

AVON MAITLAND DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD
Engage, Inspire, Innovate ... Always Learning

MINUTES

REGULAR BOARD MEETING
Tuesday, October 14, 2014
8:00 p.m.
Maitland Room, Seaforth Education Centre
62 Chalk Street North, Seaforth, ON

PRESENT:

Trustees: Michael Bannerman, Lynette Geddes, Robert Hunking, Alyson Kent, Colleen Schenk (via Skype), Al Sygrove, Jenny Versteeg

Regrets: Julie Moore, Randy Wagler

Senior Staff: Ted Doherty, Director of Education and Secretary of the Board, Superintendents Janet Baird-Jackson, Jodie Baker, Peggy Blair and Jane Morris

Student Trustees: Zach Misener and Kaitlinn Shaw

Resource Staff: Steve Howe

Recording Secretary: Barb Crawford

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Sygrove called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. for the Committee of the Whole, Closed Session.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE, CLOSED SESSION

MOTION 2014 10 128 (J. Versteeg – A. Kent)

RESOLVED THAT this Board convene into Committee of the Whole, Closed Session.

CARRIED

Trustee Hunking was Acting Vice-Chair for the Committee of the Whole, Closed Session.

Chair Sygrove resumed the Chair at 5:20 p.m.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE, OPEN SESSION

MOTION 2014 10 129 (M. Bannerman – C. Schenk)

RESOLVED THAT this Board convene into Committee of the Whole, Open Session.

CARRIED

MOTION 2014 10 130 (A. Kent – J. Versteeg)

RESOLVED THAT the agenda for Committee of the Whole, Open Session, be approved as presented.

CARRIED

Trustee Open Time

Student Safety

In light of a recent student death in the Niagara region related to a co-op placement, Trustee Versteeg asked what is in place for Avon Maitland students in co-op placements, specifically what measures are in place to ensure that our students are safe. Trustee Bannerman also questioned the risk assessment that as a board have we looked at safety concerns in general.

Superintendent Baker noted for example a risk assessment is follow up with guidance counsellors immediately after events such as the Challenge Days which has been very effective. Director Doherty explained there are some schools that have opted out for Challenge Days for various reasons and the school community and student council work with school administration to decide if they are participating.

Director Doherty noted in follow up with Pathways Coordinator Jeff Piro, staff tracks all incidents/accidents and over the past 3 ½ years there have been 1500 students enrolled in co-op placements and there have been 25 reported injuries. Co-op supervisors are Avon Maitland teachers who visit the workplaces six times per semester. Avon Maitland's co-op management plan is strongly mandated provincially, and there are rules in place suitable for specific ages of students. Co-op students are required to understand Health & Safety issues related to their placement and they know their rights to refuse unsafe work. Prior to a co-op placement students are advised about equipment that is required on job sites, there is a session on risk management and on liability in taking a vehicle to the placement or using a vehicle while at the placement. Jeff Piro continues to work extremely hard with the co-op teachers to show due diligence.

The student death in Ottawa caused the Ministry of Labour to look at changes and Superintendent Baird-Jackson continues to work with departments, specifically tech and science to complete regular inspections in the classrooms.

Superintendent Baird-Jackson highlighted upgrades to classrooms noting the funding was received through CODE in two phases. Staff continues to do peer review 'walk-throughs' of tech and science classrooms. Safety training is on-going.

Response to Martin Weatherall's Letter re: WiFi

Director Doherty presented a draft letter in response to Martin Weatherall's September 25th request for information regarding WiFi in Avon Maitland. Staff will provide the requested information and respond to Mr. Weatherall's questions.

Trustee Orientation/Trustee Exit Planning

Trustee Geddes announced an Orientation Committee meeting is planned for Tuesday, October 28th at 5:00 p.m. As part of orientation to their role as trustee, Director Doherty and Chair Sygrove will be meeting with the incoming trustees following the election and before the Inaugural meeting on December 2nd.

Trustee Laptops

Trustees discussed options regarding upgrading laptops. Chair Sygrove asked that administration present a report outlining options for replacements and that the report be available before the new term of trustees.

Review of Board Policies

Director Doherty introduced the report for discussion and review of the suggested revisions to Policies #3, #5, #9, #10, #13, #14, and #15. Trustees agreed on revisions to Policy #3, #9, #10, #13, and #14. Trustees agreed to leave Policy #5 Board Members' Code of Conduct until OPSBA has further information to support revisions, and #15 Pupil Accommodation Reviews until the Ministry releases the revised Ministry pupil accommodation guidelines.

