myles, Director of Education  
Deb Bartlett, Information/Communication Officer  
Gay Smylie, Acting Superintendent  
Josh Casey, Communications Coordinator  
Krista Messenger, Executive Assistant  
Lisa Collins, Interim Executive Officer  
Melanie Gray, Acting Superintendent  
Tim Graves, Superintendent  
Wally Easton, Interim Superintendent of Business

**Other:**

Media and community partners

**Trustee Regrets:**

Nil

**Administrative Regrets:**

Nil.

**1.0 Call to Order**

Chair Aspin called the meeting to order at 6:33 pm.

**1.1 Attendance**

Attendance indicated that nine trustees are present for the meeting.

**1.2 Declaration of Conflict of Interest**

NIL

**2.0 Approval of the Agenda**

*Motion: 21-03-01, A. Bottomley/B. Steer.*

That the agenda for the Board meeting of March 16, 2021 be approved as presented.

**- Carried.**

### **3.0 Approval of Previous Minutes**

#### 3.1 2021 02 16 Regular Meeting minutes

Trustees were referred to the meeting minutes contained in the package. The floor was opened for amendments, questions, or comments with none rose.

*Motion: 21-03-02, A. Bottomley/ H. Fry*

That the minutes of the Regular Board meeting held on February 16, 2021, be approved.

– **Carried**

Student Trustee Paradis has joined the meeting.

### **4.0 Communication to the Board**

#### 4.1 Information Items

4.1.1 *Monthly Tender Report*

4.1.2 *Professional Development Opportunities Calendar*

4.1.3 *Student Registration Form – Elementary*

4.1.4 *SBO Search Committee Update*

4.1.5 *Fricker Project Update*

Chair Aspin referred trustees to the board reports submitted for information as part of the agenda package for each item. The floor was opened for questions or comments:

- Comment from Trustee Fry regarding the professional development opportunities calendar. It is noted that the lunch and learn sessions for trustees offered by OPSBA are very informative and sessions that are recorded will be posted to the OPSBA website for viewing outside of the live presentation. Chair Aspin thanked Trustee Fry for this comment.

With no additional comments brought forward, trustees received all the information items as presented.

#### 4.2 Director's Update

Director Myles referred trustees to the report contained in the agenda package.

Highlights drawn to a handful of items including:

- Acknowledgment for the one-year anniversary of the COVID-19 pandemic. Accolades provided to all NNDSB staff for the leadership and creative problem-solving over this last year. Appreciation expressed to the Board of Trustees for their confidence in staff. Union and community partners were integral to the board's ability to adapt during this last very trying year. Out of these tough times, come resilient solutions.
- In partnership with coterminous boards, NNDSB is preparing to implement asymptomatic testing in schools, per the direction from the Ministry of Education.
- The ministry has started to share direction on what the 2021/22 school year will look like. NNDSB will continue to gauge the environment and put appropriate plans in place.
- Acknowledgement for the work of the communications team to distribute many exciting stories highlighting the achievements in our school community and by our professional groups. This traction is also noted across the board's social

media channels with the increases in account interactions.

- Building on this update, point raised that Minister Lecce announced his virtual visit with an NNDSB classroom earlier this evening. The board was extremely pleased to have him participate in a senior culinary class at Parry Sound High School. Acknowledgement for every effort put out to create a meaningful and unique experience for the Minister.

Chair Aspin thanked the Director for the report and opened the floor for comments. Chair Aspin opened the conversation by further expressing appreciation for the communications team's work in disseminating the great work of NNDSB staff and students. In recent weeks, news of a prestigious scholarship awarded to a Mattawa student, the UV box initiative, and now the request by the Minister to engage with the Special High School Major (SHSM) culinary program at the Parry Sound High School.

*Point of order to note that Chair Aspin allowed the next few agenda items to be re-prioritized to follow conversation topics. Items were discussed with a slight variation to the sequence presented on the agenda.*

#### 4.3 Chair's Remarks

The Chair shared remarks regarding board and community engagement initiatives as part of the conversation following the Director's Remarks. Highlights are noted as:

- Trustees are acknowledged for their focus to ensure the MYSP remains on track.
- With two new builds on the horizon, the community is really noticing NNDSB's forward momentum.
- Chair Aspin spoke to the motivation of many trustees has been to build back trust in the NNDSB and build back the NNDSB's reputation. Progress is noted across these two priorities in the highlights shared this evening.
- Acknowledgement for the instrumental work of the Special Advisors in support of the board's transformation, with the board continuing to benefit from the guidance of W. Easton in his current role of interim SBO.
- Sincere appreciation offered to media partners for their efforts to work with the board, including BayToday and media partners in Parry Sound.

