



## MEASURING PROGRESS ON STEWARDSHIP Report No. 17-036

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (PUBLIC)

3 October 2017

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### **Stewardship Objective - By 2019, the District will optimize learning conditions for all students through the responsible and sustainable management of resources.**

Stewardship is one of the OCDSB's strategic objectives for 2015-2019. It is defined as "a culture that practices ethical decision-making, and social, economic and environmental sustainability". The objective states: "By 2019, the District will optimize learning conditions for all students through the responsible and sustainable management of resources". Strategies identified to support this objective are:

- "Improve access to learning environments and optimize the use of all resources through school accommodation and program review planning";
- "Enhance operational practices to effectively and responsibly manage human and financial resources in support of students"; and
- "Model sustainability, smart energy use and sound environmental practices for students".

Work being done in the area of stewardship happens at the classroom, school, and District level. This work includes rich programs designed to promote social stewardship, policies to manage financial resources, and events to educate on environmental sustainability, among numerous other projects/initiatives.

Our unique challenge in reporting on progress in this area is our need to assess:

- 1) Our work as effective stewards as an organization; and
- 2) Our success in inspiring stewardship in our students.

For example, as a District, we do some important work in social stewardship by supporting a variety of organizations in our schools, after hours. Community-use hours have been on the rise in recent years (see Figure 1), while the distribution of how the time is spent has remained fairly consistent. By far the most frequent use has been for sports and recreation – our schools are being used 4.7x more often for this purpose than for the next most frequent category (see Figure 2), which highlights the intersection between stewardship and well-being. Other common uses include supports for low-income families, child care programs, and educational purposes.

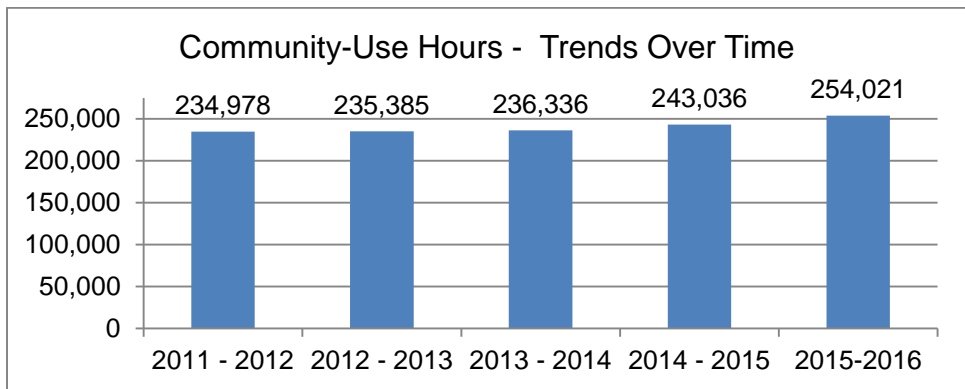


Figure 1. Community-use permit hours from 2011-2016.

