

EASTERN TOWNSHIPS SCHOOL BOARD

COUNCIL OF COMMISSIONERS

TUESDAY, APRIL 28, 2020 – 7:00 P.M.

ETSB BOARD ROOM

340, SAINT-JEAN-BOSCO

MAGOG, QC. J1X 1K9

MINUTES

Enhanced Literacy and Numeracy – Dropout Prevention – Physical and Mental Health

MEMBERS PRESENT (P):

COMMISSIONERS		PARENT COMMISSIONERS	
Gordon Barnett	Z	Marc Mercure	Z
Claire Beaubien	Z	Hélène Turgeon	Z
Daniel Brodie	Z	Cindy Véronneau	Z
Richard Gagnon	Z	Daniel Zigby	Z
Gary Holliday	A	DIRECTORS' COMMITTEE (DC)	
Joy Humenuik, <i>Vice-Chairman</i>	Z	Secretary General, Éric Campbell	P
Mary-Ellen Kirby	Z	Director General, Kandy Mackey	A
Frank MacGregor	Z	Interim Director General and Director of Continuing Education, Michel Soucy	P
Alice McCrory	Z	Interim Assistant Director General and Director of Human Resources, Jeffrey Pauw	P
Jonathan Murray	Z	Director of Financial Services, Sophie Leduc	Z
Michael Murray, <i>Chairman</i>	Z	Director of Instructional Technology and Pedagogical Services, Eva Lettner	Z
Tina Pezzi-Bilodeau	Z	Director of Complementary Services, Emmanuelle Gaudet	Z
		Director of Material Resources, Éric Plante	Z

ZOOM: Z

OBSERVERS

Sharon Priest, Communications Consultant – ZOOM

PUBLIC – ZOOM

Megan Seline, President of the Appalachian Teachers' Association (ATA)

Matthew McCully, The Record

Greg Thomson – Citizen

1. CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

2. QUORUM AND ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

QUORUM WAS ESTABLISHED AND IT WAS MOVED BY Commissioner H. Turgeon to adopt the Agenda of April 28, 2020, as modified:

Carried unanimously

7.2 Technology Acquisition

3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF MARCH 24, 2020

Resolution No. ETSB 20-04-75

Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting of the Council of Commissioners held on March 24, 2020

WHEREAS a copy of the Minutes of the meeting of March 24, 2020 has been given to each Commissioner at least 6 hours before the opening of the meeting, the Secretary General is excused from reading the Minutes.

IT WAS MOVED BY Commissioner G. Barnett to excuse the Secretary General from reading the Minutes and to approve the Minutes of the meeting held on March 24, 2020 as deposited.

Carried unanimously

4. QUESTION PERIOD

M. Seline: Would ETSB send a reassured message to teachers?

M. Soucy: A message will be sent in French and English out tonight to all staff.

M. Seline: COVID-19 deaths were reported in The Record: 1599 related deaths, 24,000 plus cases, 821 in Estrie over 1500 in hospital and 210 in ICU. This is the reality of the Eastern Townships. What is the Council of Commissioners proposing to move forward with the current state about COVID-19? You know the reality is quite different from other regions.

- M. Murray: These are complex questions with many considerations. As Council of Commissioners, we have the authority to close a school if it becomes worse. Arguments are being made for progressive openings now and others for the Fall. I would have to broadly support the government approach. We have the authority as a School Board to close a school where an outbreak takes place. The MEES has no plan and left it up to the School Board and on Director General's shoulders in the French system, we will be moving cautiously to open schools. The government has scared people too well, and now people, the staff and parents are afraid.
- M. Seline: Do you find it odd that Montreal a Hot Zone, but the Eastern Townships was not designated a Hot Zone as well?
- M. Murray: Schools have to reopen at one time. There are a few communities where there is a serious risk. We are in constant contact with Public Health.
- M. Seline: Reactive proactivity??
- M. Murray: We must take time to actively consult personnel, because the MEES has not consulted them. We will be relying on our personnel to help guide us through this process.
- M. Seline: I received an email from a teacher yesterday; one of my friends presented herself at the COVID testing in Magog, the personnel told her she was positive, but no test was done. Does this raise concern with the Council of Commissioners?
- M. Murray: We are all concerned and we know there are issues with testing; number of tests, we can deplore a specific incident, but we have to rely on the DSPu to do their job while we do ours. In this case, we would not be back in school because of a multiple of other reasons and retractions. Teachers who are pregnant are not supposed to attend school.
- G. Thomson: Will the whole ETSB territory reopen?
- M. Murray: Yes, our territory is in Estrie on the Quebec Website. All the Metropolitan Montreal is outside of the ETSB territory.
- SecGen: Yes, only the north Montérégie area will not reopen immediately, being that they are a part of the Montréal area. All ETSB schools will reopen.
- M. McCully: Yesterday's press conference mentioned the impression that when schools reopen, beforehand all participation was voluntary, but now, the impression is that there will be a mandatory or evaluative component to it. Can you clarify this? Will there be evaluations?
- M. Murray: All evaluation of new information will be left up to the teacher.

