



Special Board of Trustees' Board Meeting

Date: Monday, March 21, 2022

Time: 5:00 p.m.

Location: 2nd floor Board Room, Catholic Education Centre, 35 Weber Street, Kitchener

Attendees:

Board of Trustees:
Bill Conway, Manuel da Silva, Jeanne Gravelle, Shannon Nash, Wendy Price, Hans Roach, Brian Schmalz (Chair), Melanie Van Alphen, Tracey Weiler

Student Representatives:
Sarah Simoes, Sarah Wilson

Senior Administration:
Loretta Notten, Jason Connolly, Gerald Foran, John Klein, Shesh Maharaj, Judy Merkel, Jennifer Ritsma, Annalisa Varano

Special Resource:

Recording Secretary:
Alice Figueiredo, Executive Administrative Assistant

ITEM	Who	Agenda Section	Method & Outcome
1. Call to Order	Chair		
1.1 Opening Prayer & Memorials	Pastoral Team	--	--
1.2 Territorial Acknowledgement I (we) would like to begin by acknowledging that the land on which we gather today is the land traditionally used by the Haudenosaunee, Anishinaabe and Neutral People. I (we) also acknowledge the enduring presence and deep traditional knowledge, laws and philosophies of the Indigenous People with whom we share this land today.	Chair	--	--
1.3 Approval of Agenda	Board of Trustees		Approval
1.4 Declaration of Pecuniary Interest	Individual Trustees		
1.4.1 From the current meeting			
1.4.2 From a previous public or in-camera meeting			
1.5 11 Items for Action: NA			
2. Consent Agenda: Director of Education (e.g.: operational matters from the Ministry of Education that the Board is required to do; update on the system)			

ITEM	Who	Agenda Section	Method & Outcome
3. Consent Agenda: (Minutes of meetings)			
4. Delegations			
5. Advice from the CEO			
5.1 Update on Health and Safety Measures in Schools	L. Notten	pp.3-5	Information
6. Ownership Linkage (Communication with the External Environment related to Board's Annual Agenda; ownership communication)			
7. Reports from Board Committees/Task Forces			
8. Board Education (at the request of the Board)			
9. Policy Discussion (Based on Annual Plan of Board Work)			
10. Assurance of Successful Board Performance (monitoring)			
11. Assurance of Successful Director of Education Performance (monitoring)			
12. Potential Agenda Items/Shared Concerns/Report on Trustee Inquiries			
13. Announcements			
14. Items for the Next Meeting Agenda	Trustees		
15. Adjournment/Confirm decisions made tonight	Director of Education		
15.1 Confirm Decisions	Recording Secretary	--	Information
16. Closing Prayer			
17. Motion to Adjourn	Board of Trustees	Motion	Approval

CLOSING PRAYER

O Risen Lord, you have entrusted us with the responsibility to help form a new generation of disciples and apostles through the gift of our Catholic schools.

As disciples of Christ, may we educate and nurture hope in all learners to realize their full potential to transform God's world.

May our Catholic schools truly be at the heart of the community, fostering success for each by providing a place for all.

May we and all whom we lead be discerning believers formed in the Catholic faith community; effective communicators; reflective and creative thinkers; self-directed, responsible, life-long learners; collaborative contributors; caring family members; and responsible citizens.

Grant us the wisdom of your Spirit so that we might always be faithful to our responsibilities. We make this prayer through Christ our Lord.

Amen

Rev. Charlie Fedy, CR and the Board of Trustees, 2010



Date: March 21st, 2022
To: Board of Trustees
From: Director of Education
Subject: Update on Health and Safety Measures in Schools

Type of Report: Decision-Making
 Monitoring
 Incidental Information concerning day-to-day operations

Type of Information: Information for Board of Trustees Decision-Making
 Monitoring Information of Board **Policy IV 012**
 Information only of day-to-day operational matters delegated to the CEO

Origin: (cite Education Act and/or Board Policy or other legislation)

Executive Limitation IV 012 Communication to Board

Policy Statement and/or Education Act/other Legislation citation:

Policy 1 001 Ends
Policy IV 013 Leadership

Alignment to the MYSP:

Strategic Priority: Nurturing Our Catholic Community

Strategic Priority: Student Engagement, Achievement and Innovation

Strategic Priority: Building Capacity to Lead, Learn and Live Authentically

Background/Comments:

On Wednesday March 9th, 2022 the Ministry of Education provided all school boards with an update on the lifting of health and safety measures in schools. We continue to receive direction through the Ministry of Education, as well as our local Public Health department. We are continuing meetings with Waterloo Region Public Health and Waterloo Region District School Board to attain a measure of understanding and alignment regarding the most prudent courses of action.

