



## Committee of the Whole Meeting

**Date:** Monday, April 3, 2023

**Time:** 6:00 p.m.

*\* Committee of the Whole In Camera, if necessary, will precede or follow the Board Meeting, as appropriate.*

**Location:** 1st floor Board Room, Catholic Education Centre, 35 Weber Street, Kitchener

**Attendees:**

**Board of Trustees:**

Wendy Ashby, Linda Cuff, Kathy Doherty-Masters (Vice-chair), Sally Fuentes, David Guerin, Renee Kraft, Marisa Phillips, Robert Sikora, Tracey Weiler (Chair)

**Student Representatives:**

Chloe Armstrong, Anika Fejerpataky

**Senior Administration:**

Tyrone Dowling, Gerald Foran, Shesh Maharaj, Paul Mendonca, Judy Merkel, Kerry Pomfret, Jennifer Ritsma, Annalisa Varano

**Special Resource:**

**Recording Secretary:**

Alice Figueiredo, Executive Administrative Assistant

ITEM	Who	Agenda Section	Method & Outcome
1. Call to Order	Board Chair		
1.1 Opening Prayer & Memorials	Board of Trustees	--	--
1.2 Territorial Acknowledgement I (we) would like to begin by acknowledging that the land on which we gather today is the land traditionally used by the Haudenosaunee, Anishinaabe and Neutral People. I (we) also acknowledge the enduring presence and deep traditional knowledge, laws and philosophies of the Indigenous People with whom we share this land today.	Board Chair	--	--
1.3 Approval of Agenda	Board of Trustees		Approval
1.4 Declaration of Pecuniary Interest 1.4.1 From the current meeting 1.4.2 From a previous public or in-camera meeting	Individual Trustees		
1.5 Items for Action: NA			
<b>2. Consent Agenda: Director of Education</b>			

<b>ITEM</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>Agenda Section</b>	<b>Method &amp; Outcome</b>
<b>(e.g.: operational matters from the Ministry of Education that the Board is required to do; update on the system)</b>			
<b>3. Consent Agenda: Board (Minutes of meetings)</b>			
3.1 Approval of Minutes of Regular and Special Meetings 3.1.1 COW Minutes of March 6, 2023 3.2 Audit Committee Minutes- January 31, 2023	Board of Trustees Board of Trustees	pp. 4-6 pp. 7-8	Approval Information
<b>4. Delegations</b>			
<b>5. Advice from the CEO</b>			
5.1 School Travel Planner Update 5.2 Well-Being Update – Safe Schools 5.3 Interim Financial Report - #2 of 3 5.4 Response to Provincial Review of Incident at John Sweeney CES Recommendations Update	S. Maharaj J. Merkel S. Maharaj T. Dowling	pp 9-12 pp. 13-35 pp. 36-40 pp. 41-50	Information Information Information Information
<b>6. Ownership Linkage (Communication with the External Environment related to Board's Annual Agenda; ownership communication)</b>			
6.1 Linkages Activity 6.2 Pastoral Care Activity	Trustees Trustees	-- --	Discussion Discussion
<b>7. Reports from Board Committees/Task Forces</b>			
<b>8. Board Education (at the request of the Board)</b>			
8.1 OCSTA/CCSTA Communications <a href="#">OCSTA Communications Link</a> 8.2 OCSTA Modules OCSTA Modules - <a href="https://www.ocsta.on.ca/trustee-modules-2/">https://www.ocsta.on.ca/trustee-modules-2/</a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Human Resources</li> <li>• What Makes a Great Board Chair?</li> <li>• First Nation Trustees</li> <li>• Code of Conduct</li> </ul>	Chair  Trustees	Link  pp.51-55 pp. 56-63 pp. 64-76 pp. 77-87	Information  Discussion
<b>9. Policy Discussion (Based on Annual Plan of Board Work)</b>			
<b>10. Assurance of Successful Board Performance (monitoring)</b>			
<b>11. Assurance of Successful Director of Education Performance (monitoring)</b>			
<b>12. Potential Agenda Items/Shared Concerns/Report on Trustee Inquiries</b>			
<b>13. Announcements</b>			

ITEM	Who	Agenda Section	Method & Outcome
<b>13.1 Upcoming Meetings/Events</b> (all scheduled for the Catholic Education Centre unless otherwise indicated): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• April 15: Governance Training (AM)</li> <li>• April 15: Mayor’s Dinner</li> <li>• April 17: Equity Training</li> <li>• April 24: Board of Trustee’ Meeting</li> <li>• April 27- 29: OCSTA AGM</li> <li>• May 1: Committee of the Whole</li> <li>• May 1-5: Catholic Education Week</li> <li>• May 18: Staff Recognition Celebration</li> <li>• May 29: Board of Trustees’ Meeting</li> </ul>	Chair	--	Information
<b>14. Items for the Next Meeting Agenda</b>			
Board of Trustees Meeting: (April 24, 2023) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legal Responsibilities – Monitoring Report IV – 006</li> <li>• EDC Information</li> <li>• Monitoring Report IV008 "Financial Conditions"</li> <li>• Communication &amp; Support to Board – Monitoring Report IV-012</li> <li>• Update on Budget Preparation</li> <li>• Interim Financial Report #2</li> <li>• Extended Day Update</li> <li>• Board Policy II 015 Ownership Linkage (Chair)</li> </ul>	Trustees Chair	--	Information
<b>15. Adjournment/ Confirm decisions made tonight</b>	Director of Education		
15.1 Confirm Decisions	Recording Secretary	--	Information
<b>16. Closing Prayer</b>			
<b>17. Motion to Adjourn</b>	Board of Trustees	Motion	Approval

CLOSING PRAYER

O Risen Lord, you have entrusted us with the responsibility to help form a new generation of disciples and apostles through the gift of our Catholic schools.

As disciples of Christ, may we educate and nurture hope in all learners to realize their full potential to transform God’s world.

May our Catholic schools truly be at the heart of the community, fostering success for each by providing a place for all.

May we and all whom we lead be discerning believers formed in the Catholic faith community; effective communicators; reflective and creative thinkers; self-directed, responsible, life-long learners; collaborative contributors; caring family members; and responsible citizens.

Grant us the wisdom of your Spirit so that we might always be faithful to our responsibilities. We make this prayer through Christ our Lord.

Amen

Rev. Charlie Fedy, CR and the Board of Trustees, 2010



## **Committee of the Whole Meeting**

A public meeting of the Committee of the Whole was held Monday, March 6, 2023, 1st floor Board Room, Catholic Education Centre, 35 Weber Street, Kitchener.

### Trustees Present:

Wendy Ashby, Linda Cuff, \*Kathy Doherty-Masters, Sally Fuentes, David Guerin, Renee Kraft, Marisa Phillips, Robert Sikora, Tracey Weiler (Chair)  
\*via Teams

### Student Trustees Present:

Chloe Armstrong, Anika Fejerpataky

### Administrative Officials Present:

Tyrone Dowling, Gerald Foran, Shesh Maharaj, Paul Mendonca, Judy Merkel, Kerry Pomfret, Jennifer Ritsma, Annalisa Varano

### Special Resources For The Meeting:

### Regrets:

### Absent:

### Recorder:

Alice Figueiredo, Executive Administrative Assistant

**NOTE ON VOTING:** Under Board by-law 5.7 all Board decisions made by consensus are deemed the equivalent of a unanimous vote. A consensus decision is therefore deemed to be a vote of 9-0. Under Board by-law 5.11 every Trustee "shall vote on all questions on which the Trustee is entitled to vote" and abstentions are not permitted.

## **1. Call to Order:**

The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:18 p.m.

### **1.1 Opening Prayer & Memorials**

Prayer was deferred.

### **1.2 Territorial Acknowledgement**

Territorial Acknowledgement declared by Chair Weiler.

### **1.3 Approval of Agenda**

Chair Weiler noted amendments to the agenda:

- 3.2 for information not approval
- 3.1.1 add February.

Chair Weiler requested a mover and seconder.

**2023-08 -- It was moved by Trustee Sikora and seconded by Trustee Phillips:  
THAT the agenda for Monday, March 6, 2023, be now approved, as amended.  
--- Carried by consensus.**

#### **1.4 Declaration of Pecuniary Interest**

1.4.1 From the current meeting

1.4.2 From a previous public or in-camera meeting – NIL

### **2 Consent Agenda: Director of Education (e.g., day-to-day operational matters from the Ministry of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion)**

### **3 Consent Agenda: Board of Trustees (Minutes of meetings)**

#### **3.1 Approval of Minutes of Regular and Special Meetings**

3.1 Approval of Minutes of Regular and Special Meetings

3.1.1 COW Minutes of 6, 2023

3.2 CPIC Minutes – Dec 12, 2022

Chair Weiler requested a mover and seconder.

**2023-09 -- It was moved by Trustee Doherty-Masters and seconded by Trustee Ashby:**

**THAT the Consent Agenda of Board of Trustees and the recommendations contained therein be now approved.**

**--- Carried by consensus.**

### **4 Delegations**

### **5 Advice From the CEO**

#### **5.1 Adult Education Update**

Superintendent Varano introduced the Adult Education Update and presenters Principal Lisa Mackay and Vice-principals, James Rodrigue and Heather Papp. Presentation included information on programs, data, points of interest, renovations and next steps. Trustees asked clarifying questions and provided feedback.

#### **5.2 Trustee Expense Audit Report**

Superintendent Maharaj introduced the Trustee Expense Audit Report and presenter Shane Durham, Internal Audit Officer. Mr. Durham provided an in-depth report.

#### **5.3 Update on Student Equity Engagement Council**

Lynn Garrioch, Senior Manager of Equity Services provided Trustees with an update on Student Equity Engagement Council. Trustee asked clarifying questions and provided feedback.

#### **5.4 Parent Engagement Update**

Superintendent Merkel provided Trustees with a Parent Engagement update. Chair Weiler provided feedback.

### **6. Ownership Linkage (Communication with the External Environment)**

#### **6.1 Linkages Activity:**

- Discussed coordination Graduation dates, Alice to send sign-up once dates all confirmed.
- Working on letter to invite CPIC, Audit and SEAC to upcoming Committee of the Whole.
- Discussed upcoming events.
- Pending items include setting up social event with WRDSB Trustees.

#### **6.2 Pastoral Care Activity:**

- Established prayer scheduled for 3 months.
- Spiritual retreat scheduled April 1 only as April 15<sup>th</sup> has been announced for the mayor's dinner. In contact with Richard Olson in preparation.

### **7. Reports From Board Committees/Task Forces**

### **8. Board Education (at the request of the Board)**

#### **8.1 OCSTA Modules**

Trustees discussed OCSTA Modules.

**9. Policy Discussion**

**10. Assurance of Successful Board Performance**

**11. Assurance of Successful Director of Education Performance**

**12. Potential Agenda Items**

**13. Announcements (all scheduled for the Catholic Education Centre unless otherwise indicated)**

**13.1 Upcoming Meetings/Events**

Trustees discussed upcoming events.

