

Report of the Durham District School Board  
Standing Committee Public Session  
January 4, 2016

The regular meeting of the Standing Committee of the Durham District School Board was held this date in Room 1017, Education Centre, 400 Taunton Road East, Whitby:

1. Call to Order:

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Roll Call: Trustee Carolyn Morton, Chair

Members Present: Trustees Patrice Barnes, Michael Barrett, Chris Braney, Donna Edwards, Elinor Hansen, Larry Jacula, Linda Stone, Christine Winters, Student Trustees Michelina Aguanno, Melanie Manning, Kevin Zheng

Regrets: Trustees Paul Crawford and Kimberly Zeppieri

Officials Present: Director Martyn Beckett, Superintendents Luigia Ayotte, John Bowyer, Janet Edwards, Ed Hodgins, Richard Kennelly, Anne Marie Laginski, John Legere, Lisa Millar, Silvia Peterson, Camille Taylor, David Visser, Communications Manager Andrea Pidwerbecki

Recording Secretary: Karen Douglas

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest at this time.

3. Motion to Approve Agenda

2016:01  
MOVED by Trustee Larry Jacula

The agenda was amended by adding Items 4. (j), (k), (l).

THAT THE AGENDA BE APPROVED AS AMENDED.

CARRIED

4. Presentations

(a) SOAR

John Bowyer, Superintendent, Whitby/Safe Schools introduced Susan Tanner, Teacher, Kim Tilden, Coordinator of the Supportive Opportunities to Achieve and Restore (SOAR) Program, Patrick Thompson, student, Anderson C.V.I., Cindy Thompson, grandmother/guardian of Patrick Thompson, and Ashely Snow, parent of a SOAR student. An overview of the SOAR program was provided to trustees. It was noted that SOAR is a voluntary program, targetted generally for Grade 7 and 8 students. It is generally eight to ten weeks in duration although this can vary. An overview of the results of the small classroom environment program over the past few years was provided. The student and parent/guardians present stated the positive impact the SOAR program had on them and their children after students transitioned back to their home schools.

(b) Dual-Track French Immersion

John Bowyer, Superintendent, Whitby/Safe Schools introduced Karin Schmidlechner, Principal, James Ayotte, Teacher-Librarian, Jennifer Loach-Perry, Physical Education and Health Teacher, Crystal McDonald, Junior Math and Intermediate French Immersion Teacher, Daniel Svoboda, Grade 8 student, Nawal Dbagh, Grade 7 student, and Bavinna Baskaran, Grade 8 student, Captain Michael Vandenbos P.S. Staff and students highlighted the accomplishments of the dual-track French Immersion School, Captain Michael Vandenbos P.S. It was noted that the school has worked on numerous fronts to create a community of learners including a shared vision, positive school culture, focused and aligned strategic goals, and parent engagement. Teachers determine their next best step collaboratively, and numerous activities take place including snowbird camp, strategic timetabling and other whole school activities to consolidate both French and regular stream students together. The students in attendance spoke to the positive impact of the activities taking place.

(c) Durham Tamil Association

Raveena Ratnasingam of the Tamil Community of Durham advised trustees of the work of the Academic and Fine Arts of Durham and thanked staff of the Board who have assisted with activities. Raveena Ratnasingam was accompanied by delegates of the local organizations. It was noted that the Board was the first in the province to recognize Tamil Heritage Month in January 2012, prior to the implementation of Bill 111 passed provincially to recognize Tamil Heritage month. The Board has also helped to facilitate a competition

(c) Durham Tamil Association (Continued)

sponsored by the Academic and Fine Arts of Durham. A token of appreciation to the Board was presented to Martyn Beckett, Director of Education and Barry Bedford, Administrative Officer, Equity, Diversity, Race Relations, which will be displayed as part of the Tamil Heritage Month display at the Education Centre.

(d) ARC OSS Staff Recommendation – Oshawa Central CI

Mayor John Henry, City of Oshawa introduced members of Oshawa City Council present at the meeting. He spoke in support of Oshawa Central C.I. and its strengths in training students in specific skills. He noted that public education is an equalizer for individuals and to the community need for the school given the challenges faced by south Oshawa. He also noted that it is anticipated that there will be a greater need for the school as construction occurs in that area. He asked trustees to consider potential opportunities in keeping the school open.

