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Craig Myles, Director of Education

The June 15, 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
Student Trustee Elect C. Darling

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
Liana Blaskievich, Officer Corporate Affairs
Lisa Collins, Interim Executive Officer
Melanie Gray, Acting Superintendent
Tim Graves, Superintendent
Wally Easton, Interim Superintendent of Business

Other:

Media and community partners

1.0 Call to Order

Chair Aspin called the meeting to order at 6:31 pm.

1.1 Land Acknowledgement

Chair Aspin read the land acknowledgement aloud.

1.2 Opening Prayer

Chair Aspin welcomed elder J. Commanda of the Nipissing First Nation to the Board meeting. As part of the Board's ongoing commitments to truth and reconciliation, it is noted that here forward, all NNDSB Board of Trustee meetings will open with remarks from an Indigenous Elder.

Trustee King introduced Elder Commanda, and noted her presence held special significance to the Board, as she is a residential school survivor. Elder Commanda offered a prayer in Anishinaabemowin thanking Creator for today, life, and everything Mother Earth provides.

1.3 Moment of Silence

Trustee King called for a moment of silent reflection in honour of the tragic discovery of 215 children on the grounds of the former Kamloops Residential

School. The moment was concluded as Trustee King read aloud a poem she wrote titled, "Our Children".

Chair Aspin thanked Elder Commanda for her presence and her words and remarked how the news of the discovery in Kamloops, British Columbia has rocked Canadians to the core. NNDSB is proud of the

1.4 Attendance

Attendance indicated that ten trustees are present for the meeting, including the Student Trustee.

1.5 Declaration of Conflict of Interest

Trustee Steer declared a conflict regarding item 8.1.5- School Trip Preparedness & School Trip Administrative Guideline. It is noted that this is a non-voting item to be presented for information.

2.0 Approval of the Agenda

Motion: 21-06-01, L. Sargent/ D. Breault

That the agenda for the Board meeting of June 15, 2021 be approved as presented. - **Carried.**

3.0 Approval of Previous Minutes

3.1 2021 05 18 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: 21-06-02, J. Cochrane/ A. Bottomley

That the minutes of the Regular Board meeting held on May 18, 2021, be approved. – **Carried**

4.0 Business Arising

Nil.

5.0 Special Education Advisory Committee Report

5.1 LEARNstyle Presentation

Chair Aspin invited Committee Chair Fry to speak to this item. At the request of the Special Education Advisory Committee, Chief Learning Officer, R.

Cunningham, has been invited to provide an overview on the outcomes of the partnership with NNDSB throughout the last school year. Highlights of the presentation are noted as:

- Opening remarks from Acting Superintendent Gray and Special Education Coordinator, L. Paradis, to note how the program has augmented the board's ability to support students who are assigned a SEA funded device.
- LEARNstyle provides technology coaching support for school boards and families. The goal is to help the students adapt to the expansive use of

technology in education, which is key to closing the gap on the underrepresentation of students with disabilities in post-secondary education.

- The project began in September 2020 for students in Grades 7 and 8 and has since been expanded to include junior and secondary students.
- The company provided one-on-one virtual support to students and coaches, which leads to students trusting their coaches, and coaches understanding the student's greatest need and choosing the best strategies.
- The program strives to move students through four stages - full guidance, moderate guidance, minimal guidance and full independence. Individual examples reviewed of specific successes students have achieved following the different pathways.
- Appointment cancellations and no-shows of NNDSB students are the lowest of any board and this is attributed to the engagement and excitement of staff.

Superintendent Gray thanked R. Cunningham for the presentation and recognized the Special Education staff for their work supporting the program, as well as the leadership of the SEAC and the Board of Trustees. The floor was opened for questions and comments:

- Comment from Vice-Chair Cochrane to recognize how this program must give much hope to Special Education students and their families. Congratulations to all.
- Question from Trustee Breault on the ability to continue partnering with LEARNstyle to offer support to identified students on an ongoing basis
 - L. Paradis was invited to respond and noted that the intention is to include five hours of 1:1 LEARNstyle support with each device deployed to eligible students.
- Comment from Trustee Sargent upon reflection of her career in special education, many students would have benefited from this program, so these advancements are encouraging. Sincere thanks to the LEARNstyle and NNDSB staff for the continued pursuit of student betterment.

Closing comments from Chair Aspin to thank R. Cunningham for his presentation, and to the SEAC Committee for bringing it forward. The Board is proud of NNDSB students for their success with LEARNstyle, and the dedication of staff to support student achievement.

5.2 SEAC minutes- May 20, 2021

Trustees referred to the minutes contained in the agenda package for information purposes.

