

PROVINCE OF QUÉBEC
Ville de Rosemère

A regular meeting of the Council of Commissioners of the Sir Wilfrid Laurier School Board was held in the boardroom of the Administration Centre, 235 Montée Lesage, Rosemère, Québec, on Wednesday, January 29, 2025, and via videoconference at 19:30, at which were:

Present: James Di Sano, Chairperson; Donna Anber, Vice-Chairperson; Commissioners Heather Appleby, Barbara Barrasso, Anick Brunet, Noémia Onofre de Lima, Bob Pellerin, Désirée Ramacieri and Melissa Wall; Parent Commissioners Chloée Alary, Tara Anderson and Elena Ferrato; Maya Lavictoire, Student Representative to Council; and Russell Copeman, Director General.

Also present: Selena Mell, Assistant Director General; Anna Sollazzo, Secretary General and Director of the Legal, Corporate and Communications Department; Robin Bennett, Director of Information Resources; Lynda DaSilveira, Director of Pedagogical Services; Florence Delorme, Director of School Affairs and School Organization; Michel Dufour, Director of Material Resources and Transportation; Daniel Harvey, Director of Financial Resources; Anne-Marie Lavoie, Director of Human Resources; Maxeen Jolin, Coordinator of Communications; and Jocelyne Thompson-Ness, Administration Officer.

Absent: Commissioner Benny Catania.

Guest: Peter Papadeas, Principal of Franklin Hill Elementary School.

The Chairperson called the meeting to order welcoming everyone who is viewing the meeting online and verified quorum with the Secretary General and Director of the Legal, Corporate and Communications Department. Quorum has been achieved.

TIME: 19:31

0.0 Opening of Meeting

0.1 Acknowledgement of the Land

The Student Representative to Council, Maya Lavictoire, entered the meeting. **TIME: 19:32**

I would like to honour the existence of the First Peoples by acknowledging that the Sir Wilfrid Laurier School Board is on the traditional land of the Kanien'keha:ka or Mohawk Nation.

The Mohawk Nation is also known as the "Eastern Door Keepers" and is a member of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, which also includes the Seneca, Cayuga, Tuscarora, Onondaga, and Oneida Peoples.

In the spirit of truth, reconciliation, and collaboration, we honour our relationship with the Indigenous Community and respect the history, culture, and language of Canada's original peoples.

1.0 Approval of the Agenda

Approval of the Agenda

CC-250129-CA-0050

Parent Commissioner Chloée Alary MOVED THAT the January 29, 2025, agenda of the Council of Commissioners be approved as presented in document no. CC-SWLSB-2025/01/29-CA-001. Seconded by Anick Brunet.

Carried unanimously

2.0 Approval of Minutes – December 11, 2024

Approval of Minutes

December 11, 2024

CC-250129-CA-0051

Parent Commissioner Tara Anderson MOVED THAT the minutes of the regular meeting of the Council of Commissioners of the Sir Wilfrid Laurier School Board held on December 11, 2024, having been received by all members prior to this meeting, be approved as written and exempt from public reading by the Secretary General. Seconded by Donna Anber.

Carried unanimously

3.0 Question Period

The Secretary General and Director of the Legal, Corporate and Communications Department explained the parameters of the two question periods of 20 minutes each and drew attention to where people online can type in their questions for the second question period.

She noted that the second question period is for questions related to agenda items only. Question period is not a platform for debate.

The Secretary General and Director of the Legal, Corporate and Communications Department advised that questions were received prior to the deadline from Renata Isopo.

Question 1: Following your swearing in ceremony on November 13, 2024 you stated your intention to develop new structures that would abolish redundancy in Human Resources and streamline responsibilities to where they will make the delivery of education substantially more cost effective.

What measures have you and the Council initiated to address this crucial need, especially in view of the government's recent announcement that cuts have to be made in school board budgets?

In collaboration with departments, schools, and centres, our Financial Resources Department reviews the board's budget very closely throughout the school year. All funds are always allocated according to the budget parameters established by the Ministère de l'Éducation.

Question 2: Regarding redundancy, what is the benefit of moving principals from their schools and assigning them 'responsibilities' at the school board, thus taking on additional costs rather than keeping costs under control. And, more to the point, who pays for these additional costs at the board level, the Government or the Board? Don't the posts left vacant by the principals at school level have to be filled by others, at additional cost.