**14. Items for the Next Meeting Agenda/Pending Items**

Trustees discussed upcoming items on agenda.

**15. Adjournment – Confirm decisions made tonight. Closing Prayer**

**15.1 Confirm Decisions**

The Recording Secretary confirmed the meeting decisions.

**16. Closing Prayer**

**17. Motion to Adjourn**

**2023--10 It was moved by Trustee Phillips and seconded by Trustee Fuentes:**

**THAT the meeting be now adjourned. The meeting was adjourned by consensus at 9:00 p.m.**

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Chair of the Board

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Secretary



## Audit Committee Open Meeting

**Date:** January 31, 2023  
**Time:** 6:00 p.m.  
**Location:** CEC 201 - St Francis - (Previous 227 Boardroom)  
**Next Meeting:** March 22, 2023

**Attendees:**

**Committee Members:**  
Marisa Phillips, Robert Sikora

**Community Members:**  
Jennifer Gruber, Zeynep Danis

**Administrative Officials:**  
Tyrone Dowling, Shesh Maharaj, Laura Isaac, Shane Durham

**Guests:**  
Andrea Eltherington (RIAM)

**Regrets:**  
David Guerin

### 1. Welcome and Opening Prayer

2. Approval of Agenda  
*Motion: Zeynep Danis*  
*Seconded: Robert Sikora*  
**Carried by consensus**

3. Declared Pecuniary Interest  
*None*

4. Approval of the Minutes  
• Meeting of November 10, 2022  
*Motion: Zeynep Danis*  
*Seconded: Robert Sikora*  
**Carried by consensus**

### 5. Discussion Items

#### 5.1 Audit Committee Administration

- Introductions
  - The Audit Committee members introduced themselves
- Future Meeting Dates
  - Shane discussed the need to send a new Doodle Poll to determine 2 new dates

#### 5.2 Q1 Dashboard Report

- Laura presented the Q1 Dashboard as at November 30, 2022 reflecting Revised Estimates.

Motion: *That the Q1 Quarterly dashboard report for the period ended November 30, 2022 be sent to the Board of Trustees for approval, in the consent agenda.*

*Motion: Marisa Philips*

*Seconded: Zeynep Danis*

*Carried by consensus*

### 5.3 Regional Internal Audit Update

- January status update
  - RIAT starting Entity Level Audit report
- Regional Internal Audit Charter
  - RIAT has provided the Terms of Reference for the upcoming audit
    - Andrea presented the revised Internal Audit Charter changes which will be signed by the Chair and Director

### 5.4 Audit Committee Closed Session

*Motion: That the Audit Committee move into Closed Audit Committee agenda at 6:48pm*

*Motion: Robert Sikora*

*Seconded: Zeynep Danis*

***Carried by consensus***

## 6 Pending Items

### 7 Adjournment at 8:12pm

*Motion: Zeynep Danis*

*Seconded: Marisa Philips*

***Carried by consensus***

*Jennifer Gruber*



**Date:** April 3, 2023  
**To:** Board of Trustees  
**From:** Director of Education  
**Subject:** School Travel Planning – Annual Report

**Type of Report:**

- Decision-Making
- Monitoring
- Incidental Information concerning day-to-day operations

**Type of Information:**

- Information for Board of Trustees Decision-Making
- Monitoring Information of Board Policy **XX XXX**
- Information only of day-to-day operational matters delegated to the CEO

**Origin: (cite Education Act and/or Board Policy or other legislation)**

Annually, a report is provided to Trustees on the activities of the school travel planning team at Student Transportation Services of Waterloo Region. School Travel Planning (STP) Supervisor Leslie Maxwell will provide a complete STP overview and listing of her team’s activities at the April 3, 2023 meeting.

**Policy Statement and/or Education Act/other Legislation citation:**

[WCDSB Active Travel Charter](#)

**Alignment to the MYSP:**

**Awaken to Belong**

- Every student can see themselves reflected in their learning.
- Staff experiences a positive, healthy, and inclusive workplace.
- Families are aware of and/or use the available resources to assist in navigation of the school system.

**Ignite to Believe**

- Every student experiences the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations (OCSGEs) and the WCDSB pastoral plan within their learning environments.
- Staff are welcomed and invited to continue to be a partner in their adult faith formation journey.
- The relationship between home, parish and school is strengthened.

**Strengthen to Become**

- Every student reaches their full potential.
- Staff see their impact on student achievement.
- Families engaged as active partners in our students' Catholic education journey.



## Background/Comments:

We are very pleased to report that throughout the 2021-22 school year, Student Transportation Services of Waterloo Region (STSWR) was able to provide School Travel Planning (STP) assessments and recommendations for traffic and active transportation interventions at **15 new-to-STP schools** where school administrators, city leaders, and our funding partners alerted us to problems. That was no small feat as we **continued working with 49 schools** who joined us before September 2021 and we continued delivering a fulsome list of programs, too.

The year kicked off with **Finding Common Ground – a forum** that brought together municipal and school board decision makers to learn more about active school travel (AST) and STP and where we shared a **video of support** for STP by various community members and parents who have witnessed the benefits of this work.

**Four (4) new schools reached Champion status** by working with School Travel Planning for at least two (2) years and implementing a comprehensive slate of interventions, and many of our schools are on track to reach that goal with **balanced action plans**, too. We **published traffic videos** and other materials to help parents make the connection between their choices and dangers in school zones. We also **launched Enhanced School Zones** in the City of Cambridge with a fantastic coterminous event that saw elected officials comingling with students for the first time since the pandemic arrived. The **Community Road Model project at four (4) schools** helped urge families to choose active travel first and drive carefully and courteously near children, too.

In addition, we put **one (1) Walking School Bus** on the sidewalks (with the support of Wilfrid Laurier students) for four (4) months to help a large group of new Canadian students become acclimated to their new surroundings. This format of Walking School Bus proved to be a good ‘vehicle’ for knowledge transfer and a model that we will be happy to support as needed in the future. We also delivered **Sidewalk Smarts pedestrian skills education to four (4) schools** and we worked with students at Courtland Public School to examine the needs and uses and to rethink the school parking lot to accommodate all those needs in **one (1) design thinking project**. Engineers will be incorporating some of the elements of the students designs when they rebuild the parking lot in summer, 2023.

We created **11 additional Drive-to-5 maps** for a total of 100 maps that now help people find safe and legal parking a distance away from schools. Some schools took the project the full distance, with **one (1) school installing paw prints on sidewalks** to connect the “park and walk” locations with the school.

Finally, we are pleased to share that the 2021-22 school year ended with **a celebration event sharing the certification status of 64 schools** in June. It was the perfect way to end the school year and to launch **two (2) permanent STP Facilitator positions**, leaving us well positioned to focus on enhancing our data collection and refining our interventions in the 2022-23 school year.



The full annual report for STP programs offered by Student Transportation Services of Waterloo Region can be found here:

<https://www.stswr.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021-22-STSWR-STP-Annual-Report.pdf>

**Recommendation:**

This report is provided as information only.

**Prepared/Reviewed By:** Tyrone Dowling  
Director of Education

Leslie Maxwell  
School Travel Planning Supervisor, STSWR

Shesh Maharaj  
Executive Superintendent of Corporate Services

\*4.2 DIRECTOR Monitoring Reports: Where the Board receives from the CEO a monitoring report that flows from a responsibility delegated to the Director under Board Policy – except where approval is required by the Board on a matter delegated by policy to the Board – the minutes of the Meeting at which the Report is received shall expressly provide that the Board has received and approved of the Report as an action consistent with the authority delegated to the CEO, subject in all instances to what otherwise actually occurred.







**Date:** March 27, 2023  
**To:** Board of Trustees  
**From:** Director of Education  
**Subject:** Well-being Update - Safe Schools

**Type of Report:**  Decision-Making  
 Monitoring  
 Incidental Information concerning day-to-day operations

**Type of Information:**  Information for Board of Trustees Decision-Making  
 Monitoring Information of Board Policy **XX XXX**  
 Information only of day-to-day operational matters delegated to the

CEO

**Origin: (cite Education Act and/or Board Policy or other legislation)**

- Education Act: 306-311; Regulations: 37/01 (2), 106/01
- Ministry Policy & Program Memoranda 119, 120, 128,130, 141, 142, 144, 145,
- Safe Schools Act (2000) (2009): 309-312
- Bill 13, Accepting Schools Act (2012)
- Bill 157, Keeping Our Kids Safe at School Act (Feb.1, 2010)
- Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations
- 1001: Ends

**Policy Statement and/or Education Act/other Legislation citation:**

- [Ontario's Well-Being Strategy](#)

**Alignment to the MYSP:**

**Awaken to Belong**

- Every student can see themselves reflected in their learning.
- Staff experiences a positive, healthy, and inclusive workplace.
- Are aware of and/or use the available resources to assist in navigation of the school system.



**☒ Ignite to Believe**

- Every student experience the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations (OCSGEs) and the WCDSB pastoral plan within their learning environments.
- Staff are welcomed and invited to continue to be a partner in their adult faith formation journey.
- The relationship between home, parish and school is strengthened.

**☒ Strengthen to Become**

- Every student reaches their full potential.
- Staff see their impact on student achievement.
- Are engaged as active partners in our students' Catholic education journey.

**Background/Comments:**

Safe, caring, and inclusive school environments are foundational to student well-being, sense of safety and a basic condition necessary to foster and sustain the current high levels of student achievement in our WCDSB schools. The Ministry of Education made a commitment to every student in the province of Ontario. Regardless of 'ancestry, culture, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, language, physical and intellectual ability, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, or other factors' (p. 8), all students should be able to access the curriculum, feel safe at school, and have a sense of belonging and our belief is that safe and caring communities underpin every aspect of the teaching-learning environment, school and broader school community.

Over the 2022/23 school year the WCDSB has been continually focused on student well-being and the strong measures that we could establish to support safe, caring, and inclusive environments. We acknowledge that the pandemic has adversely impacted the overall wellbeing of our students and with intentionality our goal continues to be one focused on ensuring we are responsive to student needs and the creation of safe and nurturing environments. Ensuring that the voice of stakeholders is honoured in our work, the MDI tool was administered in the 2021/22 school year along with the parent safe school's climate survey. With specific reference to bullying, this end data collection continues to inform our work focused on student well-being.

With the strong advocacy and support of our Mental Health Lead our administrators have been given greater access to School Mental Health Ontario (SMHO) resources as well as training to support trauma informed approaches to responsive pedagogy. The portfolio of SMHO is instrumental in providing mental health and wellness resources to assist advocacy with respect to mental health and well-being within schools. Newly hired Administrators are also being provided opportunity to learn about threat risk assessment strategies in response to safe schools' incidents. All Administrators learned about the Board's newly developed critical incident response framework, which incorporates trauma informed practices in the context of crisis response.