Trustees received the Chair's remarks with thanks.

#### 4.4 OPSBA Report

The Chair invited Trustee Steer to lead the Board through this item. Trustee Steer referred Board members to the report shared as part of the agenda package. Highlights drawn to OPSBA priorities such as:

- Northern and rural challenges. Appreciation expressed to the board staff who provided input into the reports that allowed Trustee Steer to amplify NNDSB's voice. The reports are included in the agenda package for trustees to reference.
- The OPSBA Annual General Meeting will take place virtually for a second year on June 12, 2021.
- Support expressed for the earlier comment from Trustee Fry regarding the rich opportunities for professional development trustees can access via the OPSBA. Recommendation for all trustees to review the governance modules.
  - Strong encouragement from Chair Aspin for all trustees to complete these trainings. It is noted that they are specifically developed to increase

governance capacity in school board trustees which benefit the education system.

The floor was opened for questions, or comments. Comment from Trustee Fry regarding the attendance turnout to the previous lunchtime session. Response from Trustee Steer to estimate there were over 60 attendees. Confirmation from Trustee Sargent that she was also in attendance. The Chair thanked Trustee Steer for his report.

#### **4.4 Student Trustee's Update**

The Chair invited Student Trustee Paradis to speak to this item. Student Trustee Paradis shared a verbal report centering on the following highlights:

- During mental health awareness month in February, Chippewa Secondary School raised \$4 475 dollars for the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Unit at the North Bay Regional Hospital.
- With the typical March Break Vacation being postponed, schools embraced this change by hosting a spirit week. Many different activities were planned to celebrate.
- As a member of the Student Advocacy Working group, a designated group created by OSTA/ AECO to support continued advocacy for Ontario students, work is underway to develop an antiracism handbook. The goal of this resource is to provide education about racism, how to be an ally, and the role stigma and prejudice play in racism.
- Student trustees had a guest speaker regarding the importance of women, trans man and gender non-binary person having convenient access to menstrual products, as it supports their full participation in school activities, reduces stigma, and promotes gender equality. Student Trustees are hopeful to see this change implemented in all 72 school boards across Ontario.

Vice-Chair Cochrane acknowledged the importance of anti-racism education and access to menstrual products as two very key areas of leadership for the student trustees. The Chair thanked the Student Trustee for providing her verbal report.

#### **4.5 Consolidation Update**

Director Myles was invited to speak to this item and referred trustees to the report contained in the agenda package. It is noted that the board report is accompanied by the School Openings, Closures & Consolidations Administrative Guideline, with a new appendix outlining memorabilia retention. Appreciation expressed for the leadership of Acting Superintendent Smylie regarding this process. The floor was opened for questions with none rose. Chair Aspin thanked administration staff for developing this process and presenting the information for trustee's review and consideration.

### **5.0 Items for Decision**

#### **5.1 Report from Committee of the Whole**

Chair Aspin noted consensus was achieved on two items during the Committee of the Whole meeting immediately prior to the Board of Trustees meeting.

*5.1.1 Ad Hoc Parry Sound Architect Selection Committee Dissolution  
Motion: 21-03-03, N. King/ J. Cochrane*

That the Ad Hoc Parry Sound Architect Selection Committee be thanked for achieving their mandate, and the committee is hereby formally disbanded. – **CARRIED.**

*5.1.2 Trustee Initiative Fund Application Approval- FIRST Team 1305*

*Motion: 21-03-04, H. Fry/ L. Sargent.*

That the Board of Trustees of Near North District School Board approve the 2020/2021 allocation from the Trustee Initiative Fund in the amount of \$15,000 to Near North Student Robotics Initiative FIRST Team 1305, and that the Near North District School Board authorize and direct the Superintendent of Business to do all actions necessary, and execute all required documentation, to give effect to this approval. – **CARRIED.**

5.2 Audit Committee Recommendation

*Motion: 21-02-05, J. Cochrane/ D. Breault.*

Motion: That the Board of Trustees of Near North District School Board approves the appointment of KPMG as the External Auditors for a period of three (3) years with the option of two (2) one (1) year extensions, as recommended by the Audit Committee. – **CARRIED.**

