

THE LINDSAY ADVOCATE

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First learn-at-home snow day discussed by board

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Trillium Lakelands District School Board dissected their first snow day at the recent board meeting, given that snow days are

now learn-from-home days.

Haliburton trustee Gary Brohman wanted

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insights into how the board's first snow day went, and whether the new protocols for instruction on snow days were successful.

“This was a good example of give and take with our employee groups,” said director of education Wes Hahn. “There was lots of positive feedback from teachers about the need to keep learning moving and giving the kids the best chance to continue learning.”

Hahn asked student trustee Kaylee Kelly for her insights. Kelly shared that according to her peers work was hit and miss depending upon the teacher, and in her case the work was not up until later in the day.

“I also heard issues about connectivity and an ability to even access the work,” Kelly added. The recent snow day affected Haliburton and Muskoka, but not Kawartha Lakes.

Superintendent Tim Ellis told trustees that in Kawartha Lakes the decision for cancellation is typically made about 4:30 am. The board is looking at road reports and weather projections for the morning and afternoon bus runs.

“We also try to figure out early on where the plows have been,” Ellis said. “If the main highways are still snow covered it doesn't bode well for the back roads. We generally know in Muskoka by 5:30 am. A combination of road conditions and weather largely determine a snow day.”

Trustees were reminded by staff that there is a bus cancellation video on the board's website that is intended to help families answer some of the questions they might have about inclement weather cancellation.

Chair Bruce Reain shared with staff his appreciation for their efforts in his first address after being re-elected board chair for 2021.

Reain complimented all staff “on doing their best in a very difficult year.”

Bruce Reain, representing Huntsville-Lake of Bays, was acclaimed Chair for 2021 while David Morrison, representing City of Kawartha Lakes Ward 5, was acclaimed as vice-chair for 2021.

Reain said he is proud of the board's decision to mask all staff and students, “and we should all be proud of our Learning at Home program.”

Trustees Judy Saunder and John Byrnes wanted to know what would be the meeting protocols for 2021, and would the board be forced to return to virtual meetings if more COVID-19 cases occur in the area.

“If cases go up we may have to return to virtual meetings,” Hahn said, “and we may have to reconsider how we hold meetings in the future even when things return to some kind of normal. We may need to continue to meet in big rooms (like the one at the Muskoka Education Centre) and continue practicing distancing at meetings.”

Hahn reminded trustees that they have until Dec. 11 to apply for positions on one or more of the many committees that allow TLDSB to function.

There were over a dozen potential committees highlighted including a parent involvement committee, a code of conduct and investigations committee, an equity task force committee, an equity working

group committee, a student discipline committee and a committee responsible for Indigenous education initiatives. The application process will be entirely online this year.

The board will next meet virtually on January 12, 2021.

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