All assignments of personnel are done taking into consideration the needs of schools, centres, and departments as well as the available funds. We pay for all employees through our school board budget which is mainly funded by the government and our school taxes.

Question 3: Regarding other budget items, the one that seems to be most questionable is the six-figure 'contribution' that SWLSB annually makes to the Quebec English School Boards Association. How does this measure contribute to the quality education that the school board is mandated to provide for its students, if thousands of dollars are siphoned from limited financial resources?

QESBA is the association for all English school boards in Québec. They have contributed immensely to the protection and safeguard of our education rights as the official language minority in Québec. It is to the benefit of our students and our communities that QESBA represents and guides English school boards on various issues related to education.

4.0 Report from the Chairperson

The Chairperson advised that a bilingual copy of his full report is available to the public.

He went on to quote Denise Morrison as follows noting that transparency is essential to ensuring that the school board's stakeholders and community have confidence in the decisions taken.

The single most important ingredient in the recipe for success is transparency because transparency builds trust.

He went on to note that he had attended the following

Participation in school and community events

- December 13, 2024 – Attended the semi-annual review of the 100 Laval Squadron with Commissioner Benny Catania;
- December 14, 2024 – Visited the Terry Fox Elementary School holiday market and took pictures with Santa along with Commissioner Benny Catania;
- December 15, 2024 – Visited the Laval Senior Academy holiday market with Commissioners Barbara Barrasso and Benny Catania;
- December 16, 2024 – Attended the holiday concert at Pinewood Elementary School;
- December 17, 2024 – Attended the Arundel Elementary School holiday concert in the morning with Commissioner Donna Anber, and the holiday concert at Grenville Elementary School in the afternoon with Commissioners Donna Anber and Désirée Ramacieri, as well as Parent Commissioner Tara Anderson;
- December 18, 2024 – Attended breakfast with Santa at McCaig Elementary School in the morning, and had lunch with Santa in the afternoon at Rawdon Elementary School;
- December 19, 2024
 - Attended the annual Community Breakfast at Rosemère High School with Parent Commissioner Chloée Alary, the Director General, and the Director of Human Resources;
 - Attended the Mountainview Elementary School holiday concert;
 - Attended the Christmas brunch at Grenville Elementary School with Commissioner Donna Anber;
- January 19, 2025 – Attended the Pink in the City Raise Craze Celebration with Commissioners Barbara Barrasso and Noémia Onofre de Lima, as well as Parent Commissioner Elena Ferrato.

SWLSB News

- January 10, 2025 – Genesis Elementary School hosted a visit from legendary Chef Chuck Hughes and the event was written up in the Montreal Gazette. Chef Hughes showed his culinary skills while engaging grade five students in an exciting activity. This event was aligned with the Academic and Career Guidance Program;
- Registration for 2025-2026 is underway; special thanks to the Communications Department for all the marketing work they put in;

Statements by the Chairperson

- January 6, 2025 – Resignation of Trudeau as Liberal Leader;
- January 10, 2025 – Alzheimer Awareness Month;
- January 12, 2025 Anniversary of the Earthquake in Haiti;

- January 22, 2025 – Bell Let's Talk Day for mental health;
- January 27, 2025 – International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust.

On January 22, 2025, he was present at the joint session on governance with the Management Committee and the Council of Commissioners.

4.1 Community Highlights from Commissioners

Parent Commissioner Chloée Alary advised that Laurentian Regional High School held a workshop where students made Valentine's for veterans. This was a great initiative.

Commissioner Barbara Barrasso provided more information on the Pink in the City Raise Craze Celebration noting that the event raised \$317,000.00, of which \$50,000.00, was raised by students of the Sir Wilfrid Laurier School Board. She also reminded everyone that Our Lady of Peace Elementary School is holding a Comedy Night on February 7, 2025.

Commissioner Désirée Ramacieri advised that Laurentia Elementary School will be holding a Poker Night on January 31, 2025. Tickets are still available.

The Vice-Chairperson informed the Council that Arundel Elementary School has recently received donations of \$7,000.00 for its breakfast program, and \$4,000.00 to purchase new cross-country ski equipment. She also noted her attendance at the CDC Pont-Viau graduation at Kanesatake for five graduates of the Institutional and Home Care Assistance program. It was an honour to be present for this event.