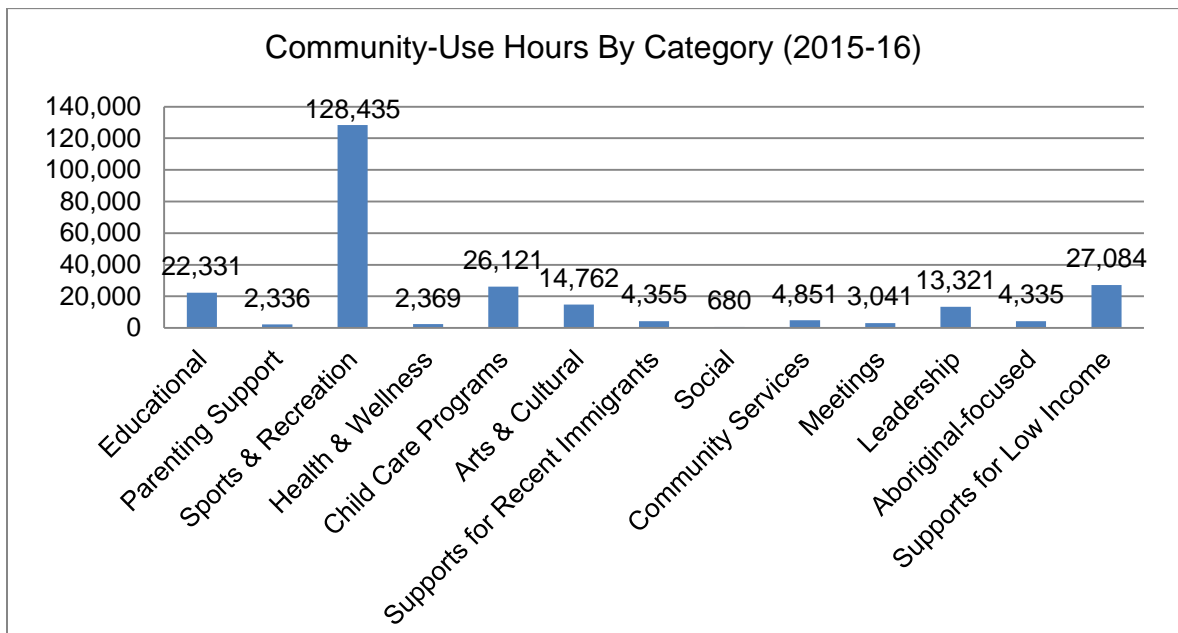


Figure 2. Community-use permit hours by category for 2015-2016.

As a District, we also intentionally teach stewardship to our students. For example, OCDSB students participate in supporting charitable causes, including the United Way, the Education Foundation, Relay for Life, Jump Rope for Heart, Do it for Daron, and a range of other charities as well as food, clothing, and toiletry drives. Students also participate in social awareness campaigns, such as those organized through WE Schools.

The WE Schools program aims to help students create change by sparking their interest in local and global issues. In 2016-2017, 118 OCDSB schools (78%) participated in WE initiatives/campaigns (e.g., WE Day; WE Scare Hunger; WE Are Rafikis; WE Take Charge). This participation rate represents a small increase from the 111 schools

(74%) that participated in 2015-2016. An online survey demonstrates positive outcomes following participation, as indicated in the table below.

Impact Statement	Percentage of Educators that Agree or Strongly Agree	
	2015-16	2016-17
My students feel a greater connection to their local community.	93%	92%
My students demonstrate more consideration of local and global issues in their everyday life choices.	90%	90%
My students are more likely to stand up for others that are treated unfairly because of their race, religion, sexual orientation, etc.	90%	89%
My students are more capable of developing a plan of action to address social justice issues.	87%	87%

Table 1. Educator agreement with impact statements following participation in WE Schools.

## **Monitoring Progress**

There are numerous activities in support of stewardship at the OCDSB. To effectively assess our progress against the objective outlined in the strategic plan, we turn to the specific strategies put forward.

### **Strategy: Improve access to learning environments and optimize the use of all resources through school accommodation and program review planning.**