5.3 Correspondence recommendation

Committee Chair Fry provided a report back to Chair Aspin to confirm SEAC met to review the letter deferred to the committee last month for review. On behalf of SEAC, Committee Chair Fry noted the committee recommends Chair Aspin sign the letter and forward to the MPP.

5.4 2020- 2021 Special Education Plan for approval

Trustees referred to the attachment included in the agenda package. Acting Superintendent Gray called upon the Principal of Special Education, S. Wilson, to provide highlights on the report:

- It is noted that all boards must create Special Education plans on an annual basis and post the plan on their websites by July 15, 2021.
- Many sections of the plan remain unchanged, as they describe the process and pathways of Special Education.
- Attention called to the five sections focused for review have been updated: Data reflecting IPRCs, Special Education Staffing, Professional Development activities provided over the current school year, Accessibility to school building projects and SEAC contact information and activities (including motions passed over the year).

The floor was opened for questions, with none rose.

Motion: 21-06-03, H. Fry/ A. Bottomley

That the Near North District School Board approved the updated Special Education Plan as presented. – **Carried.**

6.0 Equity Advisory Circle Report

6.1 NNDSB Indigenous Education presentation

Opening remarks from Director Myles and Acting Superintendent Gray to note the board was pleased to present a presentation regarding Indigenous education, at the request of the Equity Advisory Circle Committee. NNDSB's Indigenous Education Lead, Tracy Hendrick, was invited to speak. Highlights of the presentation are notes as:

- gave a presentation about the creation of resources that assist educators to better support Indigenous students and their families.
- Approximately 10% of NNDSB students self-identify as Indigenous (First Nation, Métis or Inuit). It is expected there are many more FNMI students that have not identified themselves. The self-identification helps the board create programs and supports for Indigenous students and their families.
- A Sway presentation was reviewed detailing Indigenous teaching resources and content that is relevant locally, and in the local dialect together with community partnerships and pictures. The intention is to continually update this Sway resource to ensure all staff are expressed
- Closing comments from Superintendent Gray to note much work has gone into cultivating strong relationships and connections to FNMI communities and cultures in support of the board's goals.
- The floor was opened for questions:
 - Comment from Trustee Sargent to commend staff for the data included in the Sway presentation, as it will be a valuable resource for trustees to refer to.

With no further comments to note, Chair Aspin thanked T. Hendrick and Acting Superintendent Gray for their time. It is evident that the board has spent a lot of time

developing a thorough Indigenous education curriculum for students.

6.2 EAC Minutes- May 27, 2021

Trustees referred to the minutes included in the agenda package for information purposes.

7.0 Communication to the Board

7.1 Information Items

7.1.1 Monthly Tender Report- June 2021

7.1.2 Board Correspondence

7.1.3 Professional Development Opportunities Calendar

Chair Aspin referred trustees to the board reports submitted for information as part of the agenda package for the first three items. The floor was opened for questions or comments with none rose. With the time quickly approaching 8:00 PM, a motion was called to extend the meeting for one hour.

Motion: 21-06-04, B. Steer, H. Fry

That the Near North District School Board of Trustees approved the continuation of the June 15, 2021 meeting beyond 8:00 PM. – **Carried.**

7.1.4 Programming Update

Opening remarks from Director Myles to note a detailed report has been included in the agenda package and called upon Superintendent Graves to provide highlights and respond to any questions. Conversation centred on:

- Recognition given to the program staff for their work during a dynamic year. Members of the team present this evening to support questions.
- In consultation with the health unit, NNDSB has developed summer learning programs that will be offered virtually. This update will be communicated to families once further direction is received from the Ministry of Education.
- Review of ongoing plans for next year:
 - Recall at the May Board meeting, it was shared that students and their parents would have the opportunity to register for in-person or remote learning. Results from the registration survey show that 86 elementary students, and 73 secondary students have chosen to continue remote learning in September 2021. This is down significantly, as last year remote learning had approximately 1400 students enrolled. This speaks to parents' increased comfort with returning to in-person learning thanks to the dedication of staff to create a safe environment for learning.
 - NNDSB took care to communicate as much information as possible to parents in what each learning pathway would look like, as their selection would be made for the full year.
- NNDSB is preparing to re-open in September using all the safety protocols in place to create the safest learning environment as possible. This includes continuing with the octomester model for in-person secondary students, enhanced cleaning protocols. Plans will be continually refined as information is received from the health authorities and the Ministry of Education.

