
Trustees: Kathy Archer, Christine Bingham, Becky Buck, Dawn Danko, Penny Deathe, Cam Galindo, Alex Johnstone, Maria Felix Miller, Carole Paikin Miller, Ray Mulholland and Paul Tut. **Student Trustees** Ethan Hesler and Fatima Zakar.

Regrets were received from Student Trustee Skylar Seggie.

1. Call to Order

Alex Johnstone, Chair of the Board, called the meeting to order at 5:01 p.m.

2. Delegation re: School Re-Opening (submitted by A. Nielsen-Jones and C. Elson)

Trustees received a delegation (read by staff) related to September re-opening. Trustees asked the following questions for clarification:

QUESTION #1 FOR CLARIFICATION

Delegation refers to capping class sizes via report from Sick Kids – could you point me to the page in the report that states class sizes no larger than 15 elementary students.

ANSWER:

On page 10 of Sick Kids' report (July 29, 2020), Sick Kids wrote the following, "Smaller class sizes should be a priority strategy as it will aid in physical distancing and reduce potential spread from any index case. Several jurisdictions have reopened schools with maximum class sizes ranging from 10-15. However, there is limited evidence on which to base a pre-specified class size. Decisions should take into account the available classroom space in addition to the number of exposures that would occur should a student or staff test positive."

On August 6, 2020, Toronto Public Health wrote a letter to the TDSB raising concerns about class sizes, particularly at the elementary level (the letter has been reproduced and can be found here: <https://twitter.com/jpags/status/1291544604295286784/photo/1> and is embedded in this news story: <https://www.blogto.com/city/2020/08/toronto-public-health-ontario-back-to-school-plan/?fbclid=IwAR1QvUUIdqreSKZCSp1wggCcjsYeVB8OMbbB-3fQgIKMvbVPQnz3t984cjU>).

TPH's Vinita Dubey wrote, "In elementary classes (JK to grade 3) where masks are not required, smaller class sizes will particularly be important to ensure students can be spaced out and reduce transmission." For further commentary regarding Toronto Public Health's letter to the TDSB, see <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/toronto-public-health-school-guidance-1.5677739> and/or <https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2020/08/06/toronto-public-health-has-concerns-with-ford-governments-schools-reopening-plan.html#:~:text=%E2%80%9CThe%20number%20of%20students%20in,has%20%E2%80%9Cconcerns%E2%80%9D%20about%20the%20board's>].

In our original submission, we sought to provide specific recommendations to the HWDSB, which is why we chose to advocate for a maximum of fifteen (15) students per classroom. However, recognizing that classroom sizes vary greatly makes abundant sense. In a smaller classroom, there may only be adequate room for ten (10) children to safely attend; conversely, in a repurposed auditorium serving as a classroom, there may be room for twenty (20) children to safely attend.

Our response to the Trustees' second question regarding how much physical distancing is necessary will hopefully clarify that what is crucial is to maintain two (2) metres physical distancing between children; the specific number of children who can safely learn in any particular classroom will then be dependent upon the size of the classroom.

QUESTION #2 FOR CLARIFICATION:

The delegation refers to an article by the American Pediatric Society that 6ft (2 meters) is optimal, however, Sick Kids report states that 1 meter with a mask is acceptable – do you have any further comment – is it your preference that HWDSB implement a 6ft physical distance?

ANSWER:

It is very much our recommendation, based on the best available information, that two (2) metre distancing be implemented. Vinita Dubey (Toronto Public Health... see above) stressed the importance of such distancing in her letter to the TDSB, where she wrote (bottom paragraph), "Scientifically, it has been shown that keeping a distance of 2 metres from others works well to prevent the spread of respiratory droplets from one person to another. While some distance may be beneficial over no distance (eg 1 metre compared to no distance), keeping 2 metres apart as much as possible is still strongly recommended by public health. This includes ensuring that desks are adequately spaced apart, especially because students will be at their desks for much of the day."

It is our belief that Sick Kids used the same approach as Toronto Public Health by acknowledging that one (1) metre is better than nothing; however, as Toronto Public Health made clear, scientific studies have shown that 2 metres distancing (not 1 metre) works well to prevent the spread of respiratory droplets.

RESOLUTION #20-87: Trustee Archer, seconded by Trustee Bingham, moved: **That the Delegation re: School Re-Opening (submitted by A. Nielsen-Jones and C. Elson) be received and filed.**

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Student Trustees Hesler and Zakar voted in favour

Reports Staff:

3. School Re-Opening (Covid-19 Pandemic) Update #3

Staff presented the report and provided the opportunity for Trustees and Student Trustees to ask questions.

Trustees Paikin Miller and Mulholland left the meeting at 9:20 p.m.

RESOLUTION #20-88: Trustee Danko, seconded by Trustee Deathe, moved: **That the Board extend the meeting to 10:30 p.m.**

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Student Trustees Hesler and Zakar voted in favour

RESOLUTION #20-89: Trustee Miller, seconded by Trustee Tut, moved: **That the School Re-Opening (Covid-19 Pandemic) Update #3 staff report be received.**

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Student Trustees Hesler and Zakar voted in favour

Trustee Bingham presented a motion following the monitoring report:

Whereas, in the HWDSB Return to School Plan, it is anticipated that approximately 15% of parents, guardians, or caregivers will opt for full remote learning for their children;

Whereas, a reduction in returning to the physical homeroom classroom by students does not produce a reduction in class sizes but rather a reduction in the number of physical homeroom classes offered and an increase in full remote learning classes;

Whereas, larger classes and/or multiple class reorganizations may take place throughout the school year as students opt to transition from full remote learning to physical classroom learning or vice versa;

Whereas, smaller class sizes, fewer reorganizations and greater system stability would be created if physical homeroom classes included reserved seats for full remote learners who may return;

Be it resolved that, the Chair, on behalf of the Board of Trustees, request that the Director of Education connect with Ministry of Education staff for the provision of full funding to achieve lower elementary class sizes that average 15 students for (K-3) and 20 students for (Grades 4 – 8) in the physical homeroom classes.

Trustee Galindo recommended a friendly amendment to the motion to add “*where physically possible*” to the end of Trustee Bingham’s motion.

RESOLUTION #20-90: Trustee Bingham, seconded by Trustee Galindo, moved that the motion be changed to include “Where physically possible” to the end of the motion to read: That the Chair, on behalf of the Board of Trustees, request that the Director of Education connect with Ministry of Education staff for the provision of full funding to achieve lower elementary class sizes that average 15 students for (K-3) and 20 students for (Grades 4 – 8) in the physical homeroom classes *where physically possible*.

The amended motion **FAILED** on the following division of votes:

In Favour: (4) Trustees Archer, Bingham, Buck, Galindo. Student Trustees Hesler and Zakar voted in favour.

Opposed: (5) Trustee Danko, Deathe, Miller, Tut and Johnstone

RESOLUTION #20-91: Trustee Danko, seconded by Trustee Galindo, moved: **That the Board extend the meeting to 10:45 p.m.**

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Student Trustees Hesler and Zakar voted in favour

To the main motion as presented:

RESOLUTION #20-92: Trustee Bingham, seconded by Trustee Galindo, moved that the motion be changed to include “Where physically possible” to the end of the motion to read: **That the Chair, on behalf of the Board of Trustees, request that the Director of Education connect with Ministry of Education staff for the provision of full funding to achieve lower elementary class sizes that average 15 students for (K-3) and 20 students for (Grades 4 – 8) in the physical homeroom classes**

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Student Trustees Hesler and Zakar voted in favour

The meeting adjourned at 10:40 p.m.