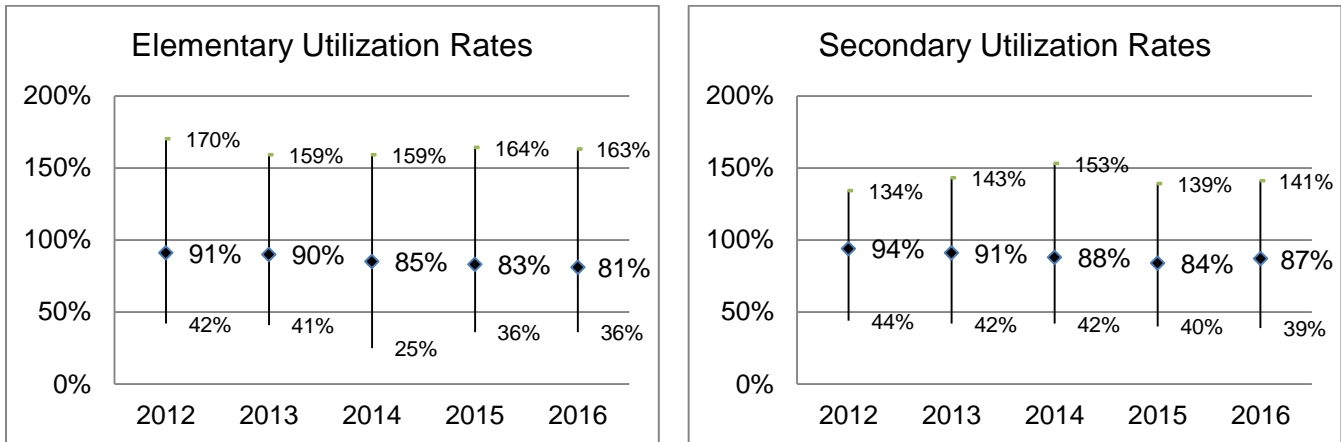
#### *Accommodation reviews;*

In 2016-2017, important work was carried out by reviewing grade configurations, programs, school condition, student enrolment, and excess pupil space in two geographic areas (i.e., the Western Area and the Eastern Secondary Area Accommodation Reviews). Following these reviews, the District began the process of realigning programs/services and optimizing the use of resources through a number of strategic decisions. Although the reviews and final decisions were challenging for families, staff, and the Board, particularly when school closures were involved, the outcomes tied to our commitment to student learning. From a stewardship perspective, the accommodation review process is an important mechanism to manage our resources effectively. Addressing excess pupil space and increasing school utilization rates supports sustainable and vibrant learning environments for students.

#### *School utilization rates;*

Optimizing school utilization rates (i.e., number of students enrolled relative to the school's capacity) supports stewardship by efficiently managing school space, increasing options for depth of programming, and strengthening enrolment which positively affects program streams. While utilization rates are one of many indicators, they do highlight the important work being done through accommodation reviews to realign programs and services, consolidate supports for students, and manage costs

associated with empty space in schools. The figures below show the average utilization rates (unweighted; with each school's utilization rate representing an equal portion in the equation) as well as the range of utilization rates across all schools. Although the average is informative, the wide range of utilization rates demonstrate the need for continued work in this area.



Figures 1 and 2. Five year trend for school utilization rates (elementary and secondary).  
 Note. Diamond represents average utilization rate as of October 31 each year; end markers represent range across all OCDSB schools. Capacity includes relocatable classroom modules and leased space.  
**In considering this data, it is important to note that 2017-2018 will be the first year for which there will be available data on utilization rates following the accommodation reviews.**

**Strategy: Enhance operational practices to effectively and responsibly manage human and financial resources in support of students.**

*Balanced budget;*

In June 2016, the Board approved the District's Multi-Year Financial Recovery Plan to eliminate structural issues that contributed to deficits in past years and to re-establish an accumulated surplus by the end of 2017-2018. The 2017-2018 Budget covers operating expenses and capital investments, balancing revenues and expenses with no reliance on the use of the unappropriated accumulated surplus. The 2017-2018 Budget reflects responsible resource management and allowed the Board to make investments in its strategic priorities and to address systemic budgetary challenges such as the impact of occasional teacher costs on school budgets.

*Dollars spent relative to those allocated in the budget;*

As shown in Figure 5, the overall funds spent typically adhere to those budgeted year over year. Within the individual areas, however, there are other trends present. Continuing Education is the area which shows a historical trend towards budget overruns. In recent years, there have been a number of program changes to Continuing Education course offerings to address this. It is important to note that Continuing Education operates on a different funding and business model, as compared to all other operating areas, and that increases in revenue can often offset the cost. Another area

that has previously had a budget overrun is Amortization costs, however, this has been on target in more recent years. Other expenses (which include Extended Day Care, Child Care Centres, Secondments, Interest Charges and Fifty Five Board Trust) have had the greatest variability, perhaps given the miscellaneous nature of this envelope.