- The floor was opened for questions:
 - Trustee Learn noted how other school boards intend to implement a quadmester model for in-person secondary learning. Question raised on why NNDSB has elected to continue with the octomester model. Superintendent Graves noted that student safety has been the highest priority for the board. The ministry has advised the board to continue limiting student to student contact, which is more manageable with the octomester model. NNDSB has carefully monitored credit accumulation throughout the year, and the data has shown this has increased while following an octomester schedule. The average final course grade was 80%. Additionally, staff and student well-being were considered noting the value of consistency. Union partners have expressed interest in continuing with the octomester model. There was no data evident that presented a compelling reason for NNDSB to reconsider the octomester plan.
 - Follow-up point noted from Trustee Learn to share his family's experience with the octomester. This model makes for long days for students.

With no further comments or questions, Chair Aspin thanked Superintendent Graves for the update.

7.1.5 School Trip Preparedness & School Trip Administrative Guideline

Opening remarks from Director Myles to note student safety and well-being is a priority at NNDSB, which also realizes that learning experiences outside of school can deepen understanding. Trustees were referred to the report contained in the agenda package.

Highlights noted as:

- To ensure that board policies and processes reflect provincial best practices and provide families with as much information as possible to make informed decisions, a thorough review of policies and procedures has resulted in the testing of a School Trip Preparedness (STP) template.
- The template is a visual method of communication that shares the out-of-school learning opportunity with parents with maps, photos and concise language to identify the activity and rationale for attending, map links for parents and emergency services, contact information of leaders and providers, curricular links, initial assessment and acknowledgement of risk, emergency preparedness including communication protocols and mustering areas, and more.
- Information will be gathered from the first round of staff training, including teacher feedback that will be used to update the board's administrative guideline to align the guideline to the STP template.
- Comment from Trustee Sargent to recognize how fortunate NNDSB students are to have so many outdoor education opportunities, and how pleased she is with the work the board is doing to foster these opportunities safely.

With no further questions or comments, Chair Aspin thanked Acting Superintendent Smylie for her leadership in this area.

7.2 Director's Update

Trustees referred to the report included in the agenda package. In the interest of time, the Director noted he would be pleased to respond to any questions of trustees.

With no questions raised by trustees, a closing comment was offered by Chair Aspin to acknowledge the Director for the work and the many initiatives detailed in his report.

7.3 Chair's Remarks

Trustees were referred to the remarks from the Chair shared as part of the agenda package. Chair Aspin reiterated his sincere appreciation to all trustees for the work accomplished throughout the 2020-2021 school year. Acknowledgement given to the senior administration team, and all NNDSB staff for working with trustees to advance the mission of NNDSB to create a top-notch educational experience for students.

Trustees received Chair Aspin's report and remarks with thanks.

7.4 OPSBA Report

The Chair invited Trustee Steer to lead the Board through this item. Trustee Steer provided a verbal report to note:

- The OPSBA's Annual General Meeting was held on June 12, 2021.
- Recall at the last NNDSB Board of Trustees meeting, a motion was passed to request Trustee Steer bring forward the importance of environmentalism on behalf of NNDSB.
- Update to share Trustee Steer raised this as a motion from the floor during the AGM and it was passed successfully, with nearly unanimous support.
- As a result, the OPSBA's mission statement has been updated to reflect the recognition of student's environmental well-being.

The floor was opened for questions, or comments with none rose. The Chair thanked Trustee Steer for his report and his successful advocacy on behalf of NNDSB.

7.5 Student Trustee's Update

The Chair invited Student Trustee Paradis to speak to this item. It is noted that Student Trustee Elect, C. Darling, is in attendance this evening. With respect for time, Student Trustee Paradis referred trustees to the report submitted as part of the agenda package. Attention called to a letter included in her report regarding menstrual product equality sent to Minister Lecce by the Toronto District School Board. This has been identified as a priority for action by the Ontario Student Trustee's Association, asking all school boards to add their voice of support to this initiative.

Roundtable remarks offered to Student Trustee Paradis to recognize her excellent work as a student trustee and congratulations on a terrific year. Trustees expressed support for NNDSB to write a letter advocating for menstrual product equality, in recognizing the importance of access equality especially in northern Ontario.

Motion: 21-06-05, J. Cochrane, B. Steer

That the Near North District School Board of Trustees request the Director of Education prepare a report regarding menstrual product access in the NNDSB so the Board of

Trustees may review as part of the decision to write a letter to Minister Lecce.

– Carried unanimously.

Closing remarks on this item from Chair Aspin to echo the high regards expressed by trustees and thank Student Trustee Paradis for her role in amplifying the student voice. Welcome offering remarks to Student Trustee Elect, C. Darling. C. Darling thanked the Board for the warm welcome and noted she was looking forward to working alongside the Board of Trustees.