Parent Commissioner Tara Anderson extended appreciation to all of the schools who took the time before the holiday period to prepare baskets for families in need across the territory.

5.0 Report from the Director General

The Director General presented this monthly report noting that since the last meeting of the Council he has continued his school visits and has now visited 12. He also attended various meetings with other school boards, school service centres, all the Directors General, and the Ministry of Education, in Québec City and virtually. He was also in attendance for the Governance Alignment Program and for the annual Rosemere High School Community Breakfast.

He went on to advise that the ministère de l'Éducation has put out a directive for a hiring freeze that applies to all positions until March 31, 2025, except for the Director General and positions that provide direct services to students. Hiring can only be done within the education network or via special permission from the Conseil du trésor. The government says that they are not cutting expenses, but just asking that everyone respects their budget.

Proud moments:

- The professional improvement day for SEPB 577 on January 6, 2025, with a theme of work/life balance;

- The recent graduation of five students from Kanesatake in the Institutional and Home Care Assistance program as personal support workers. This is the first time that CDC Pont-Viau has run a program outside the centre and, while it presented some challenges, it was a very good experience.

Upcoming Dates

- Registration for 2025-2026 began on Monday, January 27, 2025. Using the newly available information from the census on eligible families and where they reside has allowed for the school board to do a targeted registration campaign. The Communications, School Affairs and School Organization, and Material Resources and Transportation departments are all to be thanked for their parts in this campaign;
- Vocational Training programs
 - February 3, 2025 – Construction Business Management;
 - February 11, 2025 – 1.3 Contractor for All Buildings
 - February 17, 2025 - Information Technology Support;
 - February 25, 2025 – Institutional and Home Care Assistance.

6.0 Presentation – MEQ Budget Reductions

The Director of Financial Resources provided an overview of the budget reductions requested by the MEQ noting that on December 13, 2024, all Directors General from school boards and school service centres were called to an in-person meeting in Québec City where they were all given a letter outlining the required budget cuts. The Sir Wilfrid Laurier School Board (SWLSB) will have to cut \$1,484,454.00, between December 24, 2024, and March 31, 2025.

The last budget update shows a current deficit of \$150,000.00, but since it was presented things have continued to evolve so, presently, the school board will have to find \$1,519,843.00, in order to have a balanced budget by the end of the current school year.

The MEQ has given no indication as to whether there will be new budget reduction targets required between April 1 and June 20, 2025. It is hoped that this information will be revealed when the provincial budget is deposited.

Prior to the holiday period, a sub-committee was formed with members from the Resource Allocation Committee, comprised of one representative from the elementary, secondary, adult education, and vocational training sectors, as well as from the head office. The subcommittee met twice. It was decided that the best approach was to send a target amount to each school, centre, and department, which will allow each of them to decide how they will reach the set target amount. The reductions amount to \$913,000.00 for the schools and centres, and to \$600,000.00 for the administration centre; these reduction cannot affect direct services to students.

He noted that there are already some measures in effect to reduce expenses:

- The hiring freeze for head office positions;
- Virtual meetings for February and March for all groups whenever possible;

- Limited presence to school events for school board employees and commissioners;
- A delay of all non-essential maintenance;
- Limit conferences and travel to within the Province of Québec.

The MEQ cancelled 15 measures for the 2024-2025 school year that require a school to apply for a project. If a project was authorized earlier during this school year, it will be maintained. The three significant measures in this group are the following:

- 15061 – Pedagogical success of indigenous students and reconciliation;
- 15081 – TechnoFAD projects; and
- 15111 – Entrepreneurship.

Two other letters were received one concerning capital expenditures, which confirmed that there would be no new capital projects approved for additional space, and the other requested that the two new elementary schools approved by the MEQ for Saint-Jérôme and the MRC Thérèse-De Blainville be put on hold until the funding becomes available.

In response to a question from Parent Commissioner Elena Ferrato, the Director of Financial Resources advised that he would look into what a TechnoFAD project is.

7.0 Business Arising

There were no items for business arising.

8.0 Decision Items

8.1 Human Resources

8.1.1 Appointment of In-School Administrator – Vice-Principal

The Chairperson inquired if the Council members had any questions concerning the confidential report and, if so, to please motion for an in camera session. There were no questions.

Olivia Mancini joined the meeting.