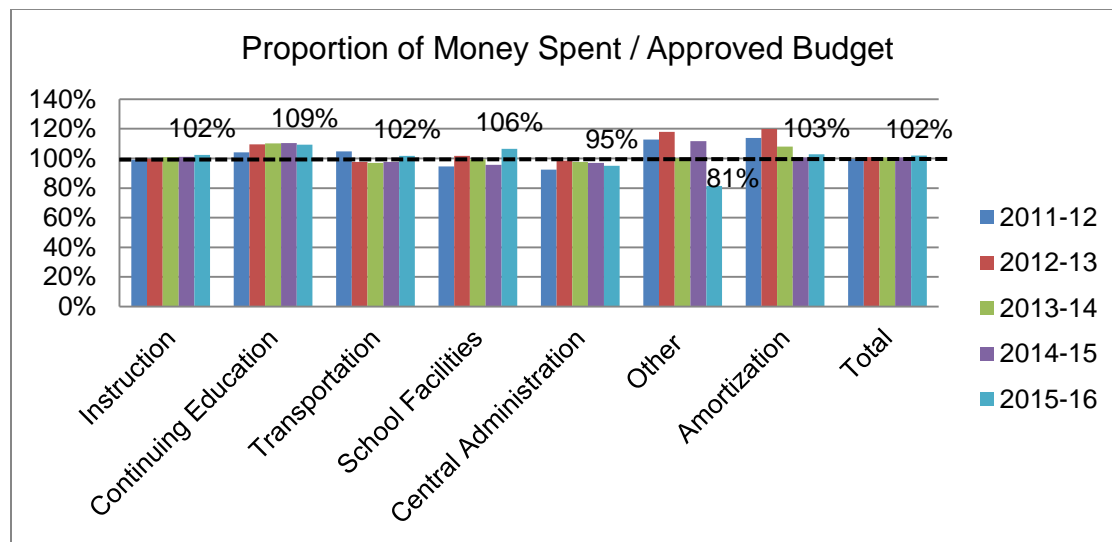


Figure 3. Proportion of money spent / approved budget.  
 Note. Data labels refer to 2015-2016.

*Improving operational efficiencies through the use of technology;*

Improving operating practices is a key strategy for the responsible management of resources. In 2016-2017 the OCDSB laid the foundation for the digital transformation of many operational practices. This includes a new district website, the development of student, staff and parent portals, online services for parents and resources for educators. In the summer 2017, the OCDSB launched an online student registration system for the 2017-2018 school year. The new registration system reduces data entry time for office staff, eliminates transcription errors, and prevents time-consuming follow-up when information is missing from mandatory fields. The ongoing transformation of operational practices will save time, reduce paper, and improve efficiencies. At the same time, we will be better able to engage with clients and staff. These are important steps forward and will have long-term impacts in the area of stewardship.

*Attendance management;*

In the area of human resources, work has been underway to improve practices in attendance management. Recent work has focused on reducing employee absenteeism by relaunching the Attendance Management Program and adding an Attendance Management Coordinator to the Human Resources team. The primary focus of the Attendance Management Program is to create and maintain a healthy workplace, on the basis that addressing workplace wellness and promoting a healthy workplace will support employees' regular attendance. Our work in this area is a good

example of the intersection of our commitment to employee well-being, student learning, and the stewardship of resources.

*Investments in learning and work spaces;*

In the interest of stewardship, investments have been made through the Facilities Renewal Program (FRP), School Condition Improvement (SCI), and Capital Spending. These investments are made to improve physical environments for students and staff, facilitate learning, and ensure healthy and safe work and learning spaces. Figure 6 explains our investment in building renewal and upgrades of schools.

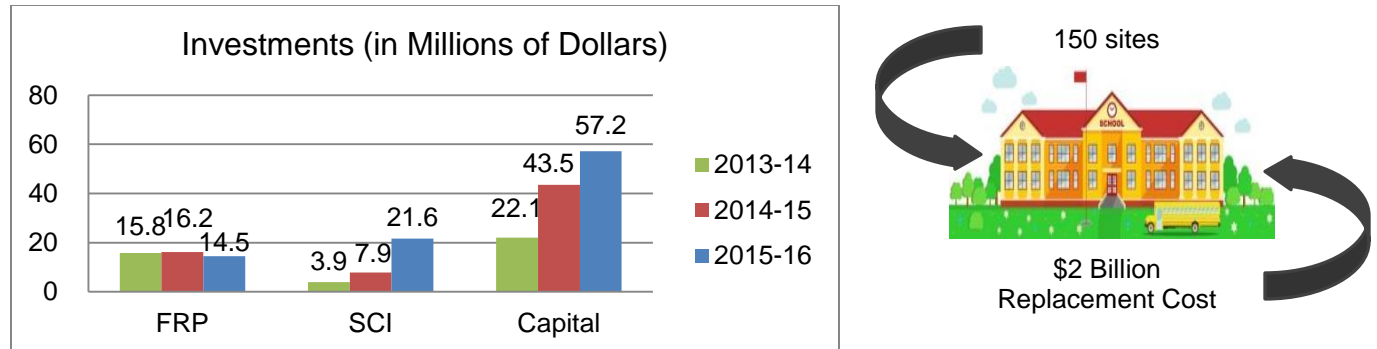


Figure 4. Investments made through Facilities Renewal Program (FRP), School Condition Improvement (SCI), and Capital Spending.