8.0 Items for Decision

9.1 Borrowing Bylaw

Interim SBO Easton was invited to provide a short report and noted this is an annual commitment required by the bank. It is noted that the board has not accessed the Line of Credit, and does not anticipate accessing it, but nevertheless, this provides the authority should it be needed. The floor was opened for further questions, with none rose.

Motion: 21-06-06, J. Cochrane, B. Steer

That the Board of Trustees for the Near North District School Board pass and approve the Borrowing Resolutions for the fiscal year 2021-2022 as presented on June 15, 2021.

– Carried.

9.0 Committee Reports

9.1 Standing Committees

9.1.1 Multi-Year Strategic Plan (MYSP) Committee Report

It is noted that MYSP Committee minutes are included in the agenda package for information purposes. Committee Chair Steer invited to lead this item for the Board.

Highlights are noted as:

- Committee Chair Steer was very pleased to refer trustees to the finalized draft of the 2021-2026 Multi-Year Strategic Plan shared as part of the agenda package.
- This report reflects the culmination of 16 months of work by the Multi-Year Strategic Plan Committee on behalf of the Board of Trustees.
- Thanks expressed to the MYSP committee members and the staff supporting the committee for the tireless work.
- Director Myles noted that an executive summary presentation has been prepared but will be forgone in the interest of time.
- It is noted that trustees have been well informed of the MYSP progress through the MYSP Committee's monthly reports.
- Over the summer, staff will get to know their role in the MYSP, which will be implemented in September.
- The plan's strategic priorities – excellence in teaching and learning, communication, building relations and innovation – will guide all work done by NNDSB for the period 2021-2026. All school, department and board improvement plans will align with these priorities, with student achievement and well-being at the centre of all the board does.
- The MYSP is a living document that will be responsive to Ministry and community changes.

The floor was opened for questions with none rose. Comments from Board Chair Aspin to recognize the leadership of Trustee Steer, Trustee Learn, Director Myles and the Officer of Corporate Affairs, L. Blaskievich for their work as the MYSP Committee and bringing forward this roadmap to guide the board for the years to come. With no further questions, Chair Aspin called for a motion to approve the plan.

Motion: 21-06-07, B. Steer, H. Fry

That the NNDSB Board of Trustees approve the 2021-2026 Multi-Year Strategic Plan as presented, as recommended by the MYSP Committee. – **Carried unanimously.**

9.1.2 Finance Committee Report

Trustees referred to the minutes contained in the package for information purposes. Committee Chair Cochrane provided a report to trustees. Highlights noted as:

- A draft of the 2021-22 budget is included in the agenda package, reflecting operating revenue of \$160.9 million.
- The budget was developed, after review for efficiencies and savings, to align with the Multi-Year Strategic Plan and provides resources that support the Board's mission and vision.
- The Finance Committee met for a thorough review of the budget in advance of the Board meeting and recommended its approval.
- Expenditures are projected at \$161.2 million, resulting in a deficit of \$417,000, or 0.3% of the total budget.
- COVID has significantly impacted revenue and expenses this year, and the Ministry of Education is allowing boards to access previous years' surpluses to assist with the current budget. The Ministry has allowed two per cent of operating grants (\$2.9 million for NNDSB) but asked boards to budget half this amount.
- Interim SBO Easton and the staff in the finance department were commended for their work.
- Note from Interim SBO Easton to note the ministry has shared there will be additional support provided to boards that do not have sufficient surplus to cover their deficits, however NNDSB does have sufficient surplus so it is not expected NNDSB will be eligible but will remain hopeful. More information is expected to be shared regarding COVID related deficits in the months ahead.
- The board is planning a virtual school model for next year, though enrollment is expected to be much less.
- Overview of capital items- noting the board received funds for school renewal, school resilience/ infrastructure (to improve air quality in schools over the next two school years).

The floor was opened for questions:

- Question raised by Trustee Sargent if other projects will be affected by the draw on surplus funds (for example new builds, and track improvements as part of the 3:2 process). Response from Interim SBO Easton to note the projected deficit is a very small draw on surplus, and

the board is expecting further information via the Priorities and Partnerships Funding (PPF) that can be reallocated to further reduce the draw.

With no further comments or questions to note, Chair Aspin thanked Vice-Chair Cochrane and members of the Finance Committee and finance department for their diligence and leadership.

