

Highlights from the October 14 Board of Trustees Meeting

Full details on presentations, reports and discussions can be found in the agenda or reviewed in the recorded broadcast.

October 14, 2020 (Brockville, ON) – Trustees with the [Upper Canada District School Board](#) (UCDSB) met on Wednesday, October 14, 2020 for a regularly scheduled board meeting. Trustees conducted the meeting in person at the Brockville Board Office, with the option for staff and trustees to call in, as per regular practice.

Changes to Secondary Evaluation Processes for 2020-2021

The Director of Education provided an update to the Board about adjustments to the secondary school diploma program and graduation requirements.

The Ministry of Education recently provided school districts the ability to adjust secondary evaluation processes to reflect the realities that come with learning and attending school during the uncertainties of a pandemic. The [Upper Canada District School Board](#) has decided that for the 2020-2021 school year, there will be no final exams for secondary students (Grades 9-12) at the end of any quadmester. Instead, student grades will be solely based on the specific learning activities and assignments delivered in each course.

There have also been adjustments made to the 40-hour community involvement graduation requirement for the 2020-2021 school year. The Ministry of Education has reduced the required number of community involvement hours to 20 hours for this school year and has provided more flexibility in the types of activities that can count toward these hours.

However, students expecting to graduate in the 2020-2021 school year will need to complete the Grade 10 Literacy Test. This test was not administered last year due the provincial mandate to close schools in the spring and the transition to remote learning for staff and students. The test has been reinstated this school year and will be administered in the Spring of 2021.

Overview of Trustee Planning Meeting

Vice-Chair MacPherson provided a summary of the UCDSB trustees planning session, which was held on October 3 at the Smiths Falls & District Collegiate Institute. Trustees and senior administration attended the annual planning event, which is essential for the Board of Trustees, held in accordance with UCDSB bylaws.

The Trustee Planning Session this year was especially significant given the Board's multi-year strategic plan ends this year (2017-2020). In accordance with the Education Act, the Board would need to refresh its Strategic Plan for the next three-plus school years.

At the recent planning session, Board members reviewed the survey results collected from staff, parents and community members during the summer. The survey resulted in over 2,300 respondents of which 1,855 respondents were parents of UCDSB students.

The next step is to present the findings from the session to the Accountability Framework Committee that will shape and finalize a set of recommendations for the next strategic plan. This is expected to be a dialogue at the Board meetings this Fall, followed by a draft plan by December 2020.

Update on 2020 Summer Learning Program and Summer Semester

UCDSB staff updated the board regarding the 2020 Summer Learning Program and Secondary Summer Semester.

The Elementary Summer Learning Program is intended to support students who would benefit from an engaging and interactive learning opportunity in the summer that builds upon and furthers their learning. Summer Semester allows secondary students and students in Grade 7 & 8 to reach ahead to earn credits via eLearning and Co-operative Education. In 2020, two new learning opportunities were added to Summer Semester: credit-recovery and credit upgrade.

This summer, 585 elementary school children enrolled in the Summer Learning Program. Overall, 98% of students and parents rated their engagement with the Summer Learning Program as very high. For the Summer Semester, 2,200 students enrolled in with 1752.5 credits earned.

Board Passes Resolution Regarding International Education Students

On October 2, 2020, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada announced that international students will be permitted to enter Canada as of Oct. 20, 2020, provided that the school they will be attending has been recognized by the appropriate provincial Ministry of Education as a Designated Learning Institution that has a COVID-19 readiness plan.

UCLCET International Education Program staff has reviewed all preparations and processes for ensuring the safe return of international students with the UCLCET Executive and with the UCLCET Board of Directors and has received their approval to engage the attestation process with the Ministry of Education based on this plan. These plans include a Safe Arrivals booklet, a 14-day quarantine support program, a student health monitor plan, and more.

The UCDS Board of Trustees passed a resolution outlining “that the UCDSB maintain its commitment to continuing its International Education program in compliance with the guidelines for accepting international students that have been established by the Ontario Ministry of Education and the Canadian Federal Government.”

Staff Provides Financial Budget updates for 2020-21 School Year

UCDSB Staff provided a financial budget projection to the Board of Trustees. Reviewing the discretionary and non-discretionary funding options available to the school board, staff outlined low, medium and high possible budget line items when it comes to discretionary as well as non-discretionary budgeting including sick leave, lower enrolment and PPE costs that can't be covered by the province.

The estimated deficits range from \$4 to \$17 million, even after utilizing COVID-related funding sources. As such, staff recommended adopting a conservative approach to discretionary expenditures while monitoring data to determine scale and impact of non-discretionary financial risks. Staff continue to review all mitigating factors and strategies to gain great visibility to the actual financial risks while also managing those risks to ensure the Board remains on a sound financial footing.

Trustee Lisa Swan put forward a motion “that the Upper Canada District School Board request the Province of Ontario support public education by increasing the funding to School Boards in the Province to support the delivery models they have mandated and increase Board funding to do such as we deal with this pandemic, and to show they support public education.” The Board carried the motion in a vote of 9-2.

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