**Strategy: Model sustainability, smart energy use and sound environmental practices for students.**

*Reductions in energy used;*

The OCDSB models environmental sustainability through smart energy use. Between 2008-2009 and 2015-2016, the OCDSB reduced electricity use by 8.1 million kWh (adjusted to account for weather and facility changes<sup>1</sup>). In 2015-2016, OCDSB electricity use was approximately 74.7 million kWh. By comparison, estimated energy use for 2008-2009 was 82.8 million kWh. In that same timeframe, natural gas use dropped by 0.6 million m<sup>3</sup> - usage for 2008-2009 (adjusted) was 12.1 million m<sup>3</sup>, which by 2015-2016 was reduced to 11.5 million m<sup>3</sup>. Reductions in energy used illustrate the intersection between economic and environmental stewardship; the estimated cumulative cost avoidance through reduction in utilities since 2009-2010 is nearly \$4.5 million.

*Green energy;*

The OCDSB is generating electricity on 41 sites through rooftop solar panels. In 2015-2016, these sites created 3.1 million kWh of electrical power, which demonstrates a steady incline in the production of renewable energy, as shown in Figure 7. The solar panels on 13 of these rooftops are owned by the OCDSB and generated over \$117,056

<sup>1</sup> Baseline data is adjusted to account for weather and changes in facilities; however, it does not include potential increases in energy usage based on construction or increased community use of schools.

in revenue through hydro credits. In addition, the 28 solar panels owned by external vendors generated \$248,384 in revenue through the rental of the space. Again, this demonstrates the intersection between economic and environmental stewardship.

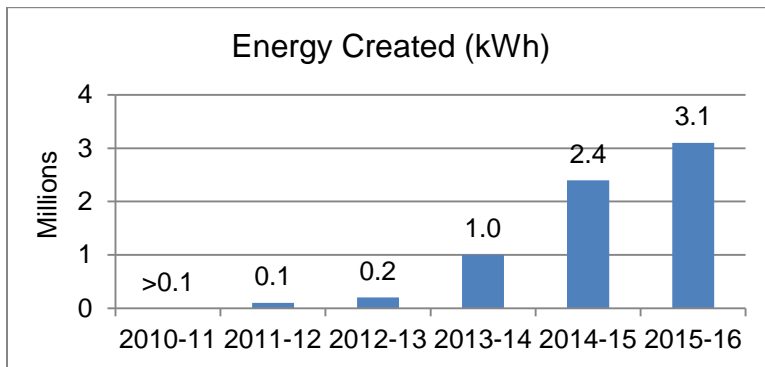


Figure 5. Energy created using solar panels.

In addition to rooftop solar panels, the District is continuing to explore opportunities for solar generation. Five sites are planned for net-metering systems (which allow the OCDSB to consume the power it generates) for 2017-2018. The five sites are expected to generate 792,349 kWh per year, resulting in greenhouse gas reductions of 61 tons per year.

*Carbon emission reduction targets;*

Each year, the OCDSB calculates greenhouse gas emissions and monitors reductions that are achieved. Consistent with other school boards and the City of Ottawa, and as outlined in the OCDSB's five-year Conservation and Demand Management Plan, the OCDSB set a target in 2013 to reduce emissions by 10% by 2023. Early success toward this goal is marked by a reduction of 5.2% by 2015. As a leader in this area, and given the priority of this initiative, the OCDSB has increased its carbon emission reduction target to 15% by 2023.

