



Office of the Director

Jim McCuaig Education Centre
2135 Sills Street Thunder Bay ON P7E 5T2
Telephone (807) 625-5131 Fax (807) 622-0961

REGULAR BOARD MEETING
Tuesday, December 17, 2024
Jim McCuaig Education Centre

Sherri-Lynne Pharand
Director of Education

Leah Vanderwey
Chair

AGENDA

PUBLIC SESSION
7:30 p.m. – in the Board Room/Microsoft Teams

| | <u>Resource Person</u> | <u>Pages</u> |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------|
| 1. Call to Order | L. Vanderwey | |
| 2. Disclosure of Conflict of Interest | | |
| 3. Approval of the Agenda | | |
| 4. Land Acknowledgement | L. Vanderwey | |
| 5. Delegations/ Presentations | | |
| 6. Approval of Minutes | | |
| 7. Business Arising from the Minutes | | |

MATTERS NOT REQUIRING A DECISION:

8. Information Reports
9. First Reports

Trustees (Chair and Vice-Chair) and presenters of reports will be available
for comment after the Board Meeting.

LAKEHEAD DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

| | | Resource Person | Pages |
|--|--|--------------------|-------|
| <u>MATTERS FOR DECISION:</u> | | | |
| 10. | Postponed Reports | | |
| 11. | Recommendations from the Board Advisory Committee | | |
| 12. | Ad Hoc and Special Committee Reports | | |
| 12.1 | <u>Recommendations from the Audit Committee (006-25)</u> | K. Alaksa | 1-5 |
| The recommendations are as follows: | | | |
| <u><i>Audit Committee Summarized Annual Report – August 31, 2024 (120-23)</i></u> | | | |
| <i>It is recommended that Lakehead District School Board:</i> | | | |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>approve the Audit Committee Summarized Annual Report as outlined in Appendix A to Report No. 006-25; and</i> <i>forward the report to the Ministry of Education.</i> | | | |
| <u><i>2023-2024 Audited Financial Statements (123-24)</i></u> | | | |
| <i>It is recommended that Lakehead District School Board approve the August 31, 2024, audited financial statements as outlined in Report No. 123-24, 2023-2024 Audited Financial Statements.</i> | | | |
| 13. | New Reports | | |

Trustees (Chair and Vice-Chair) and presenters of reports will be available for comment after the Board Meeting.

14. New Business

14.1 Letter Re: Transportation Update – Minister of Education L. Vanderwey

6-8

It is recommended that Lakehead District School Board:

1. *approve Chair Vanderwey to send a letter updating the Minister of Education, Jill Dunlop, of ongoing concerns regarding student transportation funding,*
2. *Copy letter to the following:*
Denise Allyson Cole, Deputy Minister of Education
MPP Kevin Holland
MPP Lise Vaugeois
Stephanie Donaldson, OPSBA Executive Director
Craig Murphy, Consortium Manager, Student Transportation Services Thunder Bay
JP Tennier, Director of Education Thunder Bay Catholic District School Board
Sherri-Lynne Pharand, Director of Education, Lakehead District School Board
Mireille Major-Levesque, Director of Education Conseil scolaire de district catholique des Aurores boréales
Sébastien Fontaine, Director of Education Conseil scolaire du Grand Nord

15. Notices of Motion

16. Information and Inquiries

17. Adjournment L. Vanderwey

Trustees (Chair and Vice-Chair) and presenters of reports will be available
for comment after the Board Meeting.

LAKEHEAD DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

LAKEHEAD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

2024 DEC 17
Report No. 006-25

TO THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF
LAKEHEAD DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD – Public Session

RE: RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE AUDIT COMMITTEE

1. Background

Reports were received and reviewed at the November 29, 2024, Audit Committee meeting and have been referred to the Board for approval.

A copy of the Audit Committee Summarized Annual Report - August 31, 2024 (120-24) is attached as Appendix A.

A copy of the 2023-2024 Audited Financial Statements Report (123-24) is attached as Appendix B.

RECOMMENDATION

The recommendations are as follows:

AUDIT COMMITTEE SUMMARIZED ANNUAL REPORT – AUGUST 31, 2024 (120-24)

It is recommended that Lakehead District School Board:

1. approve the Audit Committee Summarized Annual Report as outlined in Appendix A to Report No. 006-25; and
2. forward the report to the Ministry of Education.

2023-2024 AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (123-24)

It is recommended that Lakehead District School Board approve the August 31, 2024, audited financial statements as outlined in Report No. 123-24, 2023-2024 Audited Financial Statements.