(e) ARC OSS Staff Recommendation – Oshawa Central CI

Sophie Traikos advised trustees of her concerns relating to the potential closure of Oshawa Central CI including the following: R.S. McLaughlin C.V.I. and Eastdale C.V.I. are currently overcrowded, Frontenac is located adjacent to Central CI and is easily accessible to students, the school works well with students who come from lower income families and who are at high risk due to cognitive, health and other issues, the high cost of bussing students to other schools, current Grade 11 students will not be able to graduate with their peers, many parents do not have cars and if students miss the bus, they will miss a day of school. She asked why tours of Oshawa Central CI are taking place for Grade 8's if there is a possibility that the school will not be open in September. She advised that her son has experienced success at Oshawa Central CI, and she suggested that it be changed to an alternative school to continue to support students.

(f) ARC OSS Staff Recommendation – Oshawa Central CI

Rebecca Brand spoke in support of Oshawa Central CI and stated that her family lives a short walking distance from the school. Her daughter is experiencing success due to the staff, and is particularly enjoying the baking program. Her son who is in Grade 8 plans to attend Oshawa Central CI and is looking forward to receiving the same type of supports available in a school with lower numbers of students. She spoke in support of the specialized programs available and the

(f) ARC OSS Staff Recommendation – Oshawa Central CI (Continued)

chances of success being higher than in a larger school. The proposed schools to which current students would be moved would require portables, bussing, and the cost of monthly bus passes for families can be cost prohibitive. Some students are currently caregivers to younger siblings and they will not be able to assist younger siblings if they are attending schools out of their areas. It was questioned why tours of Oshawa Central CI are taking place for Grade 8 students if the school may not be open in September. Will students be allowed to tour the other secondary schools?

A question and answer period ensued.

(g) ARC OSS Staff Recommendation – Oshawa Central CI

Craig Brand advised trustees that his daughter attends Oshawa Central CI and the smaller class sizes have helped her become successful in the secondary setting. Moving her to an over-populated school would harm her education. He is concerned that there will be a higher drop-out rate and about the financial burden on low-income families in paying for city transit bus passes. He asked if students come first, why is the school being closed for financial reasons?

(h) ARC OSS Staff Recommendation – Oshawa Central CI

Ann Marie Igel, Teacher at Oshawa Central CI made a presentation relating to student success at Oshawa Central CI illustrating that the closure of the school would not promote student achievement and well-being with a focus on in-risk students, mental health and transportation as a barrier. Copies of the presentation were distributed to trustees. She reviewed the reasons for students being in-risk and specific statistics relating to in-risk students at Oshawa Central CI and the progress of in-risk students with credit accumulation. Demographic issues and indicators, employment rates, teen pregnancy rates, and mental health and healthy neighbourhoods information was also reviewed. It was noted that there are currently no transportation barriers at Oshawa Central CI, but there will be barriers created by its closure. Various supports available to students at the school will also pose a loss for them. She concluded that the closure of Oshawa Central CI will put a large in-risk population at greater risk, will negatively affect students' mental health and will create transportation barriers.

(i) Julie Payette Boundary

Shahid Chaudhry, father of two students at Julie Payette P.S. stated that he has concerns relating to a potential boundary relocation. The current route he travels to the school allows them to make a right turn south on Thickson to Julie Payette P.S. The change in boundary would require him to make a left turn north off of Thickson Road against the traffic during rush hour, which will result in an unsafe commute. Previous communication with the Board has not resulted in a satisfactory response, so he would like the Board to reconsider his request.

Shahid Chaudhry then spoke on behalf of the parent community of Julie Payette P.S. relating to the potential boundary change. He asked what other options were considered and what process was undertaken relating to changing the boundary? Parents have asked whether there could be a single track French Immersion option at a E.A. Fairman P.S. E.A. Fairman P.S. is currently under capacity and projected to be so until 2019. Could students not be accommodated at another school, e.g. Colonel Farewell P.S.? It appears that a combined Colonel Fairwell P.S./John Dryden P.S. would be less over capacity than the Board's current proposal. He asked whether the Board has met with the Town of Whitby and whether the Durham Regional Police Services has been asked for their input and whether projected growth in Whitby has been included in the planning. It was requested that a communication plan be given to parents to help them understand the rationale for the change.

A question and answer period ensued.