5.3 MYSP Committee Recommendation

*Motion: 21-02-06, B. Steer/ R. Learn*

Motion: That the Board of Trustees of Near North District School Board accept the changes to the Multi-Year Strategic Plan Committee's Terms of Reference as presented, as recommended by the MYSP Committee. – **CARRIED.**

**6.0 Committee Reports**

6.1 Standing Committees

*6.1.1 Multi-Year Strategic Plan (MYSP) Committee Report*

Committee Chair Steer invited to lead this item for the Board. It is noted that the minutes of the MYSP Committee meeting of February 11, 2021, are included for information purposes. Trustees referred to the report, roadmap, and circular graphic contained in the agenda package. Director Myles invited to share highlights and noted:

- Appreciation expressed to trustees for the approval of the MYSP Committee's Terms of Reference. The changes approved this evening transition the Committee from an "ad hoc" role to a "regular committee" which is integral to ensure the ongoing monitoring of the MYSP following the board's approval of the plan.
- The status arrow is slightly behind the expected progress this month. This is an intentional pause to provide education to staff on how to set clear and measurable goals. Authentic collaboration takes time, and this process is setting the stage for future board plans.
- The progress delay this month is not expected to affect the final approval date, as the MYSP is still expected to continue on target.
- The board's work with consultant M. Ramsay is nearly finished. The Director is committed to keeping staff and trustees updated on this work using a variety of means (including via the MYSP section of the website, and the monthly Near North Matters newsletter).

Chair Aspin thanked Trustee Steer and Director Myles for providing this update. Just prior to the presentation by the Officer of Corporate Affairs, Chair Aspin reflected on how the Multi-Year Strategic Plan will be a five-year anchor for the Board. Alignment is key to ensure all efforts support the overall goal of student achievement and well-being. The focus of the presentation this evening is to present an overview of the MYSP planning process from a public-consumption perspective. Care has been taken to remove the “edu-jargon” from the material so that the concepts can be readily understood by all audiences. This is a key piece to ensure our public can provide input into the MYSP during the forthcoming public consultations.

*Presentation: “MYSP Planning Process Overview” presented by L. Blaskievich*

It is noted that a slide deck was distributed in advance of the meeting and will be reviewed on screen to anchor the presentation. Highlights of the presentation are noted as:

- Point that the slides are intended as broad examples of the types of planning and collaboration that are occurring regarding board improvement planning that meets the priorities of the multi-year strategic plan.
- There are many parallel processes occurring with a clear vision of aligning to the four priorities that have been set in the MYSP- excellence in teaching in learning, excellence in building relationships, excellence in communication, and excellence in innovation.
- Review of what it means to set SMART goals. SMART is an acronym that stands for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Timely. Therefore, a SMART goal incorporates all of these criteria to help focus efforts and increase the chances of goal achievement.
- Currently staff are developing the board improvement plans for student achievement and well-being (“BIPSABW”).
- Example reviewed of how a strategic goal in literacy can be adapted to meet the priorities.
- Once this is established, the school improvement planning process can begin to take the board goals and adapt to meet the unique needs of individual schools. Goals in this plan become more specific to increase accountability.
- Review of how these plans are represented on the circular graphic previously presented to trustees.
- Note that the objective of this year’s planning is for all audiences to see how their goals and actions support the larger system.

As the Committee Chair, Trustee Steer thanked L. Blasievich for the presentation and drew attention to how critical SMART goals will be for the board as it relates to the Director’s performance appraisal process and the prioritization of student achievement and well-being.

Chair Aspin echoed these comments and opened the floor for further comments and questions. No comments were raised.

6.2 Committee Meeting Minutes- Presented for information

6.2.1 FNAC- unofficial minutes- February 8, 2021 ✓

6.2.2 Audit Committee minutes- February 17, 2021 ✓

6.2.3 SEAC- unofficial minutes- February 18, 2021

The Chair referred trustees to the minutes of the legislated committees contained in the agenda package for information purposes. Comment from Trustee Fry as the SEAC Committee Chair to note an amendment will be raised to the unofficial SEAC minutes to reflect the correct reference to the Ventin Group.

There being no further business to discuss, the Board moved to adjourn the meeting.

**7.0 Next Meeting Date**

Chair Aspin confirmed the Board of Trustees would meet next on Tuesday, April 20, 2021.

**8.0 Motion to Adjourn**

*Motion: 21-03-07, H. Fry/ D. Breault*

That we do now adjourn at 7:23 pm. – **Carried**



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Jay Aspin  
Chair



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Craig Myles  
Director of Education