## Strategic Direction: Awaken to Belong

The board recognizes that an inclusive, restorative, respectful and Christ-centered environment where all members of the school community feel safe, welcomed, and accepted is most conducive to learning. Positive behavior is promoted through the Catholic Values lens as students are provided many opportunities to correct behaviors, seek reconciliation and be given opportunities to redeem themselves. Progressive discipline is an entire school approach that requires all stakeholders to guide, support and model proper behavior for the students. Suspensions and expulsions are part of the progressive discipline continuum with an increased level of supports, interventions, and strategies.

The measurable goal and indicator for Safe Schools at WCDSB are the reduction in the number of Suspensions and Expulsions issued to students through effective utilization of restorative justice, progressive discipline, and careful consideration of mitigating and other factors. Additionally, data that pertains to student, staff, and parent perceptions of school climate and bullying are a guidepost to planning and responsive strategies at the board and school level. Ultimately, the Superintendent of Education for Safe Schools is responsible for ensuring the strategies are understood and fully utilized in schools. Principals are responsible for maintaining order and proper discipline in their schools. Safe School Teams in each school collaborate to develop a Safe School Plan that specifically addresses Bullying Intervention and Prevention, Progressive Discipline, Promoting a Positive School Climate, Restorative Justice and Emergency Response Procedures in accordance with Ministry and Board policies and procedures.

From a system level perspective, the analysis of data permits measurement of progress in areas of concern, identification of needs or issues, and assists with monitoring, reviewing, and evaluating the effectiveness of board policies, procedures, and practices.

### **School Climate and MDI Data: Bullying**

The Waterloo Catholic District School Board (WCDSB) conducts a variety of school climate surveys to collect information from students, staff, and parent/guardians. While the Ministry of Education requires all school districts to conduct these surveys (Education Act s.169.1(1)(a), (a.1), (a.2) and PPM 145), we are committed to providing a safe, caring, and inclusive place for everyone in our schools. The purpose of the school climate surveys is to assess the perceptions of safety (e.g., from students, staff, and parent/guardians), make informed planning decisions about programs to help prevent bullying and promote safe and inclusive schools, determine the effectiveness of programs on an ongoing basis, and build and sustain a positive school climate. The last collection for all school climate surveys was in March 2022.

#### **For Parents/Guardians and School Staff:**

We administer the Ministry created school climate surveys for Parents/Guardians and School Staff. For more information about the Ministry created surveys, please visit <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/safeschools/climate.html> . This school climate survey was administered in 2019 and again in 2022.



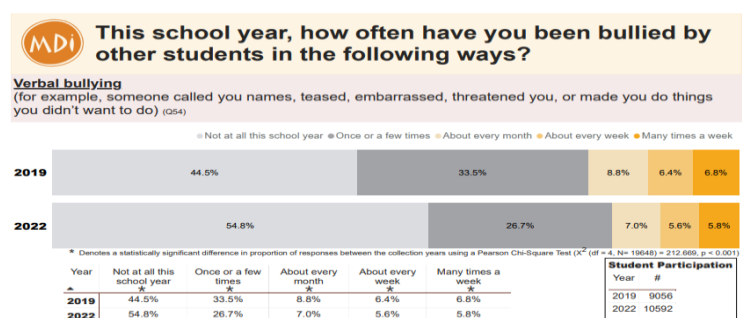
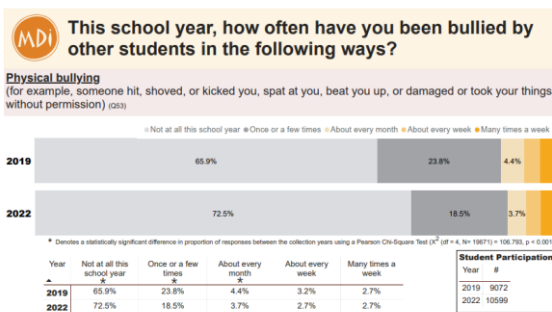
**For Students:**

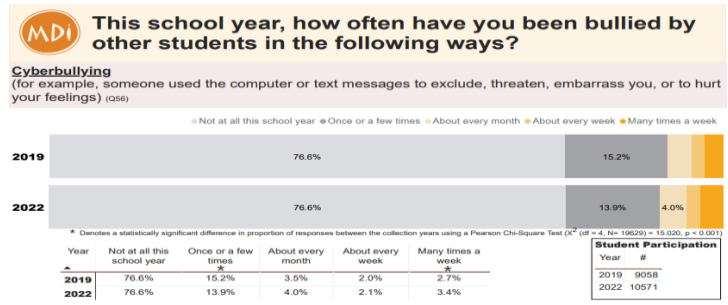
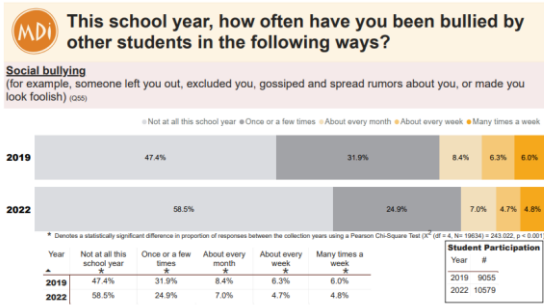
We administer the Middle Years Development Instrument (MDI) for students, from Grade 4 through grade 12. The MDI is an anonymous and voluntary online survey and will take place during class time on a board provided device with their classroom teacher. The MDI survey asks students about their thoughts, feelings, and experiences in school and in the community related to five areas of development that are strongly linked to well-being, health, and academic achievement: Physical Health & Well-Being, Connectedness, Social & Emotional Development, School Experiences, and Use of After-School Time. The MDI was developed by researchers at the Human Early Learning Partnership (HELP) at the University of British Columbia (UBC), and the administration of the MDI will be facilitated by the WCDSB Research Department. This school climate survey was administered in 2019 and again in 2022.

Any student may choose not to participate, to stop participating, or to skip a question at any time. Additionally, parents/guardians of students under 18 years of age can ask that their child be exempt from participating in the MDI survey. As part of our communication campaign, information has been distributed electronically by school Newswire, on our website, and on social media. There is an opportunity for parent/guardians to exempt their child from participating, this process is explained on the Student School Climate webpage: <https://www.wcdsb.ca/student-school-climate/>

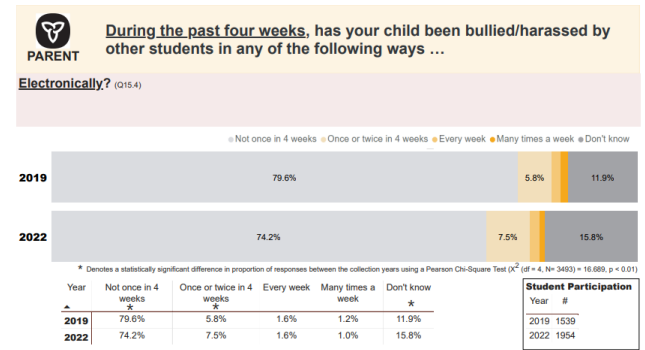
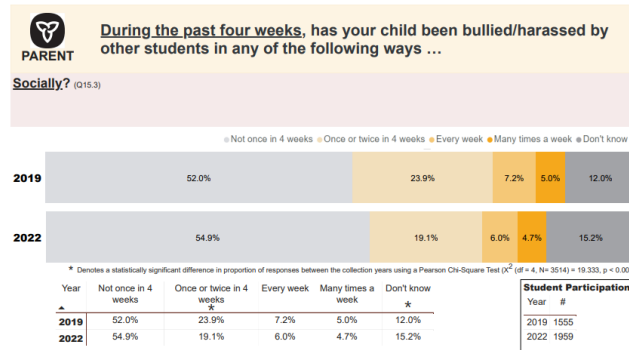
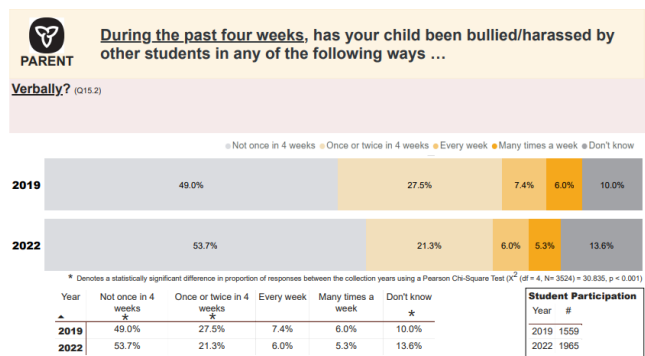
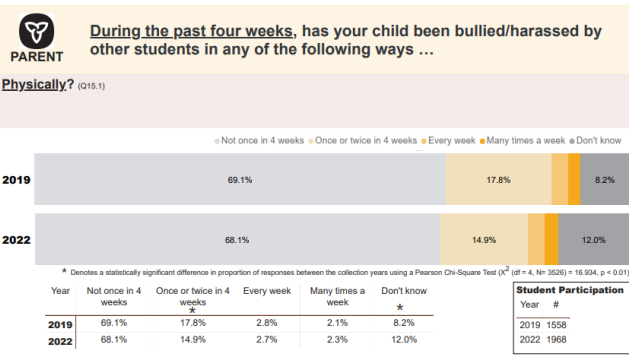
As it pertains to bullying, students from grade 4-12 were asked specific questions regarding how often in this school year they have been bullied either physically, verbally, socially or through cyber-bullying. Compared to data from 2019 most types of incidents and frequency are trending in positive directions. The most significant difference in student perspective is the reduction in verbal and social bullying. Noted however is the increase in cyberbullying that is reported in this data.

Based on the graphs below and considering incidents of “not once this year or few times” comparing 2019-2022, 1.4% more students reported that there were none or fewer incidents of physical bullying, 4.5% more students reported none or few verbal bullying incidents, 5.2% of students reported none or few incidents of social bullying and 1.4% fewer students reported that cyber bullying was not happening this year or a few times.





In 2022, 4.5% fewer parents (than in 2019) reported that physical bullying was not experienced once in a four-week period or even a few times. Additionally similar data is reported in that 2% reported that verbal bullying was not experienced once in a four-week period or even a few times. 2.5 % fewer parents also concede that social bullying may not have been absent over a four-week period or a few times a week and similarly 4.3% fewer parents believe that cyber-bullying may not have been absent in a four-week period of a few times during that period.



Finally, staff of the WCDSB also had the opportunity to respond to the Ministry survey. For all types of bullying, there is a significant increase in the proportion of staff who participated in the survey in 2022 and who selected “Don’t know” compared to the 2019 collection year. Filtering out the “Don’t know” selection reveals that the perception of frequency of bullying has not changed between collection years.