We have continued to make updates to our [Operational Guidelines](#) and this month they are significant, based on the most recent guidance we are receiving from both the Ministry and WR Public health.

Some of the highlights in this significant communication are the following:



Vaccination Disclosure Policy:

Effective March 10th, all school boards are no longer required to have a vaccination disclosure policy – it is now revoked. As a result, all screening requirements for individuals who do not provide proof of vaccination is no longer required and reporting to the Ministry of Education regarding vaccination policy implementation is no longer required.

Masking and Staff Personal Protective Equipment:

Effective March 21st, 2022, in alignment with community masking requirements, masks are no longer required for students, staff and visitors in schools, school board offices and on student transportation. Eye protection is also no longer required for staff. With that said – communication through the Director’s office is still highly encouraging the use of masks by both staff and students. The Ministry has indicated it will continue to provide PPE for those staff who still choose to wear masks.

Lifting of Cohorting and Distancing:

Effective March 21st, 2022 cohorting and distancing will also no longer be required in schools. Elementary students are now permitted to play and learn together across cohorts, classes and grades. Schools are being encouraged by the CMOH and the Ministry to immediately return to normal conditions within school settings.

Screening:

All staff and students have been asked to continue screening on a daily basis, but confirmation of schools is no longer required. The screening tool remains available at: [COVID-19 school and child care screening tool](#)

Enhanced Cleaning and Disinfecting / Hand Hygiene:

Enhanced cleaning and disinfecting are expected to continue with enhanced cleaning protocols in place. Appropriate hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette will continue to be promoted and integrated throughout the school day.

Absence Reporting:

Schools will continue to use the daily absence reporting tool and the ministry will continue to review and monitor absenteeism. 30% absenteeism (above the baseline) will remain the threshold that invites a conversation.

Responding to Provincial Direction:

We at WCDSB have had a guiding principle throughout the pandemic to follow the direction of the CMOH and that of Waterloo Region Public Health. Throughout the pandemic there have been varying levels of agreement and comfort with various health and safety measures. Throughout the past 2 years, WCDSB has strictly enforced the mask mandate. In some cases there was significant pushback and in some cases, students or families withdrew from the system as a result. We held the line because this was the guidance of the Chief Medical Officer of Health and Waterloo Region Public Health.

On Wednesday March 16th, Waterloo Region Council – supported by a recommendation from Public Health, followed the province in revoking the mask mandate in Waterloo Region. We consulted with Public Health proactively and had an indication that they would support the provincial direction.

All staff and students who wish to wear masks still have that option available to them. In the Director’s letter to parents and the system, this was highly encouraged...as was tolerance for those who may have differing views or practices in relation to masking.

Legal counsel was also sought and the Board was provided with an opinion that articulated that “*boards are not empowered to prescribe public health and safety policies, such as imposing a masking or vaccine disclosure requirement in response to a pandemic.*” Further it articulated that in the opinion of legal – “*boards of trustees do not have authority to impose restrictions that the Ministry has directed must be revoked. Further, any previous*



resolutions relating to the imposition of local measures which were contingent on but exceeded the Ministry's minimum standards must be reconsidered and revoked."

As a result, some Boards have already authored letters asking the Ministry to reconsider its direction and/or to extend the mask mandate for a prescribed period of time in schools. Those Boards have received very firm responses indicating that the CMOH and Ministry are not currently considering such a request.

Waterloo Catholic has adopted a prudent and responsible approach throughout the pandemic. The health and safety of our staff and students has always been paramount. For the past two years many staff and students have made significant sacrifices and compromises. They have worked and learned in ways that are truly heroic. We are enormously grateful to all for supporting us on this journey. With that said, we must also acknowledge that learning conditions were not ideal and we must also acknowledge that the wellbeing of some staff and students has suffered as a result. The impact of the pandemic goes far beyond the physical effects of contracting covid.

As an Easter people we can now embrace the rebirth that will happen in our system. The more fulsome joy of the classroom, the ability of a more normalized experience to return to our schools. It will not happen overnight, but that does appear to be the direction in which we are headed. We embrace this change with full hearts, tolerance and understanding. Our students who have lost so much and suffered in ways we may not fully appreciate can now begin the journey to healing and recovery.

Recommendation:

This report is for the information of the Board.

Prepared/Reviewed By: Loretta Notten
Director of Education

*Bylaw 4.2 "where the Board of Trustees receives from the Director of Education a monitoring report that flows from a responsibility delegated to the Director under Board Policy – **except where approval is required by the Board of Trustees on a matter delegated by policy to the Board** – the minutes of the Meeting at which the Report is received shall expressly provide that the Board has received and approved of the Report as an action consistent with the authority delegated to the Director, subject in all instances to what otherwise actually occurred."