Respectfully submitted,

LORENCIO DIGREGORIO
Chair
Audit Committee

LAKEHEAD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

2024 NOV 25
Report No. 120-24

TO THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF
THE AUDIT COMMITTEE – Public Session

RE: AUDIT COMMITTEE SUMMARIZED ANNUAL REPORT – AUGUST 31, 2024

1. Background

According to Ontario Regulation 361/10, *Audit Committees*, all Boards in Ontario are required to submit a summarized Annual Report to the Ministry of Education for the previous fiscal year.

2. Situation

Appendix A is the summarized report containing the requirements outlined by the Ministry of Education.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Lakehead District School Board approve the Audit Committee Summarized Annual Report as outlined in Appendix A to Report No. 120-24 and forward the report to the Ministry of Education.

Respectfully submitted,

KIRSTI ALAKSA
Superintendent of Business



Audit Committee

Jim McCuaig Education Centre
2135 Sills Street Thunder Bay ON P7E 5T2
Telephone (807) 625-5126 Fax (807) 623-7848

**Annual Report to Lakehead District School Board and Forwarded
To The Ministry of Education
For the Year Ended August 31, 2024**

Lakehead District School Board

Fiscal Year: 2023-2024

Re: Annual Audit Committee Report to the Ministry of Education as per Ontario Regulation
361/10, Audit Committees.

During the 2023-2024 fiscal year, the following internal audit was completed:

- Student Health, Safety & Well-Being;

During the 2024-2025 fiscal year, the following internal audits are planned to be completed:

- Communication/Media;
- Recruiting, Hiring and Retaining Talent; and
- Cyber Security

2024-11-29
Date


Signature

Chair of the Audit Committee
Title

LAKEHEAD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

2024 NOV 29
Report No. 123-24

TO THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE
AUDIT COMMITTEE – Public Session

RE: 2023-2024 AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

1. Background

Administration has concluded the preparation of the financial statements for 2023-2024 fiscal period ending August 31, 2024. These statements have been subjected to audit by the Board's appointed external auditors, who will be reporting on the results of the audit.

2. Situation

Lakehead District School Board remains in compliance with all of the provincial requirements with respect to funding regulations and restrictions.

3. Results for the fiscal period

3.1 Normal variations in cash flow during the year influence the year-end balances of assets and liabilities. As at August 31, 2024, funds owing to the Board by various parties are considered collectible. All liabilities of the Board are appropriately reflected.

3.2 As is the normal case, operational results during the year vary from many of the budgeted estimates prepared and approved by the Board on June 27, 2023. Many of the underlying circumstances leading to these variances are related to enrolment differences, capital projects, additional new revenues or unforeseen expenditure circumstances.

3.3 Overall total revenues increased from budgeted estimates by \$30.7 mil. \$4 mil relates to the Reverse Tuition Agreement or (REA) and has a matching expense. Of the remaining \$26.7 mil increase, \$6.2 mil relates to Priorities and Partnerships funding (PPF) that was received subsequent to estimates and \$20.5 mil relates to increased Grants for Student Needs (GSN) funding. The increase in GSN funding was mainly due to remedy adjustments from Bill 124 and retro from negotiations but also due in part to increased enrolment. Total ADE was lower than projected by 10 for elementary but higher than projected by 70 for secondary.

3.4 Overall total expenses increased from budgeted estimates by \$29.9 mil. \$4 mil of this relates to the REA expense. \$22.6 mil relates to an increase in salary and benefits expense, mainly due to remedy payments from Bill 124 and retro from negotiations. The remaining increase relates to increased supplies and materials costs, professional fees and technology purchases due to the increased enrolment and the increase in PPFs received during the year.

3.5 The financial statements for the 2023-2024 fiscal year indicate:

- i) A balance of \$1.4 mil (2023, \$1.3 mil) that is un-appropriated and available for compliance. This amount was formerly known as working capital;
- ii) A balance of \$6.9 mil (2023, \$6.6 mil) that is internally appropriated and available for compliance. This balance is derived from various reserves that have been set aside for specific purposes; and
- ii) A balance of \$(11.0) mil (2023 \$(11.2) mil) that is externally appropriated and unavailable for compliance. The balance consists of the following:
 - Value of employer future liabilities;
 - School generated funds;
 - Revenues recognized for land; and
 - Asset Retirement Obligations.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Lakehead District School Board approve the August 31, 2024 audited financial statements as outlined in Report No.123-24, 2023-2024 Audited Financial Statements.