## Key Suspension/Expulsion Trends Summary

*NOTE: To compare suspension and/or expulsion rates from the 2022-2023 school year to previous school years, many of the visualizations/data tables only considers the suspensions and/or expulsion for the first 6 months of school year (up to and including February). All data is taken from our Student Information System, facilitated by the IT department. Analysis is completed by Research & Data Services Team.*

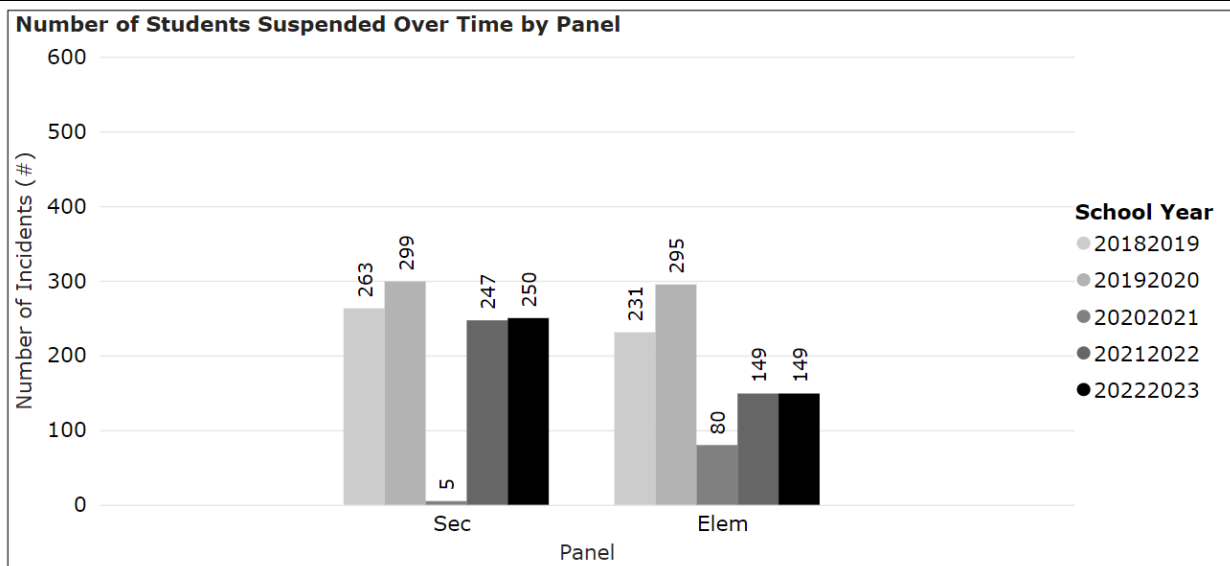
When monitoring how our programs are working in schools to reduce suspensions and expulsions, we use the following indicators to measure if we are making an impact.

### Total Number of Students

Controlling for the time range (up to and including February of each school year) for suspension and WCDSB enrollment, we are noticing that total **number of students** who are suspended each year has decreased in both panels over the past 4 years:

- In the Elementary panel, 48% fewer students were suspended this school year when compared to four years ago (i.e., 178 students were suspended in 2022-2023 compared to 345 in 2019-2020) (see Figure 1).
- In the Secondary panel, 18% fewer students were suspended this school year when compared to four years ago (i.e., 296 students were suspended in 2022-2023 compared to 360 in 2019-2020) (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1: Total number of unique students suspended by panel over the past 5 years.**



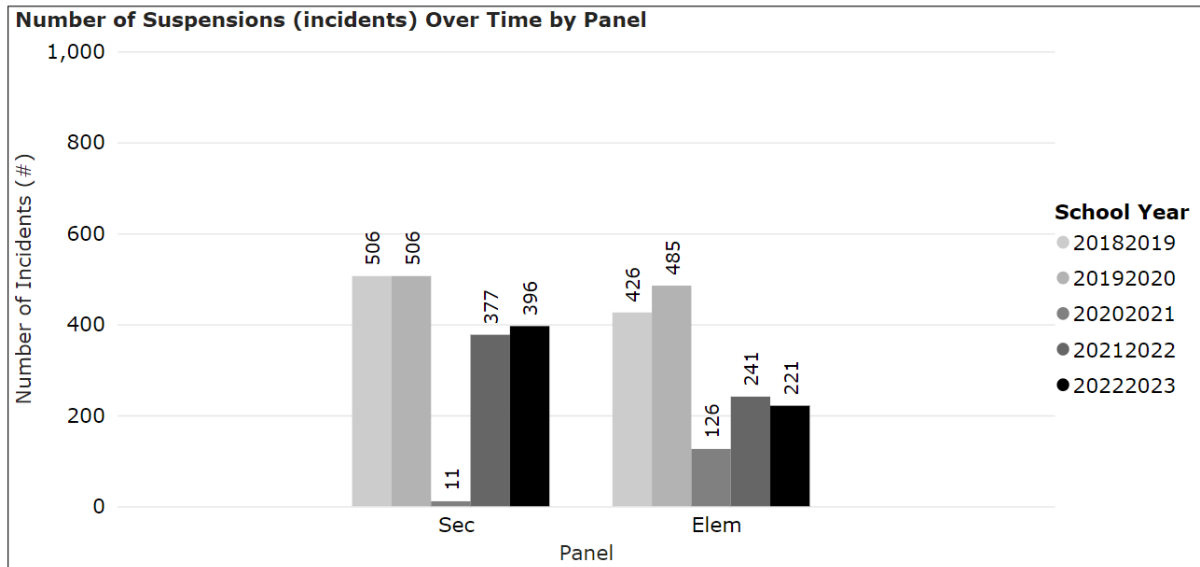
### Total Number of Suspensions

Controlling for the time range (up to and including February of each school year) for suspension and WCDSB enrollment, we are noticing that the **number of issued suspensions** (i.e., if a student was suspended twice, they would be counted twice in this data) is also changing in a positive direction when we compare the 2022-2023 rates to previous school years:



- In the Elementary panel, 54% fewer suspensions were issued this school year when compared to four years ago (i.e., 221 students were suspended in 2022-2023 compared to 485 in 2019-2020) (see Figure 1).
- In the Secondary panel, 22% fewer suspensions were issued this school year when compared to four years ago (i.e., 396 students were suspended in 2022-2023 compared to 506 in 2019-2020) (see Figure 1).

**Figure 2: Total number of suspensions (incidents) issued by panel over the past 5 years.**



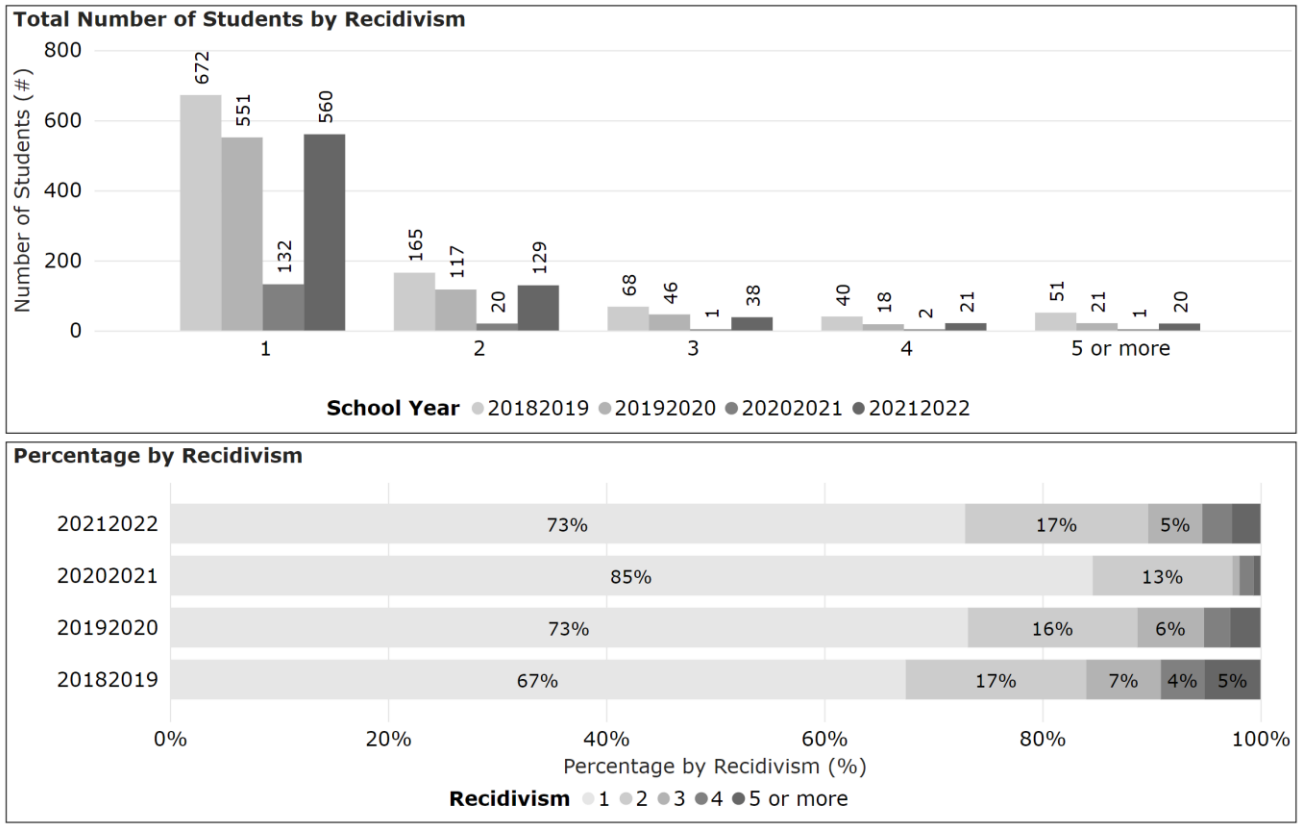
### Recidivism

When students are suspended multiple times within a school year, we use recidivism data (i.e., the number of times that a student has been suspended within an entire school year) to monitor. Including the last four complete school years (2018-2019, 2019-2020, 2020-2021, 2021-2022), we are noticing that proportionally fewer students in the 2021-2022 school year were suspended multiple times (i.e., 2, 3, 4 and/or 5 or more) compared to the 2018-2019 school year (See Figure 3).

- For students suspended only once within a school year, we see 6% more students being suspended only once (i.e., 6% fewer students being suspended multiple times within a school year) in 2021-2022 compared to 2018-2019.

**Figure 3: Total number of suspensions (incidents) issued for each student since the 2018-2019 school year.**





**Expulsions**

As there are fewer than 10 board issued expulsions within the last 5 years, this data is suppressed to ensure that the identities of specific individuals not be revealed or inferred.

The suspension data is one that continues to leverage much discussion on how we can continue to support and wrap all resources available to creating safe, caring, and inclusive environments for all students and staff. The District Safe and Accepting Schools Committee (DSASC) has updated the policy related to PPM 144 Bullying Prevention and Intervention as well as procedures that have an impact on safety in schools. Additionally, with an ongoing lens to equity of outcome for all students and with a commitment to challenging our unconscious bias the “Challenge Your Bias” Reflection Card is used as a tool to position our minds and hearts when working through progressive discipline issues with children.



