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**Trustees: Kathy Archer (electronic), Becky Buck, Sabreina Dahab, Dawn Danko (electronic), Amanda Fehrman, Maria Felix Miller, Ray Mulholland, Graeme Noble, Paul Tut, Todd White. Student Trustees Thomas Lin and Harry Wang**

**Regrets: Elizabeth Wong**

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**1. Call to Order and Land Acknowledgment**

Maria Felix Miller, Chair of the Board, called the meeting to order at 7:22 p.m. and recited the land acknowledgement.

**2. Approval of the Agenda**

**RESOLUTION #23-154:** Trustees Fehrman/Buck moved: **That the agenda be approved.**

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

Student Trustees Lin and Wang voted in favour.

**3. Declaration of Conflict of Interest**

None.

**4. Confirmation of the Minutes: October 30, 2023**

**RESOLUTION #23-155:** Trustees White/Tut moved: **That the minutes from October 30, 2023 be approved.**

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

Student Trustees Lin and Wang voted in favour.

**5. Correspondence**

Correspondence received end of day November 17, 2023

- Concerns related anti-Palestinian and anti-Muslim hate
- Our Voice Matters – Letter to HWDSB
- Concerns related to anti-Semitism
- Letters related to Investigation

Trustee White inquired if there was a statement of reply to the correspondence received used by staff.

The Director responded with the following statement:

*HWDSB has no place for hate and that is why we have a comprehensive [human rights policy](#) that denounces discrimination. In our policy it asserts that everyone is treated with dignity and respect. Everyone is supported and accepted, and all learning spaces are welcoming, respectful, accessible and free from systemic discrimination, harassment and forms of oppression.*

*Through these communications, we have heard that there are students who have not felt safe or welcomed, or who have had incidents occur that have made them feel unsafe or unwelcome, and I deeply, deeply regret that and at the same time, there are many actions that we're taking as we went through the communication where there were specific incidents that appointed to individuals such as our students who were experiencing harm. We followed up at the school level and we followed up with those who had brought it forward to ask if the*

*incidents had been reported to the school level. We also brought that to the attention of the school for follow-up and we also followed up with those who sent us the communication.*

*It is never appropriate for any of our students to feel concern for their safety, for their overall well-being and we've taken some deliberate steps to help support and care for our students during this highly sensitive circumstance of conflict between Hamas and Israel.*

*We met with all principals and vice principals earlier this month to support them with strategies and approaches when assisting students through conflict and world traumatic events. We asked them to be mindful whether or not they are seeing explicit incidents in their schools, or students could be having feelings of not being safe or feeling unwelcome, feelings of stress and anxiety. We provided a guide, [How to Support Students during World Conflicts](#), to use as a reference when facilitating supportive conversations. This guide responds to hate, bias and prejudice. Not only is it a resource, but it's professional learning that many of our staff have gone through.*

*This past Friday we did another follow up session for our principals and vice principals to have them bring this information back about how to create welcoming environments where we're not necessarily solving the issues that students are bringing forward, but we're creating an environment that makes them comfortable to do so and acknowledging how they are feeling.*

*Besides those resources, we also have an app where students and families can report anonymously, and that's called HWDSB helps. And then finally, we have at HWDSB Human Rights Office that is always available as an outlet for families to report and anyone can reach out to the Human Rights Office at [humanrights@hwdsb.on.ca](mailto:humanrights@hwdsb.on.ca)*

*One thing I would like to acknowledge is that we know we've always known that schools are a microcosm of the larger society and world that we live in. When there is conflict and strife in society, it often shows up in our schools and as a board and system leaders, we're going to continue to ensure that HWDSB students are supported to feel safe and welcome, that there's a place for all voices and that students can show up as their authentic selves and have their human rights respected.*

*I want to remind all families that [when you have concerns](#), we ask that you:*

- First start at the school level - speak with the teacher about the concerns. They do understand that sometimes they're just not getting you the results that you would want.*
- We then ask you to speak with the principal if that doesn't work,*
- The Superintendent's Office and if that doesn't work,*
- The [Human Rights Office](#)*

*We continue to support our students to hear their voices, to hear from our communities and to do our best to make sure all students and families feel safe and supported. And we know that we have much work to do, and we are on our way to doing that work.*

**RESOLUTION #23-156:** Trustees White/Buck moved: **That the correspondence be received and filed.**

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

Student Trustees Lin and Wang voted in favour.