E. Lettner: We do not have any clarification on evaluations.

5. RECOGNITION OF EXCELLENCE

The Director of Human Resources, J. Pauw presented the April 28, 2020 Recognition of Excellence:

This month the Council of Commissioners and Senior Administrators of the Eastern Townships School Board would like to signal the following:

The Eastern Townships School Board would like to extend our gratitude to essential workers everywhere. It is by their efforts that we can remain safe, or be looked after if we do fall ill; they keep us fed, maintain access to essential items, and continue to ensure everyone's basic needs are met. To all those on the front lines of this pandemic and to everyone supporting them, from the bottom of our hearts, we say:

THANK YOU!

Thank you also to the many teachers, support staff, professionals, and administrators who have shown great determination in unprecedented circumstances. Thank you especially to everyone involved in keeping our emergency daycare services open!

To students and parents: your patience and cooperation has been crucial to successfully navigating this. We hope everyone is staying safe and healthy.

While the current situation might seem overwhelming, we can continue to support one another and pull together by staying apart!

6. BUSINESS ARISING

None.

7. NEW BUSINESS

7.1 **Resolution No. ETSB 20-04-76** **2020-2021 Insurance renewal**

WHEREAS articles 178 and 270 of the Education Act stipulate that a School Board may take out liability insurance and may insure some of its property;

WHEREAS the Eastern Townships School Board's (ETSB) current insurance plan comes to term on June 30, 2020 and intends to renew the plan for the 2020-2021 school year;

WHEREAS since 2012-2013, the Council of Commissioners has authorized the participation of the Eastern Townships School Board in the *Regroupement des commissions scolaires de la Montérégie et de l'Estrie en matières d'assurances*;

WHEREAS the consolidated purchasing experience has been financially advantageous for the Eastern Townships School Board;

WHEREAS it was moved by Resolution E19-06-106, on June 25, 2019, to agree with the *Regroupement des commissions scolaires de la Montérégie et de l'Estrie en matière d'assurances* to a one (1) year contract, plus four yearly renewal options;

WHEREAS the 2020-2021 school year will be the first optional year of the contract;

WHEREAS the number of potential insurance companies that are covering organizations like school boards is decreasing;

WHEREAS the ETSB has been informed that insurance fees could significantly increase;

WHEREAS on the recommendation of the ETSB's insurance broker, the context is not favourable to go out with a call for tender;

WHEREAS final approval from the Council of Commissioners is necessary no later than the beginning of May 2020;

IT WAS MOVED BY Commissioner F. MacGregor to accept, in the context presented, the offer from BFL Canada for the renewal insurance plan for the 2020-2021 school year for the ETSB;

IT WAS FURTHER MOVED to authorize the Interim Director General or the Secretary General, to sign all documents resulting from the present mandate.