**CHECK MY FRAME OF MIND**

- Will my current frame of mind possibly interfere with my decision making?
- How am I feeling as I enter this situation? Do I need time?
- Is this urgent or can I wait to decide?

**CHECK MY BIASES**

- Implicit (unconscious) bias: Is a negative or positive feeling/belief about race, gender, age, sexual orientation, or religion influencing my decision?
- Confirmation bias: Am I seeking information that supports my viewpoint or experience with this student?



**CHECK MY ASSUMPTION S**

- Is the student history going to affect my judgement?
- Is the student ready to talk? Is the student ready to listen?
- What is the primary language of the student and/or family?

**RECOGNIZE AND REMOVE BARRIERS**

- Assess capacity to understand —cognitive, emotional, self-regulation
- Find preferred space to listen/talk (e.g., walk and listen/talk)
- Consider cultural norms (e.g., making kids make eye contact)
- Is there another adult who can be helpful in this situation?

**Strategic Direction: Strengthen to Become**

Under the guiding principle of “Reaching Every Student,” secondary schools in Ontario use many strategies, interventions, and innovative alternative programs to support, assist and meet the unique learning needs of students. These options exist in schools, in other school board facilities, in partnerships with community agencies and employers and other creative learning structures.

There is a small but distinct group of students whose needs are not met by traditional in-school programs and interventions. Often, many programs have been tried but without success. These 14 to 17-year-old students are offered the Supervised Alternative Learning program as an option. The SAL Plan is created with the student, in collaboration with the school staff and the SAL coordinator. This SAL Plan will meet the unique individual needs and provide an individualized alternative learning experience which enables their progress toward their goals - which may include obtaining an Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD), an Ontario Secondary School Certificate (OSSC) or a Certificate of Participation.

The location of the SAL program is determined based on student need. Students can work with their school and school staff through the program or be invited to attend St. Don Bosco in either Kitchener or Cambridge.





The WCDSB St. Don Bosco sites also support our students who for various reasons, are temporarily dismissed from the school setting. Additionally, the Kitchener site also has an Alternative Support program that began in February 2022 for Gr. 10 students struggling in their homeschool setting. The accepting and caring environments provide a positive opportunity for students to be supported in addressing students' social, emotional, mental health, and behavioral concerns. Small student-to-teacher ratios, Child and Youth Worker support and communication between stakeholders has demonstrated evidence of re-engagement through student achievement. Strong practices for re-entry to home schools, with a restorative lens, leads students to a seamless re-engagement to their school community.

As noted below, our programs for our safe-school students, alternative education students, as well as our SAL students are conduits to ongoing student success. Credit accumulation through onsite work at our student's home school as well as at our St. Don Bosco sites have been very positive.

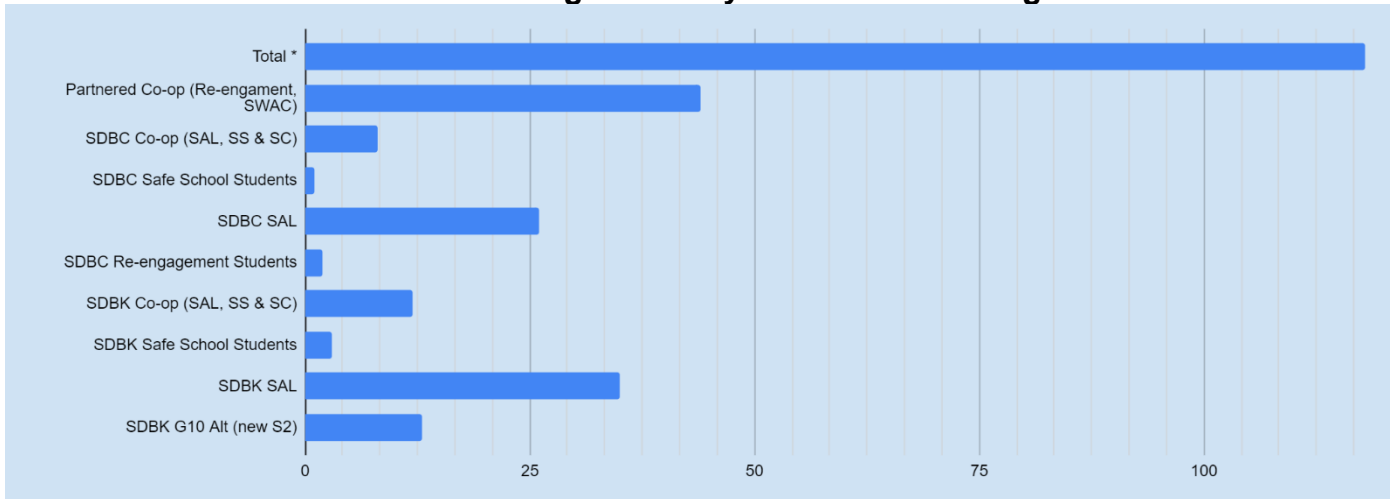
**Total safe school students and credit accumulation supported through St. Don Bosco:**

In the 2022- 23 school year to date St Don Bosco has supported a total of 147 students. Sixteen of these students have required alternative programming while serving a suspension beyond 6 days. This is an increase of 7 students over the 2021/22 data. Five of these above-mentioned students are grade 8 students. Currently there are 118 students associated with St Done Bosco, of which 4 are Safe Schools students.

When students are supported at St Don Bosco, on either a Supervised Alternative Learning Plan or through a school-based SAL, a wraparound approach focuses on credit recovery, co-op placements, opportunity for re-engagement, volunteer hour accumulation and supports through our social work team and strong community partnerships. The St Don Bosco SAL program is currently serving a total of 62 students. Our program for Grade 10 students that were struggling in their home school setting also welcomed 13 students from across our system to our St. Don Bosco site in Kitchener at the beginning of February. Additionally, there are 43 Co-op students being supported through St Don Bosco staff (this includes students through Bosco and home school SALs, re-engagement, and SWAC)



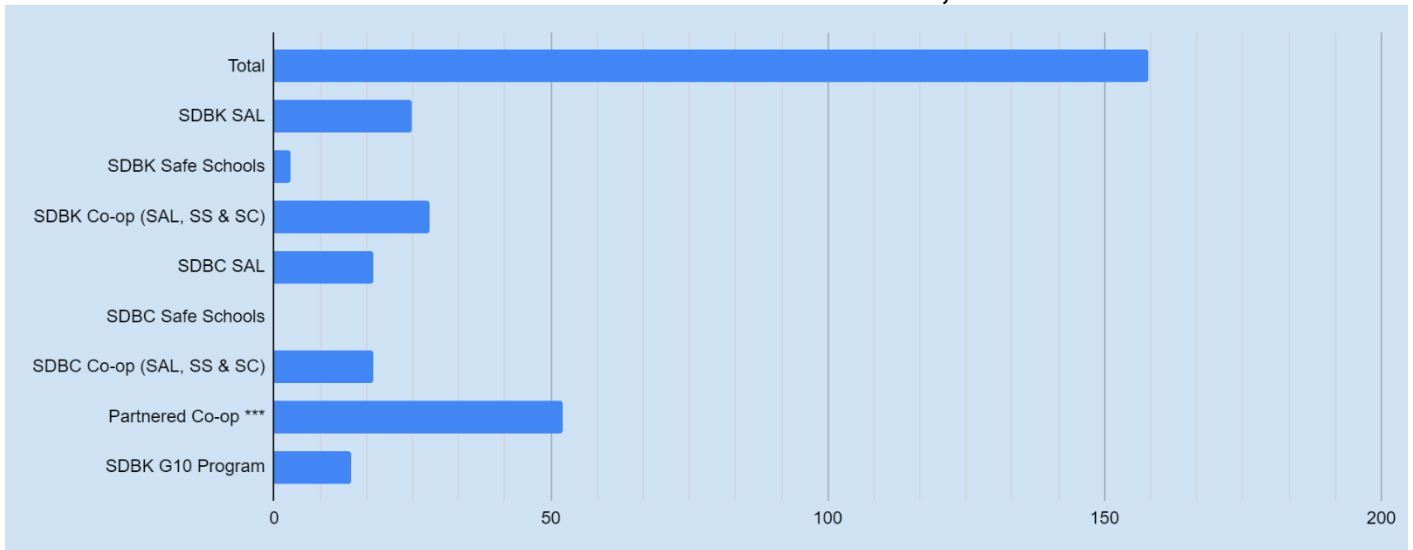
### Students being served by St Don Bosco Programs



To date, all students that the St Don Bosco staff has the privilege to serve continue to show great success as measured in credit accumulation below.

The Grade 10 Alternative Education Program accepted students beginning in November this year, allowing students more time to rescue credits and to begin working on new or recovered credits. The supported group program began in full in February 2023. There are 13 students enrolled in the program. To date students have completed 14 credits and are working on 54 more. Other students on either a SAL or through safe schools have acquired a total of 144 credits to date (including both in academic in class and coop credits) and are currently working on 248 more.

### Credits accumulated to March 24, 2023



Our Vision for Bosco over the next 2-3 years is to continue to gradually expand the programs to support students who will benefit from an alternative learning environment. In particular, we are looking



to increase support opportunities for students in grades 7 and 8 and to expand alternative opportunities in Cambridge, including creating a dedicated grade 10 program. All Programs will be based on four core pillars: Nurturing Environment, Strong Relationships, Healthy Risk Taking, and Community Connections.

## **Student Aware**



WCDSB recognizes our shared stewardship with respect to students' engagement in our online community. Our student's online activity plays a role in shaping their actions, mental health and well-being, character, and faith. We implemented Student Aware in the 2020/2021 school year, a digital program from Imagine Everything, which in keeping with supporting our students' safety, mental health, and wellbeing and in the context of prioritizing safe schools provides a level of oversight within our schools' online communities.