**Report from Trustee Special Committees**

**6. Audit Committee – November 7, 2023**

**RESOLUTION #23-157:** Trustees Tut/White moved: **That the Audit Committee Report – November 7, 2023, be approved including that Trustee Tut be appointed as Audit Committee Chair.**

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

Student Trustees Lin and Wang voted in favour.

**7. Policy Committee –November 1, 2023**

**RESOLUTION #23-158:** Trustees White/Tut moved: **That the Policy Committee Report –November 1, 2023, be approved including Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting, Environment and Copyright/Fair Dealings policies.**

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

Student Trustees Lin and Wang voted in favour.

**Report from Staff**

**8. Community Advisory Committee**

**RESOLUTION #23-159:** Trustees Fehrman/Buck moved: **That the Community Advisory Committee Memberships - Faith, French as a Second Language, Human Rights and Equity and Rural Schools be approved**

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

Student Trustees Lin and Wang voted in favour.

**9. Hamilton-Wentworth Student Transportation Services**

Associate Director Gerard provided an update on the number of open routes, spare drivers, and trainees. Currently there are a total of 4 open routes, which is decreased from the previous update. Currently, there are 5 spare drivers, which is an increase, and 15 in training with school bus operators. Works continues in areas where prone to having some late buses and that includes Flamborough Centre and Ancaster Secondary. It was also noted that a great amount of work had been completed by not only HWSTS staff, but board staff to support students and families during the HSR strike that occurred from November 9th to 16th. Associate Director Gerard offered thanks to staff, bus drivers, and operators for their support and to families and students for their patience during the strike.

The Board moved into Private session as per the Education Act, Section 207.2 (b) the disclosure of intimate, personal or financial information in respect of a member of the board or committee, an employee or prospective employee of the board or a pupil or his or her parent or guardian, this being done at 8:01 p.m.

Public session resumed at 10:02 p.m. Trustees Archer, Danko and Wong did not return and were not present during the in-camera session.

**RESOLUTION #23-160:** Trustees Buck/Fehrman moved: **That the meeting be extended by 30 meetings.**

The motion **CARRIES** on the following division:

**In Favour (7):** Trustees Archer, Dehab, Fehrman, Miller, Noble, Tut, White  
Student Trustees Lin and Wang

**Opposed (1):** Trustee Mulholland

**Reports from:**

**10. Committee of the Whole (private) – November 20, 2023**

**RESOLUTION #23-161:** Trustees Tut/Buck moved: **That the Audit Committee report from November 7, 2023, be approved including the 2022-23 Consolidated Financial Statements of the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board for the Year Ended August 31, 2023.**

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**11. Oral Reports from Liaison Committees:**

- A. City/School Board Liaison Committee:** Trustee Miller reported on behalf of Trustee Danko that the committee has not met since the last update. They plan to set a new date for the new year.

**B. Hamilton-Wentworth Council of Home & School Associations:**

Trustee Miller reported on behalf of Trustee Danko – that the Hamilton-Wentworth Council of Home and School Associations met on November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2023. Concerns about potential boundary changes at Gatestone and Shannon Koostachin were shared, there was discussion about the use of school cash online and that it may be different at each school, and it was noted there are challenges with legacy outdoor classrooms or play structures that were funded by non-board sources as there has been requests for home and schools to fund the upkeep in some cases. The committee provided feedback to the Chair on School Year Calendar.

**C. Hamilton Foundation for Student Success:**

Trustee Buck reported on the October 11<sup>th</sup> meeting where the group was made aware of the student support grants which opened on October 1<sup>st</sup>, having received 61 applications valuing more than \$11,000, which was similar to last year. Payday Payout has increased from 2,000 to 2,500 staff participants and there is now a waiting list. Foundation staff participated in the new employee orientation fair to help new employees become familiar with the foundation and its role within the system. Finally, on November 2<sup>nd</sup>, I was joined by the Director and Trustee Fehrman at the donor appreciate event in celebration of our donors and the wonderful work we can do through their generous giving.