Carried unanimously

7.2 Resolution No. ETSB 20-04-77
Technology Acquisition

WHEREAS due to the constraints within the timeline to acquire equipment, this resolution must be presented on a budgetary basis in the amount of \$400,000;

WHEREAS the availability of technological equipment in the current context is crucial in view to align with our educational mission;

WHEREAS different pedagogical and technical aspects of the Enhanced Learning Strategy (ELS) have been reviewed in the 2019-2020 school year;

WHEREAS in the pursuit of the ELS, the Eastern Townships School Board (ETSB) will need to renew some of the equipment for the 2020-2021 school year;

WHEREAS the ETSB needs to ensure compatibility with all the equipment and software already purchased through the years;

WHEREAS ETSB is part of a call for tender with COLLECTO according to the Ministry requirements;

WHEREAS all purchases will be done according to the ETSB Purchase Policy and Government requirements;

IT WAS MOVED BY Commissioner J. Humenuik to authorize the Director General to sign any documentation related to the acquisition of equipment and related items (Software, Cases, etc.), up to an amount of \$400,000 for 2019-2020 school year effective immediately;

IT WAS FURTHER MOVED that the Interim Director General be authorized to sign all associated documentation and that in the absence of the Interim Director General, the Director of Instructional Technology and Pedagogical Services can also sign.

Carried unanimously

8. REPORTS

8.1 DIRECTOR GENERAL'S REPORT

The Interim Director General, Michel Soucy, reported that the last few weeks have been challenging for everyone. The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the lives of many, including our loved ones and ourselves.

First, I want to add to the recognition we did hear before, my personal thank you to all the front-line workers, who, since the beginning of this crisis, have worked very hard under difficult circumstances.

As well, we have our ETSB personnel, who have kept our essential services such as the emergency daycares, financial services, payroll and ICT, to name a few, up and running. Our Teachers and Professionals have been reaching out to students, and helping to create fun and interesting learning opportunities while our schools and centres are closed. Again, I say thank you.

With the recent announcement, we realize that the return to school under these circumstances is a new experience for everyone. Our dedicated staff will be collaborating during this planning period, as we know that the welcome back to school is so very important for our students, especially under these circumstances.

Following the directives of the Ministry of Education and Public Health, our teams are planning the reopening to ensure a safe and secure environment for students and staff.

There will be challenges ahead but I am confident that by working together and with the collaboration of everyone, we will get through this crisis. I know it is a cliché, but it does take a village to raise a child.

8.2 REPORT FROM THE CHAIR

The Chair of the Commissioners' Council, M. Murray, invited commissioners to share their comments and concerns regarding the COVID-19 situation. The following has been addressed:

- Distanciation will be difficult in schools;
- Cafeterias will not be serving food to students;
- A maximum number of students accepted in classrooms and buses;
- Transportation;
- Using of high schools;
- Minister's reintegration plan for elementary students;
- Principals' leadership;
- Virus is serious, but we need to move on;
- Need to plan;
- Need to reassure parents and staff;
- Need to move ahead.

J. Humenuik: Coming from essential services: I can hardly imagine how the social distancing is going happen, it is going to be very challenging and we have to be there for the staff and take care of people and the children.

A. McCrory: Social distancing: Going up and down stairs, leaving the school all at once, going to the cafeteria- seems impossible. Also, if some teachers do not comply then you will not be paid, is that a fact?

M. Mercure: Did I understand correctly that cafeterias are open?

M. Murray: Cafeterias can be open, they need to bring their own lunch, no sharing of utensils.

É. Campbell: All students must bring their own lunch and meals/snacks.

M. Murray: This is unknown at this time.

F. MacGregor: We are very concerned about the opening of the schools. We are putting our employees at risk. I'm not sure as a School Board we can recommend to the MEES that we will not open?

