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Ashley St. Pierre, Chair

Craig Myles, Director of Education

The March 18, 2025 **Committee of the Whole Public Session** of the Near North District School Board was held in person at the Head Office and via a Zoom video and/or teleconference.

Trustees Present:

Ashley St. Pierre ®
Howard Wesley
Jeanie Fuscaldo
Caren Gagne
Shane Hall
Chantal Phillips
Julie Bertram ®
Bill Steer
Louise Sargent
Student Trustee Sidhu

Administrative Staff Present:

Craig Myles, Director of Education
Gay Smylie, Superintendent
Seija Van Haesendonck, Superintendent of Business
Timothy Graves, Superintendent
Melanie Gray, Superintendent
Patricia Lupton, Executive Assistant
Deb Bartlett, Communications ®
Maureen Egan, Director's Office
Liana Blaskievich, Exec. Officer Corporate Affairs

Regrets: Student Trustee Trudeau

Other:

Staff, media

1.0 Call to Order

Vice-Chair Wesley called the Committee of the Whole meeting to order at 5:00 pm.

1.1 Land Acknowledgement

Vice-Chair Wesley read the declaration aloud.

1.2 Attendance

Attendance indicated that 10 trustees were present including one Student Trustee.

1.3 Declaration of Conflict of Interest n/a

2.0 Closed Session

Motion: CW 25-03-01, C.Gagne/J.Fuscaldo

That the Committee move into Closed Session in order to discuss items pertaining to *The Education Act* R.S.O. 1990, c.E.2 section 207 (2) (c). – CARRIED

3.0 Approval of the Agenda

Motion: CW 25-03-02, C.Gagne/J.Fuscaldo

That the agenda for the Committee of the Whole meeting of March 18, 2025, be approved. - CARRIED.

4.0 Review of Previous Minutes

Motion: CW 25-03-03, C.Phillips/S.Hall

That the minutes for the Committee of the Whole meeting of February 11, 2025 be approved. – CARRIED.

5.0 Business Arising

5.1 Cyber Security Update

The Director and SBO advised that there was no update on this item.

5.2 Notice of Motion – Trustees Wesley and Fuscaldo

That the regular Board meeting time shall be changed from 6:30 PM to 2:30 PM, effective March 18, 2025, to improve accessibility, inclusivity, and effectiveness for students, staff, trustees, and the public.

AND THAT The Committee of the Whole meetings shall be scheduled for 1:00 PM to align with the Trustees' prior decision to hold Committee of the Whole meetings on the same day as the regular Board meeting.

The notice of motion was tabled from the February 11 CW and trustees discussed and provided comments. Trustee Fuscaldo referred to previous discussion surrounding the motion's effect on Student Trustees' attendance and noted that it would only apply to North Bay students. She also noted that meeting could continue at the current time if satellite office spaces were provided.

Trustee Sargent asked that the motion be on April's agenda to allow time to review the report provided by staff. She also suggested that the trustees consider holding meetings in its outlying areas to ensure community feels included.

Vice-Chair Wesley acknowledged that the Ministry has placed us in a challenging position re meetings must be chaired at the head office. This will be a challenge moving forward.

Trustee Steer said that OPSBA continues to lobby the Ministry on clarity surrounding electronic attendance. He speculated there could be changes once the new Minister is selected.

Trustee Fuscaldo noted the theme of public engagement in the meeting. Noting the number of attendees virtually, she said a satellite office would be appropriate.

Trustee Gagne agreed with the idea of sharing locations.

6.0 Notice of Motion

6.1 Notice of Motion – Trustee Wesley and Trustee Fuscaldo

That the Board of Trustees approve the ongoing operation of McDougall PS.

Trustees were referred to the Notice of Motion filed by Trustees Wesley and Fuscaldo contained in the agenda package regarding McDougall PS. It was noted that to proceed to discussion, the notice requires a seconder. Trustee Phillips seconded the motion. Trustee Fuscaldo introduced the motion saying that despite the letter we wrote to the Minister, the fact is there are too many students for the building, we have the support of the area MPP and from our community. She noted a similar decision was made at Upper Grand DSB.

Chair St. Pierre said she is in favour of the motion and queried the Director why he has received a response by the Ministry but the Board did not. Director Myles responded that he was unsure but also noted that he repeatedly lobbied the government. He also commented that when the letter was sent by trustees to the Minister it was “politician to politician” and when Directors reach out it is via staff. Director Myles noted the delay in sending the March 17 letter from the Ministry to trustees. Chair St. Pierre also expressed concern that the edu-pods were on back order.

Trustee Steer asked to defer the motion due to funding implications and that the board must hear from the Ministry first. He was also concerned with the cost of maintaining McDougall PS and the Board’s deficit position.

Vice-Chair Wesley said it is important to make a decision and that staff are waiting and students are in limbo and that the Ministry had put the trustees in this position.

Trustee Phillips noted that facts have changed including a growth in population previously not calculated. She suggested providing the Ministry with solutions and that the new minister does not have the ability to make this decision, but that the board does with our stakeholders and community. She also noted that it would be wise to follow the Ministry advice and defer the motion until we know more.

Vice-Chair Wesley stated that we would not have the information for the next calendar year. Students need to know where they are going and how staff are operating. The Ministry has put us in an awkward position and that deferring further would put stress on students, staff and families.

Director Myles noted that staff need to move ahead with contractual obligations, timelines and move management plans.

Trustee Gagne agreed to defer but with timelines and reaching out to the new minister. She expressed concern over losing funding. Vice-Chair Wesley said there is no documentation saying that we are losing money nor punitive actions from the Ministry.

Trustee Bertram said the board should make a decision today and let the chips fall where they may and deal with it later.

Trustee Fuscaldo said the board is tasked with ensuring student success and well-being and that we are hundreds of students spaces short therefore cannot defer. She felt we would risk losing students to the co-terminus board and therefore is in favour of voting now.

Trustee Sargent suggested pausing on the JK-6 movement to the new build and housing them in McDougall PS. She expressed concerns of safety and advocated for JK-6 in McDougall PS and re-visit next year.

Trustee Hall suggested deferring the motion and noted he did not want the school sold.

Trustee Bertram called the question and requested a recorded vote.

Trustee Steer noted point of order because all trustees had not spoken on the item. He expressed concerns and was not in favour noting that this will create a difficult climate with the Ministry in the future.

Trustee Phillips asked for the motion to be read. Vice-Chair Wesley read the motion: That the Board of Trustees approve the ongoing operation of McDougall PS.

A friendly amendment was approved adding “for the 2025-26 school year.” Vice-Chair Wesley said there is consensus to move the recommendation forward to the Board meeting for approval. A recorded vote was requested by Trustee Bertram.

	YEA	NAY	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
Bertram, Julie	x			
Fuscaldo, Jeanie	x			
Gagne, Caren		x		
Hall, Shane	x			
Phillips, Chantal	x			
Sargent, Louise	x			
St. Pierre, Ashley	x			
Steer, Bill		x		
Wesley, Howard	x			

6.0 Adjournment

Motion: CW 25-03-05, L.Sargent/J.Fuscaldo

That the start time of the March Regular Board meeting be moved to 6:00 pm from 6:30 pm. - CARRIED

Motion: CW 25-03-06, S.Hall/J..Fuscaldo

That on March 18, 2025 we do now adjourn at 5:54 pm. - CARRIED