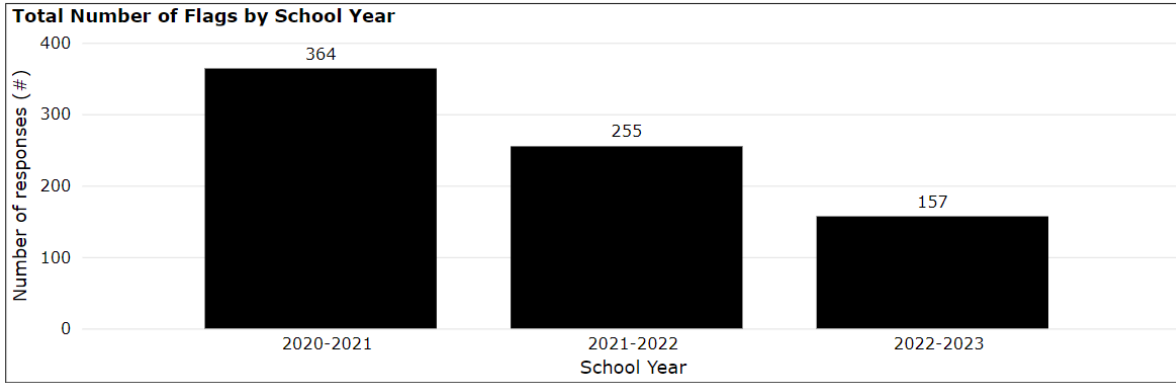
The process for supporting students begins when the program identifies potentially vulnerable or at-risk students. The Student Aware Coordinator follows up with School Administrators which then leads to:

- Administrators connect with student and/or parent
- Intervention plan put in place when needed included connecting to school based SW, support and communication with parents and students, suicide risk assessment, VTRA assessment, referrals to community

When we review the total number of Student Aware flags to date (note: 2022-2023 school year is incomplete), we are observing an overall downwards trend over the past 3 years (i.e., 364 flags in 2020-2021, 255 flags in the 2021-2022, and 157 to-date for the 2022-2023 school year) (see Figure 1).



**Figure 1:**



When exploring the areas of concern for each Student Aware flag across each school year, we see that self-harm, pornography and school violence are the greatest areas of flagged concerns (see Figure 2. Note: for privacy reasons, groups smaller than 10 are not reported).

**Figure 2:**

Student Aware Flag: - Selected Choice	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
Another	<10	<10	<10
Child Exploitation	<10	11	23
Cyberbullying	<10	<10	<10
Pornography	85	<10	36
School Violence	39	45	38
Self-harm	227	194	62

The outcomes of each flag indicate the parental involvement is most common, but that there are additional, responsive outcomes when each flag is assessed (See Figure 3. Note: for privacy reasons, groups smaller than 10 are not reported).

**Figure 3:**

Outcome: - Selected Choice	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
Parent Called	337	174	138
Another	25	164	12
Suicide Risk Assessment	12	171	<10
Connected to Social Work	85	34	12
School Project		<10	12



## Strategic Direction: Ignite to Believe

### Community Justice Initiative: Restorative Practices

CJI has been a strong partner of WCDSB over the past number of years providing direct support, training, and ongoing professional development to many of our staff and schools. During the 2021/22 school year professional development was offered to all employee groups that wished to engage in additional learning about Restorative Practices. Training modules are outlined below. For the 2022/23 school year CJI is working in a very focused manner in 3 of our schools and are supporting our full system through “responsive consultation” as needed.

#### **Level 1: Exploring Restorative Practices for Your School Community**



This training introduces the following objectives: Restorative Justice principles; core values; relationship building; sharing power and engagement vs. compliance as applicable within schools.

#### **Level 2: Building a Community of Practice**

This training builds off the foundational pieces introduced in Level 1 and is designed to deepen learning and reflection of Restorative Practices (RP) in the school environment. *The Little Book of Restorative Justice in Education* will be used as a resource to guide learning and discussion.

A third level, **Restorative Circle Training**, ran in the summer of 2022 to position school staff for implementation in September 2022.

19 staff registered in the program offerings.



## Safe School Ambassador Program



Safe School Ambassadors (SSA) is a student-centered bystander education program developed by Community Matters to reduce bullying/mistreatment and enhance school climate. In October 2021 over 100 students from across our five WCDSB high schools participated in a full training day wherein the students developed and practiced communication and intervention skills essential to creating a positive and inclusive and faith filled school climate. Further to this our supporting teachers learned how to facilitate small group meetings that provide Ambassadors with resources and ongoing skill development. All schools have reported success in launching the program in their schools and have implemented schedules for bi-weekly meetings for planning and collaboration.



In June 2022, the students and their supporting teachers participated in a full day discussion about the connections between bullying, equity, and mental health. Topics such as microaggressions,



discrimination and racism were led by our Equity Senior Manager and the students discussed the importance of connection and belonging with our Mental Health Lead.

In March of 2023, an additional 96 students were trained to be Safe School Ambassadors ensuring the sustainability of the program as we build this into our elementary panel. A pilot of the SSA program has begun this spring at John Sweeney Catholic Elementary School with 4 students trained. This program supports our belief in the power of students to influence positive change which reflects our vision to ensure that all know they have safe, caring, and supportive school to attend.

## **Anti-Bullying Week**



Bullying Awareness & Prevention Week 2022/23 was centred on our pastoral theme: Awaken!

Our Year One Theme Awaken invites us all to open our eyes, hearts, and minds to the world around us. This week, in a special way, we were animated by the charge "We are the People of God, diverse yet united, awakened to heal in Community!". Let us reach out and bring healing to whatever relationships need our attention. Our WCDSB Mission Statement calls upon us to "...transform God's world". Our week was marked by a renewed effort to transform hearts and minds as we AWAKEN to bring Awareness and Healing to Anti-Bullying efforts across the WCDSB.

All schools were provided a rich resource to guide the themes of:

- Awaken to building new friendships
- Awaken your capacity for Empathy
- Awaken your listening ear
- Awaken our ability to engage in Conflict Resolution
- Awaken relationships through Acts of Kindness

Each theme was introduced by a prayer, followed by an activity from School Mental Health Ontario designed to build that social-emotional skill. Resource Link: [Anti Bullying Week.pptx](#)



## The Umbrella Project

The Umbrella Project continues to be a strong foundational program that is a direct conduit to wellbeing throughout the WCDSB. The skills of wellbeing directly taught through the program weave seamlessly with our commitment to act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly. As we continue to impact student emotional intelligence, adaptability, interpersonal skills, and stress management we will continue to build safe, caring, and inclusive environments. As we continue to support this program, we are also aligning these skills to our Ontario Catholic Graduate Expectations.



## Trauma Informed Schools



WCDSB is working closely with Doctor Kristen McLeod, founder of the Attune Trauma and Regulation Centre, to embed Trauma-Informed classroom principles at the Tier 1 level. These are ‘Good for All’ Classroom approaches that focus on understanding how students’ brains are impacted by stress and trauma and how we understand and relate to them with curiosity and compassion. Embedding trauma-informed principles into our classroom structures increases safety in a number of ways, but primarily by preventing challenging behaviour from happening. These classroom principles include focusing on *connection* with every student; providing *predictability* and *flexibility* in our structure, *delighting* in our students and *coregulation*: where adults regulate their emotions so they can support students in regulating theirs. Our Administrator team is receiving additional training and support to lead their teams and explore student discipline practices from a trauma-informed lens. “Trauma-informed educational practices respond to the impacts of trauma on the entire school community and prevent future trauma from occurring” (Venet, 2021). Dr. McLeod met with the full administrator group in the fall and with each Family of Schools’ team of administrators individually throughout the spring. She and the Mental Health Lead will meet with the full administrator group again in June 2023 to consolidate the learning and begin planning for 2023-2024.

In response to safe school incidents and a need to blend trauma-informed approaches, a response framework was collaboratively developed and released to School Administrators in December of 2022. The framework provides guidance and is a collaborative approach to supporting students, staff, and the broader school community in the immediate and aftermath of a critical incident. The framework is a holistic approach that includes information gathering, communication strategies for staff, classrooms,



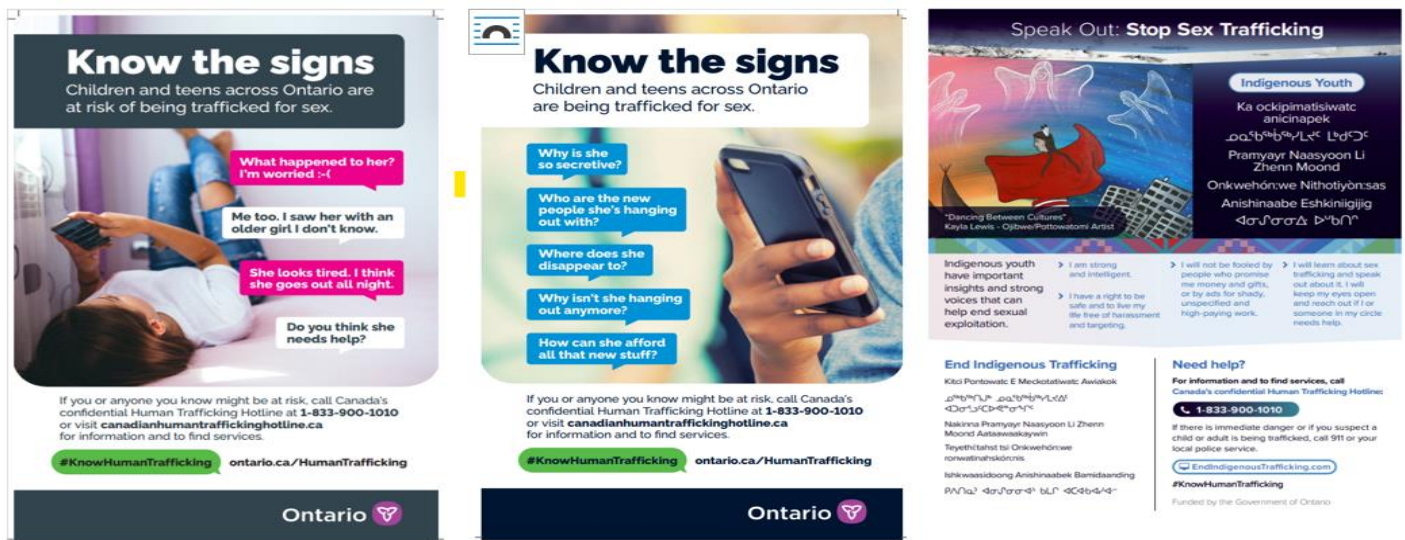
and the broader school community, pastoral response, support to students, identification and support for vulnerable students and practical strategies.

## Human Trafficking

February 22, 2023, was National Human Trafficking Awareness Day, a day to help bring awareness to the magnitude of modern-day slavery in Canada. WCDSB commits to reducing risk to our students by raising awareness in students, parents & caregivers.

In advance of Human Trafficking Awareness Day, in order to increase staff awareness of Human Trafficking, schools were encouraged to present a portion of [Human Trafficking A Presentation for Parents in Waterloo Region](#), a panel presentation by the Multidisciplinary Response to Combat Human Trafficking Committee, Waterloo Region (Recorded January, 2021) at their February Staff meeting.

Additionally, Human Trafficking Awareness posters were displayed in all schools. Secondary Schools displayed sets in washroom frames and common spaces. Elementary schools received posters to be displayed in Grade 7 & Grade 8 classrooms. Letters were sent to Grade 7 & 8 parents, and communications were posted on Secondary School Newswire and school websites to provide information about what Human Trafficking is, what is happening locally, how traffickers recruit, warning signs that someone may be being recruited and local resources. School staff were provided additional resources to help answer student questions and facilitate conversation.



As already noted, the issue of human trafficking has become an increasingly serious concern in our community, surrounding communities and society. Human trafficking is a grave issue as it robs victims of human dignity and fundamental human rights.