REGULAR SESSION**MOTION 2014 10 131****(M. Bannerman – L. Geddes)****RESOLVED THAT** this Board reconvene into Regular Session.**CARRIED****ROUTINE MATTERS**

Chair Sygrove called the meeting at 8:00 p.m. and asked for items of New Business. No items were included.

Approval of Agenda**MOTION 2014 10 132****(J. Versteeg – A. Kent)****RESOLVED THAT** the agenda be approved as presented.**CARRIED****Declaration of Pecuniary Interest**

No trustee declared a pecuniary interest regarding any item presented in this agenda.

Approval of Minutes

The following amendments were noted:

Superintendent Ash was not in attendance at the September 23rd Board meeting. The Declaration of Oath for the Student Senators was omitted from the minutes.

MOTION 2014 10 133**(M. Bannerman – C. Schenk)****RESOLVED THAT** the Minutes of the Avon Maitland District School Board meeting held Tuesday, September 23, 2014, be approved as amended.**CARRIED****Business Arising from the Minutes**

There was no business arising from the minutes.

Committee of the Whole, Closed Session**Strategic Reflection – Trustee Bannerman**

When I graduated from University, one of the first jobs that I had was to run an 8-week marriage counselling course for a non-profit group in Stratford. It was somewhat ironic that I... as an unmarried man, would be asked to lead a course and provide insight and direction for newly engaged couples on the secrets to a happy marriage but hey.. I was a recent grad and pretty sure that I knew it all anyways – so... why not!

What I learned from teaching this course is that there really is one skill that above all determines the successfulness of any relationship. The skill... or the 'art' really... of communication. It was that ability for couples not only to clearly express their thoughts, feelings, goals, needs and expectations, but also hear and understand the same thoughts, feelings, goals, needs and expectations from their partners.

When we break it down, public education, and more specifically the Avon Maitland District School Board is a 'hive' full of relationships – or perhaps better defined – 'Collaborative Partnerships'. It starts with the basic relationship between teacher and student but it certainly does not end there. We have relationships, partnerships between the public and the board, the trustees and the Director. The Director and senior staff, senior staff and educators, parents and principals, the list is endless and exhausting if we try to name them all. But what is important, is that we recognize and realize that at the heart of each of these relationships being successful... being healthy – is the ability for us to communicate.

I still remember one of the 'quotes' on communication that I use to use in my pre-marriage course. It went something like this ... 'if you are able to talk to a person in a language they understand that goes to their head, if you are able to speak with them in their own language it goes to their heart'. Or perhaps better put... 'to effectively communicate we must realize that we are all different in the way we perceive the world and use this understanding as a guide to our communication with others'.

As a school board and as individuals within the board we need to work on clearly communicating our own thoughts, feelings, goals, expectations and needs in regards to the different roles, partnerships and relationships that we find ourselves in... and we need to try our best to do this in a language that people not only understand... but one that they actually speak. But the communication aspect does not stop there.. why? Because healthy communication does not just involve speaking. I'm sure that we have all heard the saying that God made us with 'two ears and one mouth... so that we could listen twice as much as we speak'. Healthy communication within any partnership really involves listening... not just to hear, but to understand.

If fact, I would say that often the number one thing I heard from parents when they call me as a trustee with one of their concerns I 'thanks... I just needed to be heard'. As a board and as individuals within this board it is important that we continue to provide opportunity to listen... to really hear what our partners are saying. We need to understand and appreciate when a parent is more concerned about their special needs child being socially integrated with their peers than perhaps being able to count to 100. We need to be aware of when kids are struggling with things outside the classroom... issues like mental health, poverty, abuse or perhaps a family break up.

You see, the other thing I realized through my little marriage counselling sessions – and have since provide clinically within my own marriage... is that very rarely is one partner, or one side, always right. Often there is a middle ground, not that all solutions are found through compromise.

Sometimes we still need to choose black or white, right or left, up or down, single stream French school or dual track. But hopefully we continue to communicate throughout these decision making processing in a way that has involved input from all the parties, all the partners. Because even when we have to decide on something more concern, more defined, an 'up' over a 'down' or a 'left' over a 'right' the input that we receive from our partners (if we are really listening) can still impact how successful the final outcome may be. By hearing and understanding their concerns and needs we can better address and meet many of the challenges we may face, and ultimately still create more buy in and success even if the solution is polar opposite to what our partners may have wanted at first.