M. Murray: Yes, we can if we choose to exercise that choice.

F. MacGregor: How will we limit 15 students per class?

- M. E. Kirby: I have been contacted by teachers, principals and parents: Not being well received on the ground. I have many concerns regarding the opening of schools even if nobody is ready. With no clear guidelines, we may not have continuity across the Board. I feel it is ill-advised and not well thought out. I do have faith that our team is putting some sort of plan in place.
- T. P-Bilodeau: Like Mary-Ellen, I had many calls and emails and to date, none have said they will be sending their children to school. I feel our schools will be empty.
- C. Beaubien: My heart goes out to Teachers, the logistics, a challenge of what to teach or not. Also, to Principals, especially those that have more than one school. Also to Bus drivers and É. Plante, how do you follow all the directives? My heart goes to the School Board Administrators only being given two weeks. Good luck and I am sure you will be successful, kudos to all.
- D. Zigby: As a parent, I have spoken to other parents; when will schools reopen and how will they reopen? My children will go back because they want to go back. How all this happens, will not be easy. We need to see this as a dry run, we will need to do this, and better now than wait until September.
- M. Murray: The key items we need to plan, largely ignore what is coming from the MEES, assure our staff, parents, etc. that we can do this and we have to be able to adjust as we go ahead. I am going to suggest that we meet weekly on Tuesdays to provide support and hear from our Administrators regarding what is happening. Is that something that our Commissioners would entertain? We would not need a full slate of Administrators. Each week would be to primarily meet for the COVID-19 dossier.
- C. Beaubien: Can we hear more from our Parent Commissioners? Why don't we limit our usual advisory committees and add COVID updates at each meeting? My children, who are in High School, were disappointed that they will not be attending school. I feel that students want to go, businesses are reopening, and this will be more to have our children taken care of while the economy starts back up again. This will be a practice for the Fall.
- H. Turgeon: I have two children; my daughter will be going to school, my son cannot as he is in High School. It feels as though the MEES forgot about the high school kids.
- T. P-Bilodeau: One child wants to go and one does not, but they cannot because they are both in High School.
- M. Mercure: I have one daughter in High School.
- J. Murray: Children are going back, parents need to go to work, I am somewhat on the fence.

C. Veronneau: I only have high school kids and am not worried about them going back. I am more concerned of what they will bring home. Single parents have issues; are we putting a lot of pressure on the students and what they could bring home. We have to think of the physical and psychological impacts.

9. ADVISORY COMMITTEES' REPORTS

9.1 Executive Committee

The Chair of the Executive Committee, M. Murray, explained the resolutions that will be presented tonight have been discussed amongst the Commissioners at the Executive meeting. Also, the Support Staffing Plan 2020-2021 has been adopted:

Resolution No. ETSB 20-04-78 **2020-2021 Support Staffing Plan**

IT WAS MOVED BY Commissioner C. Beaubien to approve the 2020-2021 Support Staffin Plan, as deposited.

Carried unanimously

9.2 Governance and Ethics Committee

The Chair of the Governance and Ethics Committee, Commissioner R. Gagnon, observed that the notes were in the kit.

The Interim Director General presented the following resolution:

9.2.1 **Resolution No. ETSB 20-04-78** **Vocational Training Programs Authorization Request**

WHEREAS the Eastern Townships School Board (ETSB) aims to diversify its Vocational Training services to the English community in the area;

WHEREAS the ETSB wishes to improve its offering of vocational training programs with the addition of Automated Systems Electro mechanics, Heavy Vehicle Mechanics, Market Cooking, Retail Butchery and Wine Services;

WHEREAS according to "*Service Québec*", the professional prospective for all these types of employment is favourable;

WHEREAS these programs could be offered in partnership with other English School Boards on a temporary or on a permanent basis by ETSB;

WHEREAS the ETSB must comply to the process established by the *Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur (MEES)*;

WHEREAS the ETSB must make a request for new programs and the request must be endorsed by the Provincial Organization of Continuing Education Directors, English (PROCEDE) Table and the English Language Vocational Educators Council Committee (ELVEC);

WHEREAS the ETSB must request to the MEES its authorization to offer these programs at its Centres;

IT WAS MOVED BY Commissioner J. Humenuik that the Eastern Townships School Board formally send a request to the MEES asking for authorization to add Automated Systems Electromechanics, Heavy Vehicle Mechanic, Market Cooking, Retail Butchery and Wine Services to its offer of vocational training programs.

Carried unanimously

The Chair of Governance and Ethics committee, R. Gagnon, mentioned the last Advisory Committee meeting took place on April 14, 2020 and the next Governance and Ethics Committee meeting is scheduled on June 9, 2020.