TIME: 20:10

Appointment of In-School
Administrator

WHEREAS the position of Vice-Principal at Franklin Hill Elementary School is currently vacant;

Vice-Principal

WHEREAS according to By-Law no. BL2023-CA-01: *Delegation of Functions and Powers of the Sir Wilfrid Laurier School Board*, the Council of Commissioners hires a person in a regular executive position;

CC-250129-HR-0052

Commissioner Bob Pellerin MOVED THAT, on the recommendation of the Director General, the Council of Commissioners of the Sir Wilfrid Laurier School Board appoint Olivia Mancini to the position of Vice-Principal within the Sir Wilfrid Laurier School Board, effective immediately. Seconded by Parent Commissioner Tara Anderson

Carried unanimously

The Chairperson congratulated Ms. Mancini on her new position and welcomed her.

The Principal of Franklin Hill Elementary School (FHES) noted that he is very happy to have her join the school team as she will be a great fit.

Ms. Mancini thanked the Selection Committee for this opportunity and that she is looking forward to working with the FHES community.

The Director General advised that Ms. Mancini would begin her position at FHES when the Vice-Principal of Souvenir Elementary School, where she is currently the interim, returns from leave.

8.2 Financial Resources

8.2.1 Amendment to the *Expense Reimbursement Policy for the Members of the Council of Commissioners and the Employees of the Sir Wilfrid Laurier School Board* – Consultation Results

The Director of Financial Resources advised that no feedback was received following the consultation.

Amendment to the *Expense Reimbursement Policy for the Members of the Council of Commissioners and the Employees of the Sir Wilfrid Laurier School Board*

WHEREAS the Council of Commissioners of the Sir Wilfrid Laurier School Board adopted resolution no. CC-241211-FR-0039, authorizing for consultation the proposed amendments to Section 3.0 of policy no. 1999-FR-01: *Expense Reimbursement Policy for the Members of the Council of Commissioners and the Employees of the Sir Wilfrid Laurier School Board*;

Consultation Results

WHEREAS a consultation was held from December 12, 2024, to January 16, 2025;

CC-250129-FR-0053

WHEREAS the Association québécoise des cadres scolaires – Sir Wilfrid Laurier Section, the Sir Wilfrid Laurier Administrators' Association, the Laurier Teachers' Union, SPPOQA (Syndicat des professionnelles et professionnels de l'Ouest de Québec Anglophone), FEESP-CSN-S18, and the SEPB-Québec-FTQ Local 577, were consulted on the policy, and feedback was received and taken into consideration;

Commissioner Donna Anber MOVED THAT, on the recommendation of the Director of Financial Resources, the Council of Commissioners of the Sir Wilfrid Laurier School Board approve the amendments to Sections 3.0 and 9.0 of policy n° 1999-FR-01: *Expense Reimbursement Policy for the Members of the Council of Commissioners and the Employees of the Sir Wilfrid Laurier School Board*, effective immediately, as per document no. SWLSB-2025/01/29-FR-001. Seconded by Commissioner Melissa Wall.

Carried unanimously

The Chairperson pointed out that these amendments were made to the policy to reinforce accountability and transparency of managing public funds properly.

8.3 Material Resources and Transportation

8.3.1 Engagement of Contractor – Façade, Windows and Roof Project – Laval Senior Academy (Block A)

Engagement of Contractor – Façade, Windows and Roof Project

WHEREAS the façade, windows and roof require renovations in Block A at Laval Senior Academy;

Laval Senior Academy (Block A)

WHEREAS public call for tenders no. 24-190-02 was published for this renovation and opened on January 15, 2025;

WHEREAS the conformity of all bidders has been verified;

CC-250129-MR-0054

Commissioner Barbara Barrasso MOVED THAT, on the recommendation of the Advisory Committee – Student Success, the Council of Commissioners of the Sir Wilfrid Laurier School Board award the contract for the renovation of the façade, windows and roof at Laval Senior Academy (Block A) to Toiture Perreault Inc., for a total cost of \$1,546,421.00, before taxes, or \$1,652,919.15, net taxes;

AND THAT the engagement above be conditional to the receipt of all contractual documents;

FURTHER THAT the Director of Material Resources and Transportation be authorized to sign all documentation concerning this project.

Seconded by Parent Commissioner Chloée Alary.