Why does this happen? Because communication leads to community. Through honest communication we show respect, and by showing respect we hopefully eliminate the concept of a 'power struggle'. In other words instead of a 'do this because we said so' attitude, we come together and reach a final decision as two equal partners collaborating on problem solving through the use of creativity and critical thinking. So... as I reflect over my past four years as a school board trustee with the Avon Maitland District School Board I can honestly say that I have seen us communicate well, and I've seen us at times do it poorly. Again, sort of like marriage, even the best relationships that I know don't always get it right 100% of the time, but, the other thing that I have learned through my little foray into marriage counseling is that the relationships that survive... no.. the relationships that actually thrive and grow, are the ones that people are willing to commit to and work at. As a Trustee, it is my hope, and my challenge to you, to us, that we would always continue to value and respect the different relationships that exist within our board. That 'communication' would not simply be a 'buzz word' in our vision statement, but that it would be a fundamental building stone in the foundation of who we are as a board. Something that we are committed to 'work at' and 'grow'.

In closing, George Bernard Shaw once wrote that 'the biggest problem in communication is often the illusion that it has taken place'. Let's continue to ensure that this is not the case within the Avon Maitland District School Board.

Good News

Student trustee Kaitlenn Shaw announced on September 29th the Learning Together Student Symposium was held in Stratford and brought together teams of 10 students from all secondary schools. There was team building exercises promoting inclusion in all Avon Maitland schools. Trustee Geddes noted student trustee Shaw gave an excellent closing speech.

Trustee Kent reminded trustees of the upcoming Foundation for Education Gala celebrating its 20th anniversary on Saturday, November 8th. Please contact Trustee Kent for information.

Superintendent Blair presented a video of staff members who have been nominated for the Champion for Inclusion award. This award is facilitated through the University of Western Ontario and includes school boards in southwestern Ontario.

Student Trustee Update

Student trustee Zach Misener reported the Senate discussed their application for the Speak Up grant, and discussed hosting a symposium to bring grades 7 to 12 students together to work on creating good school culture.

Public Delegations

There were no public delegations.

Staff/Student Presentations**Evidence of Impact in Grade 9 Math**

Director Doherty commented on the Pan-Canadian Assessment results and noted Ontario was the only province to score above the national average in all three areas – Science, Reading and Mathematics, and Avon Maitland is in the top 3 in all and second in mathematics. Director Doherty noted staff is incredibly proud of how well students are doing in grade 9 mathematics, and trends are very positive.

Superintendent Morris, System Principal Trocchi and Assessment and Evaluation Coordinator Sandy Lee outlined the highlights and the success in math at the grade 9 level. Their presentation focussed on student's achievements and the plans for the 2014/2015 school year.

Chair Sygrove congratulated all students on their achievements and expressed appreciation to all staff for their efforts.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

No reports were presented.

DIRECTOR'S REPORTS**Recommendations for Immediate Action**

No action reports were presented.

Information and Progress Reports**EQAO 2013/2014 Assessment Results: Primary, Junior, and Grade 9 Mathematics and OSSLT Assessments**

Superintendent Morris and Assessment and Evaluation Coordinator Sandy Lee highlighted the primary, junior and grade 9 Board results. The report noted the grade 9 mathematics results are near the top of the provincial results. Academic and Applied scores increased by 4 and 9 percentage points respectively. Of the students taking Applied mathematics, 61% successfully met the provincial standard compared to 47% provincially. Of the students taking Academic mathematics, 90% successfully met the provincial standard, compared to 85% provincially. In Junior reading, scores have dipped slightly to 77%, with writing remaining consistent at 72% and mathematics decreasing 7 percentage points to 49%. The province scored 79% in reading, 78% in writing and 54% in mathematics. The Primary results have increased by 4 percentage points in reading to 65%, and 6 percentage points in writing to 72%. Primary mathematics results have decreased 4 percentage points to 63%. The province scored 70% in reading, 78% in writing and 67% in mathematics. The OSSLT was written on March 27, 2014. The OSSLT has shown improvement by 2 percentage points to 81%, compared to 83% provincially.

Superintendent Morris highlighted the next steps which include continuing the work of the program team in conjunction with the schools to examine the 2013/2014 data to refine the BIPSA for this year, and to establish the process for developing new strategies and indicators of success for each of those area – primary reading, junior math, secondary applied math and OSSLT. The immediate focus is junior math. At this time the Board is offering an AQ course at the Seaforth Education Centre and there are 20 teachers enrolled in the primary junior math course. The course is supported by ETFO and the Ministry.