In this Pastoral year of **AWAKEN**, we wanted to take our awareness campaign against Human Trafficking one step further with our students. The topic of human trafficking and exploitation is also being addressed this year in a series of age-appropriate class presentations for all grade eight



students and including many, if not most, grade seven students as well. If time allows, we will bring this presentation to our secondary schools, to compliment the work already taking place in Grade nine classes. Our **AWAKEN** to Human Trafficking presentation is a collaborative effort between the Safe and Secure School and Religious Education portfolios. This work will complement our Fully Alive, Family Life Lessons as well as the Growing in Faith and Growing in Christ, Religious Education Program. As with all our programming, we are delivering this topic with a careful eye to our Catholic outlook and understanding on human life and dignity.

Pope Francis states: “Every human being, man, woman, boy and girl, is made in God’s image...Every person, and all people, are equal and must be accorded the same freedom and dignity. Therefore, we declare on every one of our creeds that modern slavery, in terms of human trafficking...is a crime against humanity.”

These face-to-face presentations on Human Trafficking began in November and will conclude in early May. The **AWAKEN** to Human Trafficking presentation includes a series of interactive tools for student engagement and a chance to get their ‘minds on’ the topic, a survey of the digital tools being used to entice vulnerable youth, a careful look at how and why the Church stands in opposition to this growing crime, a broad look at cultural groups most susceptible to victimization (i.e., one in two victims are Indigenous females). All students receive some physical take-aways from the talk including prayer cards on the topic – so that students and families can pray for the victims of trafficking – and a tip sheet to highlight Red Flags behaviours to watch out for!



Each presentation concludes by highlighting the story of Saint Josephine Bakhita who is the Patron Saint for those who have experienced slavery or trafficking. After viewing a powerful video by local renowned artist Timothy Schmalz, students have a chance to get their hands on a smaller version of his statue “Let the Oppressed Go Free,” which stands in the Vatican and puts a spotlight on Human Trafficking. Each school receives a replica statue that is a poignant reminder that our work to prevent this crime – especially with respect to our young - can never cease.

The Waterloo CDSB Human Trafficking Policy <https://wcdsb.ca/about-us/policies-and-administrative-procedures/human-trafficking-aph-036/>

## **Suicide Prevention and Intervention**

In **September 2022**, in partnership with **Waterloo Region Suicide Prevention Council (WRSPC)** we began delivering 60-minute Mental Health Promotion presentations to grade 8 classes. In alignment with [Ontario’s 2019 Curriculum for Grades 1-8: Health and Physical Education](#) (“The Curriculum”), these presentations would promote the concept that “*Well-being is influenced not only by the absence*



of problems and risks but by the presence of factors that contribute to healthy growth and development”<sup>1</sup>.

The Curriculum recognizes that: “... the topic of suicide may arise in discussions with students. This topic needs to be approached with additional caution. Learning about suicide is best approached through structured, developmentally appropriate, adult-led instruction. It is important to conclude discussions with stories of hope, and information about seeking help... Educators may wish to consult with mental health staff for additional support”<sup>3</sup>.

These presentations balance speaking about mental health and mental health promotion with providing education and awareness for suicide prevention. Topics include Mental Health, Staying Well, Signs to Watch for, Understanding Suicide, Getting Help and Helping a Friend. Materials were resourced from School Mental Health Ontario, Kids Help Phone, Be There.org and Centre for Suicide Prevention. When discussing suicide, best practice guidelines for safe conversations and a trauma-informed approach are taken to these discussions to mitigate risks of harm. The presentations conclude with hope and information about seeking help. Should it be requested, additional support is available for youth after the presentation.





At the time of this report, over 50% of WCDSB Grade 8 Classes have received the presentation, with the remaining classes scheduled in March and April 2023. Feedback from Grade 8 teachers and administrator indicate that 93.3% reported the materials were an excellent (4/5) or ideal (5/5) fit for their students, and 73.4% reported that their students had very good (4/5) or excellent (5/5) engagement in the learning. Some tweaks are being made to the remaining presentations to increase student engagement. All reported that adequate supports were available to their students during and after the presentations.

### Next Steps

- Enriching the Human Trafficking Awareness resources available on our board website for parents and students
- Continue to expand, develop, and promote opportunities for students to engage in learning about and promotion of healthy lifestyles and communities through the Safe School Ambassador Program
- Merging data of Student Census to Suspension and Expulsion data so that we may more closely examine issues of equity as it relates to marginalized students and how we might better serve them
- Continue to provide opportunities for staff to build capacity as it relates to trauma focused response as we build caring and safe communities in all WCDSB education centres.
- Expand and develop further opportunities for Alternative Programming through St. Don Bosco Catholic School



**Recommendation:**

This is for the information of the Board.

**Prepared/Reviewed By:** Tyrone Dowling  
Director of Education

Judy Merkel  
Superintendent of Education

Kelly Roberts  
Research Coordinator

\*Bylaw 4.2 “where the Board of Trustees receives from the Director of Education a monitoring report that flows from a responsibility delegated to the Director under Board Policy – **except where approval is required by the Board of Trustees on a matter delegated by policy to the Board** – the minutes of the Meeting at which the Report is received shall expressly provide that the Board has received and approved of the Report as an action consistent with the authority delegated to the Director, subject in all instances to what otherwise actually occurred.”





**Date:** April 3, 2023  
**To:** Board of Trustees  
**From:** Director of Education  
**Subject:** Interim Financial Report - #2 of 3

**Type of Report:**

- Decision-Making
- Monitoring
- Incidental Information concerning day-to-day operations

**Type of Information:**

- Information for Board of Trustees Decision-Making
- Monitoring Information-Board Policy IV 008 "Financial Conditions and Activities"
- Information only of day-to-day operational matters delegated to the CEO

**Origin: (cite Education Act and/or Board Policy or other legislation)**

Interim financial reports are presented to the Board to assist Trustees in their monitoring of the financial well-being of the school board. Interim reports are presented to the Board of Trustees three times per school year (January, March, and June). Reports are reviewed by the Audit Committee prior to being sent to the Board of Trustees.

**Policy Statement and/or Education Act/other Legislation citation:**

Executive Limitation IV008: Financial Conditions and Activities:

"With respect to the actual, ongoing financial condition of the organization, the CEO shall not cause or allow the development of fiscal jeopardy or a significant deviation of actual expenditures from board priorities established in the approved budget."

**Alignment to the MYSP:**

**Awaken to Belong**

- Every student can see themselves reflected in their learning.
- Staff experiences a positive, healthy, and inclusive workplace.
- Families are aware of and/or use the available resources to assist in navigation of the school system.

**Ignite to Believe**

- Every student experiences the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations (OCSGEs) and the WCDSB pastoral plan within their learning environments.
- Staff are welcomed and invited to continue to be a partner in their adult faith formation journey.
- The relationship between home, parish and school is strengthened.

**Strengthen to Become**

- Every student reaches their full potential.
- Staff see their impact on student achievement.
- Families are engaged as active partners in our students' Catholic education journey.



## Background/Comments:

Attached to this covering report are the following:

1. Dashboard Report
2. Expenditure Summary
3. Revenue Summary

These reports contain forecasts which are based on financial data up to and including February 28, 2023, the end of the second fiscal quarter of the year. Notes, where appropriate, have been included to provide the reader with contextual or explanatory information.

Since the last financial report, there have been no changes to management's assumptions or forecasting methodologies that would have a material impact on the Board's financial position. Enrolment levels are stable as are staffing complements.

The following two areas present additional budget risk:

- Staff replacement (supply) costs are always difficult to predict as they are dependent on active flu cases, staff morale, workplace culture, demographics, absence management program efficacy, and availability of replacement staff. Modelling has been undertaken by finance staff based on historical data, trends in the Region, and a review of staffing complements. The forecast contains management's best estimates of supply costs as at the time of writing. These costs will continue to be monitored closely through the remainder of the year.
- Utility costs can be volatile due to changes in commodity prices, government initiatives (carbon pricing), school activities/usage, and heating/cooling equipment age/condition. Conservative estimates have been used in the development of utility budgets and as of the time of writing, will fall within expectations. This area will be monitored closely as the year progresses.

Lawsuits, grievances, and other claims, if any, have been disclosed in private to the Audit Committee. Associated expenses, if any, have been included in budget forecasts.

Management's risk assessment related to the Board's financial well-being for the 2022-23 school year is **LOW**.

There have been no significant deviations from the budget priorities set in June 2022 and revised in December 2022.

## Recommendation:

That the Board of Trustees receive this interim financial report as information on the financial well-being of the Board as at February 28, 2023.

**Prepared/Reviewed By:** Tyrone Dowling  
Director of Education

Laura Isaac  
Senior Manager, Financial Services

Renee King  
Manager of Budget

Shesh Maharaj  
Executive Superintendent, Corporate Services

\*Bylaw 4.2 "where the Board of Trustees receives from the Director of Education a monitoring report that flows from a responsibility delegated to the Director under Board Policy – **except where approval is required by the Board of Trustees on a matter delegated by policy to the Board** – the minutes of the Meeting at which the Report is received shall expressly provide that the Board has received and approved of the Report as an action consistent with the authority delegated to the Director, subject in all instances to what otherwise actually occurred."



## Waterloo Catholic District School Board

2022-2023 Second Quarter Financial Report

For the Period Ended February 28, 2023

### Summary of Financial Results

	Estimates	Forecast	In-Year Change	
			\$	%
<b>Revenue</b>				
Provincial Grants (GSN)	290,641,980	292,572,019	1,930,039	0.7%
Grants for Capital Purposes	6,335,689	6,172,835	(162,854)	(2.6%)
Other Grants	4,401,687	8,139,957	3,738,270	84.9%
Other Revenues	12,883,794	17,956,230	5,072,436	39.4%
Amortization of DCC	19,374,673	20,368,402	993,729	5.1%
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>333,637,823</b>	<b>345,209,443</b>	<b>11,571,620</b>	<b>3.5%</b>
<b>Expenses</b>				
Classroom	233,105,263	238,268,675	5,163,412	2.2%
Non-Classroom	43,778,882	49,062,409	5,283,527	12.1%
Transportation	7,865,761	7,845,427	(20,334)	(0.3%)
Pupil Accommodation	27,173,586	28,092,191	918,605	3.4%
Capital and In-Kind Expenditures	2,225,728	2,307,749	82,021	3.7%
Amortization/Write downs	19,488,603	20,482,330	993,727	5.1%
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>333,637,823</b>	<b>346,058,781</b>	<b>12,420,958</b>	<b>3.7%</b>
<b>Balance before Accum Surplus</b>	-	(849,338)	(849,338)	-
Accumulated surplus use	-	1,000,000	1,000,000	-
<b>Surplus/(Deficit) - end of year</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>150,662</b>	<b>150,662</b>	<b>-</b>

Note: GSN - Grants for Student Needs

Note: DCC - Deferred Capital Contribution

Note: Targeted grants are also referred to as Partnership and Priority Funding (PPF)

### Changes in Revenue

**GSN:** Increase due to increased enrolment and English as a Second Language grant offset with lower teacher experience grants.