Motion: 21-06-08, J. Cochrane, B. Steer

that the 2021/22 budget for the Near North District School Board be approved as presented, as recommended by the Finance Committee. – **Carried.**

9.1.3 Parry Sound Build Committee Report

Trustees referred to the meeting minutes of June 3, 2021 and the report contained in the package for information purposes. As Committee Chair, Vice-Chair Cochrane provided a verbal update. Highlights of the discussion are noted as:

- Review of the report contained in the agenda package noting the focus of the two sub-committees, the building and programming sub-committees.
 - The programming sub-committee's focus will be on room allocations, move management and how to accommodate programming in the new build.
 - The building sub-committee will ensure the project stays on track. There will be meeting over the summer with specific department staff to design specific spaces.
- Representatives of NNDSB were invited to the Parry Sound town council meeting on June 1 to provide an update on the JK-12 build. The deputation lasted 90 minutes. Council members asked many questions and the board was pleased to provide information to address them.
- Update shared regarding the community review hosted on June 8 with the architect that was open to all stakeholders. Members of the community were invited to provide comments and questions online. Once the online form has closed, those questions and answers are being compiled and will be published on the board website.

The floor was opened for questions:

- Comment from Trustee Sargent to commend senior staff on the community presentation. Value noted in the process established to funnel all comments to one point for collection and response. Question raised concerning opportunities further provincial or deferral funding for aspects of the build that align with their priorities (example cited to note how now all new school builds receive funding for childcare). Specifically, are there any other funding streams that would allow the board to incorporate more Indigenous elements throughout the build. Comment from Vice-Chair Cochrane to note the importance of meaningful Indigenous elements entrenched throughout the build was thoroughly emphasized during the architect selection process. During their interview, this was an area that

+VG was very passionate about.

- Trustee King noted participating in the FNAC meeting where Trustee Sargent's suggestion arose and it was shared that the government does not provide special funding to recognize the importance of Indigenous education spaces. This will remain a priority for the Parry Sound Build Committee to ensure it remains an area of focus.

With no further questions to note, the Chair thanked Vice-Chair Cochrane for his report. Reminder provided to trustees to refer any questions that come forward about the Parry Sound build to the survey posted on the board's website to ensure all comments can be considered as part of the feedback report to ensure the board is being fully transparent in the most efficient way.

9.2 Committee Meeting Minutes- Presented for information

9.2.1 Parent Involvement Committee minutes- April 9, 2021

9.2.2 Parent Involvement Committee unofficial minutes- May 28, 2021

The Chair referred trustees to these minutes contained in the agenda package for information purposes.

10.0 Next Meeting Date

Chair Aspin confirmed the Board of Trustees would likely be convened over the summer, as previously noted last month. Board Chair Aspin took a moment to thank trustees for their involvement in all the projects the board is working on. Progress is dependent upon the dedication of each trustee, and together- there is much to look forward to.

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

11.0 Motion to Adjourn

Motion: 21-06- 9, A. Bottomley, H. Fry

That we do now adjourn at 8:55 pm. – **Carried.**



Jay Aspin
Chair



Craig Myles
Director of Education

RESOLUTION SUMMARY

21-06- 01 L. Sargent D. Breault	That the agenda for the Board meeting of June 15, 2021 be approved as presented. – CARRIED.
21-06- 02 J. Cochrane A. Bottomley	That the minutes of the Regular Board meeting held on May 18, 2021, be approved. – CARRIED
21-06- 03 H. Fry A. Bottomley	That the Near North District School Board approved the updated Special Education Plan as presented. – CARRIED.
21-06- 04 B. Steer H. Fry	That the Near North District School Board of Trustees approved the continuation of the June 15, 2021 meeting beyond 8:00 PM. – CARRIED.
21-06- 05 J. Cochrane B. Steer	That the Near North District School Board of Trustees request the Director of Education prepare a report regarding menstrual product access in the NNDSB so the Board of Trustees may review as part of the decision to write a letter to Minister Lecce. – CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.
21-06- 06 J. Cochrane B. Steer	That the Board of Trustees for the Near North District School Board pass and approve the Borrowing Resolutions for the fiscal year 2021-2022 as presented on June 15, 2021. – CARRIED.
21-06- 07 B. Steer H. Fry	That the NNDSB Board of Trustees approve the 2021-2026 Multi-Year Strategic Plan as presented, as recommended by the MYSP Committee. – CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.
21-06- 08 J. Cochrane B. Steer	That the 2021/22 budget for the Near North District School Board be approved as presented, as recommended by the Finance Committee. – CARRIED.
21-06- 09 A. Bottomley H. Fry	That we do now adjourn at 8:55 pm. – Carried.