9.3 Audit Advisory Committee

The Chair of the Audit Advisory Committee, Commissioner J. Humenuik, presented the following resolutions:

Finance:

9.3.1 Resolution No. ETSB 20-04-80 Banking Services Contract

WHEREAS the National Bank of Canada's mandate with the Eastern Townships School Board (ETSB) terminates on June 30th 2020;

WHEREAS only two financial institutions provide banking services to public institutions;

WHEREAS after studying the banking conditions of other school boards, the Director of Finance determined that our banking conditions were favourable;

WHEREAS the Audit Committee agreed to proceed with a gré-à-gré negotiation with our current financial institution;

WHEREAS the National Bank of Canada has offered a five-year contract;

WHEREAS the Audit Advisory Committee has analyzed the above offer;

IT WAS MOVED BY Commissioner J. Humenuik, as recommended by the Audit Advisory Committee, to appoint the National Bank of Canada as the ETSB's banking institution from July 1st 2020 to June 30th 2025.

Carried unanimously

9.3.2 Resolution No. ETSB 20-04-81

Objectives and Principles Governing the Allocation of Resources pursuant to Section 275 Education Act (EA) and allocation of surpluses Section 193.4 (EA) – Budget Year 2020-2021

WHEREAS Section 275 of the EA states that after consulting with the governing boards and the parents' committee, and taking into account the recommendations of the resource allocation committee under the fourth paragraph of section 193.3, the school board shall establish objectives and principles governing the allocation of subsidies, school-tax proceeds and its other revenues;

WHEREAS under Section 193.4. (EA) the resource allocation committee must annually make a recommendation to the Council of Commissioners regarding the allocation of the surpluses of the School Board's educational institutions in accordance with section 96.24 (EA);

WHEREAS in accordance with Section 193.3. (EA), the Resource Allocation Committee has set up a consultation process with a view to establishing objectives and principles governing the annual allocation of revenues in accordance with section 275, determining how those revenues are to be allocated in accordance with Section 275.1, including by setting out the criteria to be used to determine the amounts allocated, and determining how student services are to be distributed in accordance with Section 261;

WHEREAS under Section 193(9) (EA) the Central Parents' Committee was consulted on the objectives and principles governing the allocation of subsidies, school-tax proceeds and other revenues among educational institutions as well as the criteria pertaining thereto, and the objectives, principles and criteria used to determine the amount to be withheld by the school board for its needs and those of its committees;

IT WAS MOVED BY Commissioner J. Humenuik that the Council of Commissioners approve the Objectives and Principles Governing the Allocation of Subsidies, School Tax proceeds and other Revenues, as well as the objectives, principles and criteria used to determine the amount reserved for its own needs and the needs of its committees, as it pertains to the School Board's budget for the 2020-2021 school year;

IT WAS FURTHER MOVED to accept that School/Centre surplus will be limited to whichever is greater, \$10,000 or 5% of the operating budget, excluding decentralized grants. Until Schools or Centres surpluses are within the predetermined range a School/Centre cannot increase its surplus and must in fact decrease the amount of its surplus to the predetermined range (\$10,000 or 5% of its original budget excluding the decentralized grants). Deficits are to be reimbursed at a maximum of 2% to 5% per year of the operating budget excluding decentralized grants for the school year 2020-2021.

Carried unanimously

9.4 Material Resources:

9.4.1 Resolution No. ETSB 20-04-82

Alexander Galt Regional High School – 2020-2021 Snow Removal Contract

WHEREAS the Eastern Townships School Board (ETSB) approved a budget of \$58,522 for the project stated above;

WHEREAS eight (8) companies were invited to bid on the project;

WHEREAS three (3) bids were received by the Eastern Townships School Board by the date and time specified;

WHEREAS the lowest bid in the amount of \$58,522 (including taxes), was received from the Company Excavation Blouin et Fils Inc.;

IT WAS MOVED BY Commissioner G. Barnett that the Company Excavation Blouin et Fils Inc. be awarded the contract for the project stated above; **IT WAS FURTHER MOVED** that the Interim Director General and/or the Director of Material Resources be authorized to sign all associated documentation.

Carried unanimously

The next Audit Advisory Committee meeting is scheduled for May 19, 2020.