Carried unanimously

8.3.2 Engagement of Contractor – Interior Staircase and Washroom Project – Pinewood Elementary School (Annex A)

Engagement of Contractor
– Interior Staircase and
Washroom Project

Pinewood Elementary
School (Annex A)

CC-250129-MR-0055

WHEREAS the interior staircase and washroom require renovations in Annex A of Pinewood Elementary School;

WHEREAS public call for tenders no. 24-155-01 was published for this renovation and opened on January 13, 2025;

WHEREAS the conformity of all bidders has been verified;

Commissioner Anick Brunet MOVED THAT, on the recommendation of the Advisory Committee – Student Success, the Council of Commissioners of the Sir Wilfrid Laurier School Board award the contract for the renovation of the staircase and washroom at Pinewood Elementary School (Annex A) to Construction Landreville Lussier Inc., for a total cost of \$710,359.00, before taxes, or \$759,279.65, net taxes;

AND THAT the engagement above be conditional to the receipt of all contractual documents;

AND THAT if all contractual documents are not received in due time, Construction Landreville Lussier Inc. be considered in default, the tender bond be executed and, in such a case, the contract be then awarded to the next lowest bidder, namely Troicé Construction Inc., for a total cost of \$810,232.93 before taxes, or \$866,031.65 net taxes;

FURTHER THAT the Director of Material Resources and Transportation be authorized to sign all documentation concerning this project.

Seconded by Commissioner Bob Pellerin

Carried unanimously

8.3.3 Engagement of Service Provider – External Auditing Services

Engagement of Service
Provider

External Auditing Services

CC-250129-MR-0056

WHEREAS the latest contract for external auditing services expired on June 30, 2024;

WHEREAS a new service contract is therefore required;

WHEREAS public call for tenders no. 24-206-01 was published for this purpose and opened on December 17, 2024;

WHEREAS the conformity of all bidders has been verified;

Commissioner Melissa Wall MOVED THAT, on the recommendation of the Advisory Committee – Student Success, the Council of Commissioners of the Sir Wilfrid Laurier School Board award the contract for external auditing services to Amyot Gélinas, s.e.n.c.r.l., for a total cost of \$371,500.00, before taxes, or \$397,084.28, net taxes;

AND THAT the engagement above be conditional to the receipt of all contractual documents;

FURTHER THAT the Director of Financial Resources be authorized to sign all documentation concerning this contract.

Seconded by Commissioner Barbara Barrasso.

Carried unanimously

9.0 Information Items

9.1 SWL Foundation Report

The report can be found in the meeting package.

Commissioner Bob Pellerin informed the Council that the Foundation has launched a lottery to raise funds to ensure that students have everything they need. The tickets are \$25.00, with the grand prize being a \$5,000.00, trip, so he encouraged everyone who might like to purchase a ticket to do so quickly as there are only 1,500 tickets available. The prizes will be drawn on June 5, 2025.

He went on to note that planning is underway for the annual Laurier Gala and Star Fest. Students can submit audition videos up until March 14, 2025. The event will be held on May 29, 2025. If anyone knows a talented student within the school board, please encourage them to audition.

9.2 Parent Commissioners' Reports

9.2.1 Parents' Committee

The Parents' Committee report can be found in the meeting package.

9.2.2 SEAC

The SEAC report can be found in the meeting package.

9.3 QESBA Report

There was no report for the QESBA.

9.4 Central Students' Committee Report

Parent Commissioner Elena Ferrato advised that the Central Students' Committee had met last week and exam preparation and inclusion practices were discussed. The students are very inspiring and filled with great ideas.

Student Representative to Council Maya Lavictoire noted that even she, as a student, is really impressed by what her peers do for time management and stress.

10.0 Question Period (20 minutes)

The Secretary General and Director of the Legal, Corporate and Communications Department noted that, as explained earlier in the meeting, the second question period is for questions related to agenda items only and there is no debate.

There were no questions.

11.0 Correspondence

There was no correspondence.

12.0 Varia

There were no varia items.

13.0 Adjournment of Meeting

Adjournment of Meeting

CC-250129-CA-0057

Commissioner Melissa Wall MOVED THAT the meeting be adjourned. Seconded by Commissioner Désirée Ramacieri.

Carried unanimously

TIME: 20:24

NEXT MEETING → REGULAR → February 26, 2025

M^e Anna Sollazzo, Secretary General

James Di Sano, Chairperson