Primary Class Size Plan – Elementary Class Size Reporting

Superintendent Baker presented the report for information noting the Board is compliant at this time but the official enrolment data is not available until after the count date on October 31st. On September 22nd the Board filed the Ministry's Primary Class Size Plan which is an annual requirement on the status of elementary class size throughout the district. Based on actual enrolment, Avon Maitland's filing of the Primary Class Size Plan indicated 92.1% of primary classes (JK-3) were 20 or fewer pupils; 100% of all primary (JK-3) and grades 3/4 combined classes had 23 or fewer pupils; junior/intermediate (grades 3/4-8) average class size ratio was 25.84, and, FDK district-wide average class size was 24.56.

Trustee Honoraria

Superintendent Baird-Jackson provided background on the trustee honoraria and noted over the last number of years the trustee honoraria has been changed with Bill 16, Bill 55 and in March 2014 the Minister announced that restraints be extended further. The Ministry memorandum dated September 24th noted the Regulation is being amended again. The base amount is frozen at \$5,900.

Staff Adjustments

Presented for information.

Senior Staff Updates (verbal)

Superintendent Baker noted effective October 20th a new system will be in place for all employees to receive their paystubs electronically. The health and wellness initiative in the workplace continues to increase awareness and encourage more fitness in the workplace.

Superintendent Baird-Jackson reported finance staff is in the midst of an internal audit on enrolment and capital planning. The year-end external audit is underway. Facilities staff is finalizing the formal facility reviews and have been working on review of secondary buildings. And in North Perth construction has begun with work on the north wing footings of the new building.

Superintendent Morris advised plans are being finalized for the November 7th PA day for secondary teachers. Elementary teachers will be doing report cards and parent interviews. Over the next two weeks the iPads for South Huron DHS, St. Marys DCVI and Stratford schools will be delivered.

Superintendent Blair noted EAs will be receiving iPads this year to assist students with more complex needs. On October 15th will begin working with community partners on the kick-off of the special needs strategies.

Communications Manager Steve Howe reported a group of grade 7 students from Berlin have arrived and will be here for the next 3 weeks. The exchange will be similar to what Avon Maitland students experienced in terms of activities, events and attending classes.

Director Doherty noted staff is working on a plan for another experience for grade 7 students similar to this past summers' trip to Italy. Director Doherty advised trustees of a new partnership for a hockey academy attached to Mitchell District High School and Stratford Northwestern Secondary School. The hockey camp will take place after school. There is a planned in-service for the schools involved in the New Pedagogy for Deep Learning from October 20th to 23rd in Toronto. The elementary schools involved include North Woods, North Easthope and Anne Hathaway, and the secondary schools are St. Marys DCVI, Goderich District CI and Mitchell District High School.

OPSBA Update

Trustee Geddes reported there is no regional meeting this fall due to the upcoming election.

Minutes from Board Committees

Joint Health & Safety Committee: May 22, 2014

Audit Committee: June 10, 2014

SEAC: September 10, 2014

Correspondence

a) Letter from Martin Weatherall dated September 25, 2014

NEW BUSINESS

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Future Board Meetings (at Education Centre unless otherwise noted)

- Tuesday, October 28, 2014 – 7:00 p.m. Committee of the Whole, Closed Session, 8:00 p.m. Regular Board Session
- Tuesday, November 11, 2014 – 5:00 p.m. Committee of the Whole, Closed Session, 6:00 p.m. Committee of the Whole, Open Session, 8:00 p.m. Regular Board Session
- Tuesday, November 25, 2014 – 7:00 p.m. Committee of the Whole, Closed Session, 8:00 p.m. Regular Board Session

Future Meetings/Events with Trustee Representation (at Education Centre unless otherwise noted)

- SAL: Tuesday, October 28, 2014 – 9:00 a.m.
- Trustee Orientation: October 28, 2014 – 5:00 p.m.
- Parent Involvement Committee: October 29, 2014 – 6:30 p.m.
- SEAC: Wednesday, November 5, 2014 – 4:00 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION 2014 09 134

(J. Versteeg – M. Bannerman)

RESOLVED THAT this meeting be adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

CARRIED

Approved at Seaforth, Ontario

Date Approved

Al Sygrove
Chair of the Board

Ted Doherty
Director of Education and
Secretary of the Board