9.5 Educational Advisory Committee

The Chair of the Educational Advisory Committee, M.E. Kirby, mentioned that next Educational Advisory Committee meeting is scheduled on June 2, 2020.

9.5.1 The Support to School Communities was tabled.

9.6 Communications Advisory Committee

The Chair of the Communications Advisory Committee, D. Zigby, mentioned that the next Communications Advisory Committee meeting is scheduled on May 5, 2020.

9.7 Human Resources Advisory Committee

The Chair of the Human Resources Advisory Committee, C. Beaubien, mentioned that the following topics at the April 21, 2020 meeting were discussed:

- 2020-2021 Support Staffing Plan;
- Allocation of Teacher Resources;

- Mental Health – Morneau Shepell;
- New teachers – Level of comfort with technology;
- Negotiations during COVID-19.

The next Human Resources Advisory Committee meeting is scheduled on May 12, 2020.

9.8 Transportation Advisory Committee

The Chair of the Transportation Advisory Committee, Commissioner H. Turgeon, mentioned that the next meeting is scheduled on May 21, 2020.

9.9 Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)

The Chair of the SEAC, C. Véronneau, mentioned that the next SEAC meeting is scheduled on May 13, 2020.

10. Parents' Committee

The Commissioner representing parents, D. Zigby, mentioned the last Central Parents' Committee meeting took place on April 1st 2020 on ZOOM and it worked out well. The following was discussed:

- Update on the situation;
- Balance of year update;
- FCPPQ update.

The next Parents' Committee meeting is scheduled on May 6, 2020.

11. Student Advisory Committee

Commissioner J. Humenuik, representing the Student Advisory Committee, mentioned that there has been no meeting, but students are asking if we can meet. One of our students participates at the QESBA level.

The next Student Advisory Committee meeting is scheduled May 19, 2020.

12. QESBA

QESBA participated in several committee meetings put in place by the Government in order to deal with the COVID-19 situation across the Province. Unfortunately, the Government came up with its plan to reopen schools without waiting for the recommendation from these committees.

13. COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

Commissioner C. Beaubien Thanked the ETSB for the initiative for giving out 200 iPads to the Health sector in order for patients to communicate with their family.

With no reopening of high schools, our students will turn to the labour market. Will it have an impact on our dropout rates?

Commissioner A. McCrory Explained how much money was available for bursaries to students (Bursary updates: \$5536.50). Commissioners' bursaries are given in each High School and Centre. It was agreed that the bursaries will be increased by \$100 each.

14. UPCOMING EVENTS

None.

15. CORRESPONDENCE

None.

16. QUESTION PERIOD

M. Seline: Will all employees be expected to wear protective equipment?

M. Murray: No.

M. Seline: Will all students be expected to wear protective equipment?

M. Murray: No.

M. Seline: Will HS be used for distancing?

M. Murray: Probably not.

M. Seline: If someone has a medical condition or exception, will they be paid? Should teachers get a doctor's note now?

M. Murray: We will be contacting all employees, if they are eligible for an exception, we will work with them to help them out.

M. Seline: Will student weighting be counted in the class sizes?

- M. Murray: MEES says the maximum number of students is 15. There is no mention of weighting as of now. We have many of the same questions.
- M. Seline: If a teacher is teaching a full day with students, are they expected to still validate the kits?
- M. Murray: That remains to be clarified.
- M. Seline: Is there a cleaning plan for reopening as well as every day?
- M. Murray: We had plans in place for the H1N1 and they will still be valid.
- M. McCully: What is the ETSB position about the COVID-19 situation with the reopening of schools? The Board's position is unclear seeing as you still govern your own Board, why do you not reject the MEES plan and go on your own plan to meet the needs of our territory?
- M. Murray: If this becomes necessary we may go this route.
- G. Thomson: The DG and the Board is responsible to come up with the plan and put it in place. I would be proud if our Board took independent action and made the right decision for our communities, especially if the ETSB has a different position from the Ministry and stand for it.

17. **GOVERNANCE AND COMMUNICATION**

None.

18. **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned on a motion by Commissioner R. Gagnon at 9:03 p.m.

Éric Campbell
Secretary General

Michael Murray
Chairman

EC/gm
28.04.2020