**D. Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA)**

Trustee Buck reported there was a regional joint meeting held on November 4<sup>th</sup> in Kitchener Waterloo where discussion took place on board priorities and OPSBA advocacy on behalf of boards. OPSBA Leaders Academy is hosting a third lunch-time webinar on November 22, with Marion Thompson Howell on delegations. OPSBA Advocacy Day at Queens Park is taking place November 27<sup>th</sup>, where Trustee Buck will be in attendance with some Trustee colleagues from OPSBA. Lastly it was noted that the OPSBA Public Education Symposium is taking place in January with registration opportunities coming soon.

**12. Oral Reports from:**

**A. Student Trustees' – Local Activities & Ontario Student Trustees' Association (OSTA) Report**

The student trustees shared the following:

- Student Senate met the second week of November and had leaders from Youth for Climate Justice speak to both Elementary and Secondary Senates about the importance of preserving climate. Senators also brainstormed possible ways they could help fight climate change.
- In April there will be a joint meeting with the Ontario Student Trustees Association (OSTA) and both the Public and Catholic boards to form a new vision document that will serve as the organizations guide to advocacy and the areas of focus in our liaison with the Ministry of Education. Two areas being proposed are Mental Health and Well-being and Artificial Intelligence.
- Student Trustee Lin met with Principals, Teachers and Students at Ancaster High and Ancaster Meadow to discuss student usage of Artificial Intelligence (AI). Teachers at Ancaster High have formed a teacher AI community and Student Trustee Lin is serving as the student representative. His hope is to collaborate with board staff to find similar resources and responses for AI and students.

**B. Director's Report**

The Director shared the following:

- The Director participated in a school visit to Winona where she and the school administrators had the opportunity to walk into classrooms, and feel the energy and eagerness of students

willing to take part in engaging activities. She also got to meet with a group of 25-30 student leaders who shared with her the activities that they planned for the school which would be both learning activities and just plain fun activities.

- Grey Cup Festival - Community Race to the Cup, the Director was joined by members of Exec Council, Trustee Fehrman and members of the Communication and Community Engagement team. The Race to the Cup is a 5 Lesson Grey Cup Festival themed educational program that is supported by the Hamilton Ticats. Thanks to our Learning Services dept for putting the lessons together which are grounded in human rights and also inspire students to engage in sports, teams and physical literacy.
- The Director attended the Hamilton Foundation for Student Success Donor Appreciation Event with Amy Leeming Cote and Trustee Buck. They are grateful for all the generous donations that are received in support of many different initiatives for students across the board.
- The Director also attended the Liberty for Youth, 19<sup>th</sup> Gala "The power of a changed life". This is a significant community service where students ages 12 – 25 are mentored and supported to help change their lives. It was incredible to hear the testimonials from Hamiltonians that have changed their lives through their mentors and this program.
- The Director was grateful to the Community Engagement team led by Amber Aquin, who recently provided professional learning for Trustees on different ways that they can engage in their communities.
- In addition, over the past two weeks the board also had Climate Action Days, student led activities at secondary schools, grade 7/8 information nights, vaping information nights and partnerships with public health.

### **C. Chair's Report**

The Chair shared the following:

- Chair Miller was thrilled to see her ward come alive with the Grey Cup activities at Tim Hortons Field which is in the heart of Ward 3.
- She is excited to be the new Chair and is looking forward to celebrating with staff on their retirements as an Emcee at the annual Retirement Dinner next Monday.
- She thanked Amber Aquin for the fantastic engagement learning session on November 15, and thanked Trustee Officer Heather Miller for supporting the learning session and also the work that Trustees do every day, stating how incredibly valuable and appreciated she is.
- Chair Miller thanked outgoing Chair Danko and shared that she is very excited to work with vice-chair Tut and have his support this coming year and thanked the Board of Trustees who have signed up to do this work, who are advocates in their community, who are connecting on the issues that matter and who are participating in our democracy and elected process, in order to guide HWDSB to be the best organization that we can be.

The meeting adjourned at 10:30 p.m.

Reference: [Agenda Package](#) and Recordings: [Part 1](#) and [Part 2](#)