



BRANDON SCHOOL DIVISION

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES, THE BRANDON SCHOOL DIVISION, HELD IN THE J. L. MILNE BOARDROOM, ADMINISTRATION OFFICE, 1031 - 6TH STREET, BRANDON, MANITOBA, AT 7:00 P.M., MONDAY, MARCH 2, 2015.

PRESENT:

Mr. M. Sefton, Chairperson, Mr. K. Sumner, Vice-Chairperson, Ms. S. Bambridge, Mr. P. Bartlette Mrs. P. Bowslaugh, Mr. G. Buri, Mr. J. Murray, Dr. L. Ross.

Mr. D. Labossiere, Secretary-Treasurer, Ms. B. Sangster, Recording Secretary, Mr. B. Ewasiuk, Live Streaming Video Operator.

Senior Administration: Dr. D. M. Michaels, Superintendent, Mr. G. Malazdrewicz, Associate Superintendent, Ms. Eunice Jamora, Assistant Secretary-Treasurer, Ms. B. Switzer, Director of Human Resources.

REGRETS:

Mr. G. Kruck

CALL:

The Chairperson called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and referred to the Call.

The meeting had been called for the purpose of considering the following:

- a) Public Budget Feedback Presentations

The following individuals made presentations regarding the Proposed 2015-2016 Budget:

- 1) Ms. Alison Johnston, President, Brandon Teachers' Association, provided a submission on behalf of the Division's teaching staff. She began her presentation with reflections from the beginning of the deliberations held on budget day – specifically in relation to item #2: Return to the student/teacher ratio before the reduction of 11 teaching positions from the 2014-15 budget. She quoted Trustee Murray from that the all-day budget session, noted his comments ended with him saying "So I am not going to be supporting this one or number 5 for exactly the same reasons that we need to start today building on our needs today and not what happened on budget day last year". She reminded everyone that item #5 was a return to EAL staffing to the previous level prior to the reduction of 11 teaching positions from 2014-15 budget; 2.5 FTE positions.

Ms. Johnston spoke on the high school enrollment projections of the Division that indicate that from September 2015 to September 2016 the increase in the number of students from 2014 will be 138 students, with an additional 67 students anticipated for 2017. Further, the Division's high school enrolment statistics indicated that as of September 30, 2014, in semester one, 89 classes had 26-30 students; 17 classes had 31-35 students and 2 classes had 36 – 40 students. She asked the Board "What is the Division's plan to address this increased enrollment given that the

number of front line classroom sizes continue to increase well beyond capacity, or will the choices being made available for students simply be decreased. She noted the same point could be made in regard to the overall K-12 enrolment increase from 2014. This data indicates that this change will see an additional 383 students by September 2017. She asked the Board "Given the apparent strategy of maintaining the status quo in the front line teaching complement, what is the Division's plan to address this continued increase in enrolment?"

Ms. Johnston then spoke on the Division's level 2 funded students. She noted FRAME data from 2009-2010 indicates that 184 of the Division's 7,331 students received this support. In 2014-15, only 209 of the Division's 8,074 students received this same support. She finds these statistics perplexing and feels that to assume that the Division's drastically increased enrolment has less needs than in previous years is simply naïve. The Division's Financial Budget identifies that the 2015-16 Special Educational Assistant complement will be reduced by 23.7 FTE positions. Brandon Teachers' Association acknowledges the reduced dollars coming to the Division due to rejected applications for funding. She asked "What is the Division's plan to address this shortfall? Will the responsibility of dealing with these now "unfunded" students on a daily basis rest solely on the shoulders of the frontline classroom teacher?"

Ms. Johnston noted the January 12, 2015 Board Meeting, where the Chairman of the Board welcomed the Crocus Plains F1 Team Aurora and recognized them for their trip to Abu Dhabi for the 2014 F1 in Schools World Finals. When interviewed, what each student held in common was the support and encouragement they had received from their front-line teacher support team. She also quoted parts of a letter the Board received from John Hill, Montreal, QC, regarding the meeting of hockey players from Vincent Massey High School. Ms. Johnston noted that his comments identified the impact that the team's teachers clearly had on the group.

Ms. Johnston quoted Trustee Sumner when he spoke about wanting to provide teaching positions that are required by our Division and that when the Board reduced positions last year it only moved us back two years in terms of the ratio. Ms. Johnston would advocate that in not restoring and even adding to the 11 eliminated positions, the Board has fallen short of the mark. She feels the Division will be moving even further back in terms of the ratio. Ms. Johnston asked the Trustees "Two years seems to be in fact a noticeable amount of time. When will you restore the 11 eliminated positions?"