*Waste diversion;*

In 2016-2017, the OCDSB diverted 702 thousand kilograms of waste to green (compost), blue (glass, metal, plastic) and black (paper, cardboard) bins. Overall, this represents a diversion rate of 27% of waste materials. The proportion of waste diverted has been steadily climbing since 2012-2013 (24%). Although the amount of overall waste had been on the rise from 2012-2015, there was a decrease in the last two years which is encouraging for a new trend.

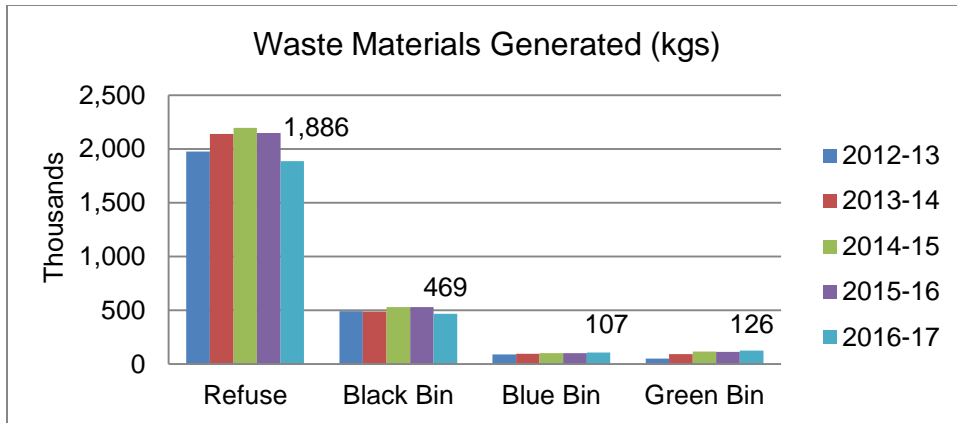


Figure 6. Waste materials generated.  
 Note. Data labels refer to 2016-2017.

*Reduction in plastic bottles through water fill stations;*

All schools and administration buildings are equipped with water bottle filling stations, which have led to a substantial reduction in plastic water bottle use and therefore significant diversion of plastic from landfill/recycling streams. Based on patterns of use, it is estimated that filling stations have provided water for the equivalent of approximately 4.2 million plastic water bottles (as of April 2017).

*Educating students;*

In addition to modelling sustainability, the OCDSB actively educates students on environmental stewardship through a number of programs, partnerships, and events. Although far from an exhaustive list, some of these initiatives are highlighted in the table below.

Initiative	Description	Participation
EcoSchools	Designed to nurture leaders, reduce the ecological impact of schools, and build environmentally responsible school communities. Certification involves reviewing energy and waste data, planning actions, and engaging the school community.	In 2016-2017, 53 OCDSB schools received the EcoSchool certification; an increase from 46 in 2015-2016. One school achieved platinum status for the 2 <sup>nd</sup> year in a row; 14 schools were certified gold, 27 silver, and 11 bronze.
Forest School/ Nearby Nature	Provides elementary students with regular and repeated access to a natural space for child-directed, emergent and inquiry-based learning.	In 2016-17, 14 schools participated. Reported benefits include: imaginative play; engagement; freedom of space; inquiry-based pedagogy; risk-taking; self-regulation; and equal opportunity for students with various backgrounds.
Outdoor Education Centres	Two Outdoor Education Centers (Bill Mason & MacSkimming) offer hands-on outdoor programming that is designed and delivered to complement classroom learning in many sections of the Ontario Curriculum.	During the 2016-2017 school year, 25,570 students (1142 classes) attended the Centres. This represents 93% of elementary and 88% of secondary schools, as well as an increase of about 500 students and 200 classes since last year.



Walking School Bus	Encourages students to walk to school in a group of their peers, under the supervision of adult. Promotes active living as well as strategies for reducing carbon footprint.	There are 10 Walking School Bus Routes at OCDSB, with 5 routes being so large that they require 2 leaders. Registration is currently 153 students; an increase from last year's 123.
Partnership with Growing Up Organic	An organic garden/farm-based education program designed to inspire and educate students about the impacts of their food.	Over 35 workshops were held; 6 gardens were built and 1 garden was expanded.
ONFE Indoor Garden Pilot Project	Vertical hydroponic gardens were installed so students can tend to the plants as they grow and take part in activities related to healthy eating, environmental education, social enterprise and service learning.	Gardens were installed in 2 elementary schools in 2016-2017, with the project expanded to 8 schools for 2017-2018.
Stewardship Days	Students come together to network and learn, and to develop an environmental action plan for the coming year.	In the spring of 2017, a day was held for elementary students (with approx. 30 teachers and over 100 students), and a day for secondary students (with 8 teachers and approximately 25 students).