(j) ARC OSS Staff Recommendation

John Aker, City of Oshawa councillor spoke in support of Oshawa Central CI. He stated that the City of Oshawa is experiencing unprecedented growth and reviewed the numbers of residential permits issued in the past few years and the anticipated number of new residents reflected by the permits. He stated that they anticipate a need for all six secondary schools in Oshawa. The area surrounding Oshawa Central CI is projected to have major growth with construction projects planned near the school. He stated that Oshawa Central CI is an important educational, recreational and social asset which is integral to maintaining a healthy neighbourhood. The area in which Oshawa Central CI is located has been identified as a priority neighbourhood in Durham Region, and he reviewed statistics which support this. Some reconfiguration of the catchment areas for schools may be required in order to keep the school open, but that it would be worthwhile. A letter from members of City Council in support of Oshawa Central CI and a package of information relating to the Health

(j) ARC OSS Staff Recommendation (Continued)

Neighbourhoods from the City of Oshawa would be sent to the Board as soon as possible. He stated that it has been a pleasure to work with the Oshawa Accommodation Review Committee.

A question and answer period ensued.

(k) ARC OSS Staff Recommendation

Dan Carter, City of Oshawa councillor spoke in support of Oshawa Central CI. He acknowledged that the Accommodation Review process is a difficult one, and that if the decision could be made solely on the basis of the analytics, the decision may be easier. However, given that the school provides a pathway out of poverty and other challenges, the decision becomes more difficult. A plan is being developed to help the economically challenged families in the neighbourhood. He stated that at a recent meeting, a student with anxiety issues had spoken in support of the school with passion and courage. Through his Hope Centre for Learning which provides counsellors, education and mentorship he has become aware of the day-to-day challenges experienced. The school is small enough to support students with anxiety issues allowing them opportunities to succeed. Pathways out of poverty start with education and unique ways to assist students. He spoke to the importance of education and asked that trustees remember the individuals helped by the school in making their decision.

(l) ARC OSS – Oshawa Central CI

Saamah Jadoon, teacher at Oshawa Central CI spoke in support of Oshawa Central CI. She stated that she was also a graduate of the school and the first in her family to attend post-secondary education. She outlined the special programming available to students at Oshawa Central CI including a hair salon, fitness studio, woodworking technology and that the school had received a prestigious award from a home builders association. Students from the school have travelled to many places around the world including London, Paris, Hollywood and have won the History Olympics competition twice. Thousands of dollars have been raised by the school for local charities. Amongst accomplishments listed were that Oshawa Central CI was the first to run a math carnival, and one of the first to adopt an ambassador program. She listed several graduates of the school including the founder of the Toronto Film Festival, former federal leader Ed Broadbent, the first female firefighter for the City of Oshawa and the current Governor of the Bank of Canada. Central has grown leaders in both students and staff in an environment which supports

(l) ARC OSS – Oshawa Central CI (Continued)

student well being. She asked that trustees consider retaining Oshawa Central CI in support of student success.

Ahmed Youssef, grade 12 student, Oshawa Central CI spoke in favour of the school. He suggested that boundaries be rewritten in order that the school would have more students. He stated that it would be a great loss to close many of the specialized programs at the school including the culinary arts program, small engine, and cosmetology classrooms. He stated that he had participated in the History Olympics competition when Oshawa Central CI won the competition over several larger local secondary schools. He asked that consideration be given to making David Bouchard P.S. or Waverly P.S. feeder schools. He stated that he had recently been accepted into several universities, and been offered scholarships and he credited Oshawa Central CI for assisting with his successes.

Chair Carolyn Morton thanked all presenters for the information provided and noted that trustees will take into consideration the recommendations made.

5. Recommended Actions

There were no recommended actions at this time.

6. Information Items

(a) Student Trustee Report

Student Trustee Melanie Manning reported that the fourth Student Senate meeting for the current school year had been held on January 4<sup>th</sup>, 2016, and that a Durham-wide collaborative conference is being placed. Additionally, a survey for students and teachers in special education relating to inclusion is being developed.

(b) Request for School Consolidation Capital Projects and New Construction of Child Care

David Visser, Associate Director advised trustees relating to a request for school consolidation capital projects and new construction of child care. The due date for the submissions is February 29, 2016.

Report of the Durham District School Board  
Standing Committee, Public Session  
January 4, 2016

7. Committee Reports

(a) OPSBA Report

Trustee Linda Stone reminded trustees of the 2016 Public Education Symposium which will be held January 28 to 30, 2016 and the Summit on Children and Youth Mental Health which will be held on April 7 and 8, 2016.

8. Correspondence

There was no correspondence at this time.

9. Other Business

There was no other business at this time.

10. Adjournment

2016:02  
MOVED by Trustee Edwards

THAT THE MEETING DOES NOW ADJOURN.

CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 9:38 p.m.

---

Chairperson

---

Secretary