Respectfully submitted,

ANGELA LEE-WIWCHARYK
Manager of Financial Services

KIRSTI ALAKSA
Superintendent of Business

SHERRI-LYNNE PHARAND
Director of Education

December 18, 2024

The Honourable Jill Dunlop
Minister of Education
5th Floor
438 University Ave.
Toronto, Ontario
M7A 1N3

Dear Minister Dunlop,

RE: Follow-Up - Ongoing Concerns Regarding Student Transportation Funding

On behalf of the trustees of the Lakehead District School Board, I am writing to follow up on the concerns outlined in our consortium's previous correspondence with you, MPP Holland, and MPP Vaugeois regarding the challenges posed by the new student transportation funding framework. These challenges continue to have a tangible impact on our students and their ability to access education.

Access to Education

As we continue tracking the cohort of students who were eligible for transportation services in the prior year, but are no longer eligible under the new formula, we have observed a concerning trend. Absenteeism among these students has continued to rise. Specifically, at the end of September, **38.0%** of students who were eligible for transportation last year, but not this year had lower attendance compared to the same period last year. By the end of November, this increased to **49.0%** of students who were eligible for transportation last year but not this year, under the new walk distances, had lower attendance compared to the same period last year. This data indicates a **significant rise** in the number of students with declining attendance.

It is important to note that this cohort is largely composed of our most vulnerable populations, who previously relied on transportation to access their education but now face significant barriers. It should be noted that, as of the end of September, 47.3% of students on this list who voluntarily self-identify as First Nations, Métis, and Inuit (FNMI) had decreases in attendance compared to the same period last year. This figure increased to 51.7% by the end of November, indicating a concerning rise in the number of FNMI students with declining attendance. This is both a human rights and an equity of access to education issue.

Weather Related Risks

To further illustrate the environmental and systemic challenges faced by students in our region, consider the following temperature data, which emphasizes the unique conditions in Thunder Bay compared to other Ontario regions:

Temperature Average # of Days per Year, 2010-2023

| Temperature in °C | Thunder Bay | North Bay | Toronto |
|-------------------|-------------|-----------|---------|
| Below - 25 | 18.3 | 11.1 | 0.07 |
| Below -27 | 13.5 | 7.4 | 0 |
| Below - 30 | 5.8 | 3.2 | 0 |

Source: provided by the Thunder Bay District Health Unit from climatedata.ca

Given that temperatures below -27°C present significant health risks, as highlighted in guidance from Canadian pediatricians and Environment Canada and considering that -25°C is the threshold for which students are kept indoors for recess, it is critical to address the implications for student safety. The Canadian Pediatric Society advises parents and caregivers to limit outdoor exposure when temperatures fall below -27°C, as frostbite can occur rapidly at this threshold. Additionally, at -15°C or colder, it is recommended to reduce the time children spend outside. We know that many of our students from vulnerable families do not have the appropriate winter gear to be outside for extended periods, further increasing their risk. The Montreal Children's Hospital guide for frostbite prevention also emphasizes that "children are at greater risk for getting frostbite because they lose heat from their skin faster than adults do."

| Grade | Distance | Average Walk Time for Age Group and Walking Time (Time = Distance ÷ Speed) |
|---------------|----------|---|
| JK/SK | 0.8 km | 2.0 - 2.5 km/h = 19.2 to 24 minutes |
| Grade 1-3 | 1.6 km | 4-5 km per hour = 19 – 24 min |
| Grade 4-8 | 1.6 km | 4-5 km per hour = 19 – 24 min |
| Grades 9 – 12 | 3.2 km | 4.5 to 6.0 km/h = 32 to 42.7 minutes |

These above noted facts and following recommendations underscore the unacceptable nature of applying a universal transportation policy across Ontario. In regions like Thunder Bay, where severe cold is a regular occurrence, and community infrastructure is less developed than in larger cities, the lack of transportation services disproportionately impacts families. The socio-economic environment, accessibility challenges, and risks associated with outdoor exposure further exacerbate this inequity.

We reiterate our concerns about:

1. The **universal distance standard** that fails to account for regional realities.
2. Benchmarks and funding formulas that do not reflect rising costs.
3. Transition funding and local priorities funding that are insufficient to address these gaps.

To address these issues, we urge the Ministry to:

1. Conduct a regional review of transportation policies with input from northern and rural boards.
2. Update funding benchmarks to reflect current market conditions and inflation.
3. Develop targeted solutions to address the unique challenges of northern regions, including climate and infrastructure considerations.

We remain committed to supporting student safety, attendance, and achievement. We look forward to hearing from you and your team to discuss these concerns further and to explore actionable solutions.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Leah Vanderwey
Chair
Lakehead District School Board

- c. Denise Allyson Cole, Deputy Minister of Education
MPP Kevin Holland
MPP Lise Vaugeois
Stephanie Donaldson, OPSBA Executive Director
Craig Murphy, Consortium Manager, Student Transportation Services Thunder Bay
JP Tennier, Director of Education Thunder Bay Catholic District School Board
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