Ms. Johnston concluded her presentation by equating the Brandon School Division to an army and to be successful, the army needs many components: a general, some captains, communications, transportation, training, and support personnel, to name a few. The Trustees' proposed budget provides for all of these things with a new Assistant Superintendent, increased Vice-Principal time, a MIST project manager, mechanic, PD and support personnel. The Brandon Teacher's Association agrees that all of these additions are needed, but in their opinion there is a glaring omission in this year's budget. This budget is missing foot soldiers; the troops; the frontline teachers working on a daily basis in the classroom with students. Ms. Johnston finished by saying what this budget is lacking and desperately needs is "*boots on the ground*"!!

The Chairperson thanked Ms. Johnston for her presentation.

- 2) Mr. Jamie Rose, President of CUPE Local 737, spoke on behalf of support staff members at the Brandon School Division. He thanked the Board for allowing him to share their views of the 2015-16 Budget. Mr. Rose stated that they are gravely concerned that a reduced level of funding for the Division's Level 2 & 3 students will have serious consequences on the lives of the students and create greater stress on their members as well as on teachers to be able to provide a quality

learning experience for all students. He explained the snowball effect when there is the loss of an educational assistant. Other staff, including teachers, have to take up the extra work. This removes important contact with other students. When cuts are made, students will fall through the cracks and we simply cannot take that kind of risk with the education of our students. CUPE Local 737 is ready to work with the Board of Trustees to do whatever they can to ensure our students are cared for, including lobbying the provincial government for additional funding.

Mr. Rose also touched on concerns that the movement towards more Home School Liaison hours in the Division is not being pursued. He believes that access to resources such as Home School Liaisons should be throughout the school day in its entirety.

Mr. Rose then noted that the level of funding being allocated to PD for Support Staff is simply not keeping up with the needs of their members and they are not receiving the type of support their members need to improve their skills. The more skills and training their members are provided, the better they are able to give back to the students. They care about the quality of education the students receive, and believe ensuring adequate staffing in their programs is key to that quality.

The Chairperson thanked Mr. Rose for his comments.

- 3) Ms. Debby Dandy, Executive Director of Brandon Community Living, spoke on their mandate to work in the society to create a welcoming, diverse and accepting community where people feel that they belong, regardless of their labels. Being unable to accept difference has become a significant global issue and it is also one of the roots of bullying. She spoke of individuals who are made to feel that they don't belong and in order to survive, they may choose behaviours which make them feel like they belong. For those who cannot find a solution, unsuccessful or not, life becomes about being the weaker one, the bullied, the vulnerable, the miserable. Community Living Brandon believes that change will come from our children. An investment in helping them understand acceptance, tolerance, self-esteem and seeing that we can all learn from each other is the best investment we can make. Community Living Brandon supports the "inclusion" of funding for anti-bullying programs in Brandon School Division.

Trustee Bowslaugh asked Ms. Dandy if knows of the programs already in the Division against bullying. Trustee Bowslaugh explained that there is a lot going on in the Division that a lot of people are not aware of.

The Chairperson thanked Ms. Dandy for her presentation and comments.

- 4) Ms. Krystal Kayne, Parent, spoke and provided a PowerPoint presentation regarding her son's bullying experiences at school. She provided photos and timelines and told the story of what occurred. Ms. Kayne and her son got involved with the "Anti-Bullying Blanket" program which helped her son cope with his feelings and let him know he was not alone. She discovered KiVa International, a research-based anti-bullying program, while trying to find help for her son and noted that 98% of the students who were being bullied felt that their life had improved while on this program.

The Chairperson thanked Ms. Kayne for taking the time to attend the meeting and putting herself out there and he acknowledged it wasn't easy.

- 5) Melissa Wastasecoot, Parent, thanked the Board for the opportunity to attend the meeting and speak on bullying. She noted her children attend New Era School in grades 1 and 3. She would support an anti-bullying, preventative initiative through schools and at home with parents. Ms.

Wastasecoot stated anti-bullying should be brought into the school during a child's early years. Her daughter has suffered from verbal, social and physical abuse and said bullying is not acceptable for anyone. She feels that a \$0.83 per household increase for \$50,000 in anti-bullying initiatives is worth the price. She stated that Aboriginal girls are being bullied at a higher rate, and that the treatment of women and girls in this country is a national shame. Ms. Wastasecoot noted that racism and bullying are learned behaviours. She said she would be interested in seeing the 30 anti-bullying programs that are in place in the Division and seeing the results. She asked that the Board take this information into serious consideration.

The Chairperson thanked Ms. Wastasecoot for attending and for her comments.

Trustee Sefton thanked everyone for coming and speaking to the Board regarding the budget. The comments and feedback are valued, appreciated and listened to.

Mr. Ross – Mr. Buri

That the meeting do now adjourn (7:42 p.m.).

Chairperson

Secretary-Treasurer