Table 2. Initiatives for educating students on environmental stewardship.

## **Next Steps**

The OCDSB's stewardship objective aligns with other District priorities, such the characteristics (e.g., globally aware) and skills (e.g., ethical decision-makers) identified in the Exit Outcomes. Stewardship also aligns with local and global priorities, including the United Nations' Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Sustainable Development Goals include: responsible consumption and production; sustainable cities and communities; decent work and economic growth; climate action; and quality education; among other goals. The work being done at the OCDSB makes a valuable contribution to these goals; however there is still work to be done. Once again, this work can be organized according to the three strategies put forward to make progress on stewardship.

### **Strategy: Improve access to learning environments and optimize the use of all resources through school accommodation and program review planning.**

Significant progress in this area was made in 2016-2017 through two accommodation reviews. Coming out of these reviews, next steps will be to complete renovations at the schools affected, develop plans for future use/disposal of closed school sites, and develop a plan to monitor the impact on students making the transition from Rideau to Gloucester High School.

As noted earlier in this report, school utilization rates ranged from 25% to 170% in October 2016. The 2016-2017 accommodation reviews began addressing this imbalance; however additional work is needed and was planned as an accommodation review of the Alta Vista/ Hunt Club area in 2017-2018. This review has been put on hold following direction from the Ministry of Education, and therefore the way in which

we continue to make progress through in this area requires another approach. Progress under this strategy can continue in terms of more specific boundary reviews such as the work planned with respect to the boundary review of the Osgoode/Metcalf area. Progress can also continue through program reviews and by investigating consolidations where appropriate.

**Strategy: Enhance operational practices to effectively and responsibly manage human and financial resources in support of students.**

Improved financial management and the ability to put forward balanced budgets without reliance on surplus, is an important reflection of the District's commitment to stewardship. To continue with enhancement of operational practices, areas have been identified for future work. Progress was made last year through the use of technology, which will be used again this year to improve school and school council financial management practices. Progress was also made through attendance management, and continued support in this area will remain a priority for the year ahead, with a focus on health and safety through training and new procedures.

Further progress through this strategy involves investigating options to improve the efficiency of programs and/or practices. For example, last year, progress was made in optimizing special education staffing and resources by responding to fluctuations in student demographics and changes in the student population. Continued work in this area will further enhance operational practices in the coming year. Future work could also include consideration of the Infant/Toddler/Preschool program and how it might be better utilized. Other work will include additional supports for school council financial management, including the implementation of School Cash online, additions to the School Council Funds Resource Guide, and further clarification of best practices in managing the loss of funds.

Another area for future progress under stewardship is the responsible management of human resources through succession planning. Preparing staff for leadership roles is important work for the long-term success of the organization. To achieve this, a key piece of work this year will be the development of a plan to support principals and vice principals as they work toward further leadership responsibilities.

**Strategy: Model sustainability, smart energy use and sound environmental practices for students.**

The OCDSB has been a leader in this domain, with recognition locally and provincially. One example of this leadership is the recent increase in the target the OCDSB has set for carbon emission reductions. Future work will involve the development of strategies and establishment of resources that are required to meet this target.

Increased participation in EcoSchools, Walking School Bus, and Forest School/Nearby Nature acknowledge the great work happening in this area. Moving forward this year, one goal is continue increasing participation in these initiatives. All schools have been

asked to identify an Environmental Lead for their school (a voluntary role) as a strategy to leverage the communication about all things sustainability and provide support in making progress on this objective.

### **Guiding Questions**

The following questions are provided to support the discussion of this item by the Committee:

- Have the strategies put forward in the 2015-2019 strategic plan been successful thus far in moving us forward on the stewardship objective? How do we know?
- Where do we have room for growth?
- What are the resource demands for continued progress?
- Are there specific investments that could support further progress in these areas?

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