**Other Grants:** Increase due to targeted grants and in-kind grant provided since budget announced.

**Other Revenues:** Increase due to higher participation in International, Continuing Education and Extended Day programs as well anticipated interest revenue due to cash on hand.

**Accumulated surplus:** Draw on surplus anticipated to support implementation of MYSP

### Changes in Expenses

**Classroom:** Increase due to higher enrolment, additional targeted grants announced, sick leave costs, St. Josephine Bakhita opening costs, and MYSP implementation.

**Non-Classroom:** Increase due to targeted grants provided since budget announced, participation in the short and long term International programs, MYSP implementation and student learning

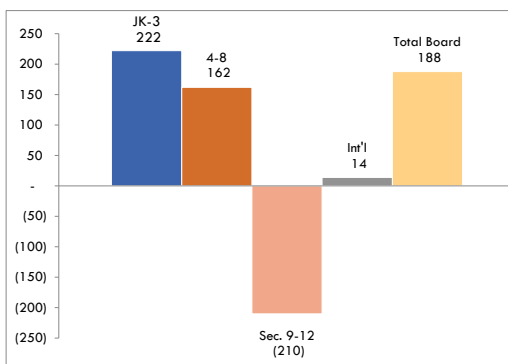
### Summary of Enrolment

ADE	Estimates	Forecast	In-Year Change	
			#	%
<b>Elementary</b>				
JK-3	8,514	8,736	222	2.6%
4-8	8,786	8,948	162	1.8%
Int'l Students	20	36	16	80.0%
<b>Total Elementary</b>	<b>17,320</b>	<b>17,720</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>2.3%</b>
<b>Secondary &lt;21</b>				
Pupils of the Board	7,500	7,290	(210)	-2.8%
Int'l Students	135	133	(2)	-1.5%
<b>Total Secondary</b>	<b>7,635</b>	<b>7,423</b>	<b>(212)</b>	<b>-2.8%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>24,955</b>	<b>25,143</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>0.8%</b>

Note: ADE is comprised of actual enrolment reported at October 31, 2022 and projected enrolment as at March 31, 2023

Note: VISA students pay tuition & their enrolment does not affect our GSNs

### Changes in Enrolment: Estimates vs. Forecast



### Highlights of Changes in Enrolment:

**Elementary:** Increase due to high kindergarten registrations and levels of immigration to Waterloo Region.

**Secondary:** Decrease due to incorporation of trending data from 2021-2022

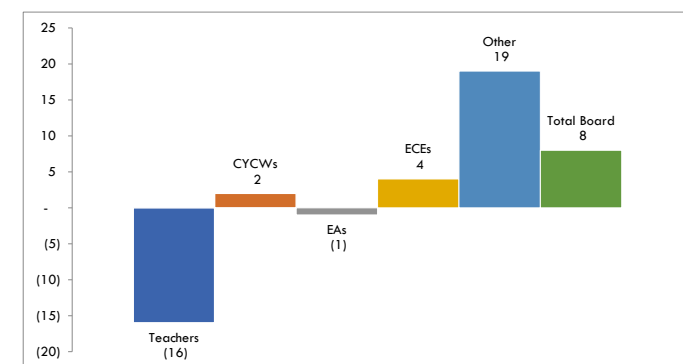
**Int'l Students:** Increase due to fewer travel restrictions.

### Summary of Staffing

FTE	Estimates	Forecast	In-Year Change	
			#	%
<b>Classroom</b>				
Teachers	1,521	1,505	(16)	-1.1%
Child & Youth Care Workers (CYCWs)	60	62	2	3.3%
Educational Assistants (EAs)	373	372	(1)	-0.3%
Designated Early Childhood Educators	167	171	4	2.4%
<b>Total Classroom</b>	<b>2,121</b>	<b>2,110</b>	<b>(11)</b>	<b>-0.5%</b>
<b>Other Support Staff</b>				
School Administration	172	172	-	0.0%
Board Administration	91	94	3	3.3%
Facility Services	209	201	(8)	-3.8%
Consultants/Co-ordinators	29	41	12	41.4%
Paraprofessionals	103	115	12	11.7%
Library & Guidance	66	66	-	0.0%
<b>Total Other Support Staff</b>	<b>670</b>	<b>689</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>2.8%</b>
<b>Total Staffing</b>	<b>2,791</b>	<b>2,799</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0.3%</b>

Note: FTE is calculated as of Oct 31, 2022 and projected FTE as at March 31, 2023

### Changes in Staffing: Estimates vs. Forecast



### Highlights of Changes in Staffing:

**Classroom Teachers:** Adjustments were made to secondary teaching complement due to enrolment

**Classroom Support - DECE:** Increase due to enrolment and participation in Extended Day program.

**Other Support Staff - Board Administration:** Increases to central staff to better support schools.

**Other Support Staff - Facility Services:** Staffing shortages.

**Other Support Staff - Consultants/Co-ordinators:** Increase to accommodate Ministry initiatives and reclassification of literacy teachers.

**Other Support Staff - Paraprofessionals:** Increase to support student safety at secondary sites and positions required to support Ministry initiatives.

**Waterloo Catholic District School Board**  
**2022-2023 Second Quarter Financial Report**  
**Revenues**  
**For the Period Ended February 28, 2023**

<b>Budget Assessment</b>					
2022-2023					
	Estimates	Forecast	Change to budget		Material Variance Note
			\$ Increase (Decrease)	% Increase (Decrease)	
<b>Grant Revenues</b>					
Pupil Foundation	139,507,055	140,557,423	1,050,368	0.8%	
School Foundation	17,930,092	18,135,957	205,865	1.1%	
Special Education	37,096,707	37,357,373	260,666	0.7%	
Language Allocation	8,582,889	10,206,124	1,623,235	18.9%	
Learning Opportunities	6,713,321	6,645,385	(67,936)	(1.0%)	
Adult Education, Continuing Education	3,080,249	2,965,873	(114,376)	(3.7%)	
Teacher and DECE Q&E	29,942,270	28,515,115	(1,427,155)	(4.8%)	
Transportation	7,636,956	7,811,277	174,321	2.3%	
Administration and Governance	7,863,566	7,892,219	28,653	0.4%	
School Operations	25,622,478	25,681,950	59,472	0.2%	
Community Use of Schools Grant	331,764	331,764	-	0.0%	
Indigenous Education	442,577	575,513	132,936	30.0%	
Mental Health and Well-Being Grant	1,362,840	1,366,980	4,140	0.3%	
New Teacher Induction program	212,926	212,926	-	0.0%	
Rural and Northern Education Fund	92,362	92,212	(150)	(0.2%)	
Permanent Financing - NPF	397,975	397,975	-	0.0%	
Support for COVID-19 Outbreak	3,825,953	3,825,953	-	0.0%	
<b>Regular Operating On-going Grants</b>	<b>290,641,980</b>	<b>292,572,019</b>	<b>1,930,039</b>	<b>0.7%</b>	a.
<b>Grants for Capital Purposes</b>					
School Renewal	371,755	371,755	-	0.0%	
Temporary Accommodation	3,580,628	3,580,628	-	0.0%	
Short-term Interest	487,940	325,086	(162,854)	(33.4%)	b.
Debt Funding for Capital	1,895,366	1,895,366	-	0.0%	
<b>Total Capital Grants</b>	<b>6,335,689</b>	<b>6,172,835</b>	<b>(162,854)</b>	<b>(2.6%)</b>	
<b>Other Grants</b>					
Continuing Education	2,420,893	2,064,598	(356,295)	(14.7%)	c.
Partnership and Priorities Fund (PPF)	1,958,285	5,975,359	4,017,074	205.1%	d.
In-Kind Grant	22,509	100,000	77,491	344.3%	d.
<b>Total Other Grants</b>	<b>4,401,687</b>	<b>8,139,957</b>	<b>3,738,270</b>	<b>84.9%</b>	
<b>Other Revenues</b>					
Continuing Education Fees	3,016,546	3,212,084	195,538	6.5%	
Rentals	706,589	737,080	30,491	4.3%	
Interest	325,000	770,000	445,000	136.9%	e.
Tuition Fees	3,263,500	5,424,800	2,161,300	66.2%	f.
Extended Day Fees	3,830,375	4,111,917	281,542	7.4%	g.
Other International Fees	716,996	867,558	150,562	21.0%	f.
Other	1,024,788	2,832,791	1,808,003	176.4%	h.
<b>Total Other Revenue</b>	<b>12,883,794</b>	<b>17,956,230</b>	<b>5,072,436</b>	<b>39.4%</b>	
<b>Deferred Revenues</b>					
Amortization of DCC	19,374,673	20,368,402	993,729	5.1%	b.
<b>Net Deferred Revenue</b>	<b>19,374,673</b>	<b>20,368,402</b>	<b>993,729</b>	<b>5.1%</b>	
<b>Total Revenue and Grants</b>	<b>333,637,823</b>	<b>345,209,443</b>	<b>11,571,620</b>	<b>3.5%</b>	

<b>Explanations of Material Grant Variances</b>	
a.	Increase due to enrolment and higher ESL participation than anticipated. This increase is offset by less experienced workforce.
b.	Change is due to timing of construction projects.
c.	Reduced Con Ed ESL programming.
d.	New targeted funding (PPFs) announced since Estimates and additional in-kind grants not previously anticipated.
e.	Increase due to cash on hand and trending.
f.	Increase due to International long-term, short-term and student exchange programs due to reduced travel restrictions.
g.	Increase due to greater participation in Extended Day program.
h.	Increase due to miscellaneous revenues such as rebates, refunds and other International program recoveries.

**Notes:**

1. Budget is the 2022 - 2023 Estimates Budget as approved by the Board of Trustees in June 2022

**Waterloo Catholic District School Board**  
**2022-2023 Second Quarter Financial Report**  
**Expenses**  
**For the Period Ended February 28, 2023**

	<b>Budget Assessment</b>				Material Variance Note
	2022-2023				
	Estimates	Forecast	Change to budget		
\$ Increase (Decrease)			% Increase (Decrease)		
<b>OPERATING</b>					
<b>Classroom Instruction</b>					
Teachers	169,133,032	167,520,139	(1,612,893)	(1.0%)	a.
Supply Teachers	4,237,696	5,288,960	1,051,264	24.8%	b.
Educational Assistants	18,463,328	18,863,159	399,831	2.2%	
Designated Early Childhood Educators	9,701,039	9,934,965	233,926	2.4%	
Classroom Computers	3,524,512	4,799,520	1,275,008	36.2%	c.
Textbooks and Supplies	6,584,360	7,737,141	1,152,781	17.5%	d.
Professionals and Paraprofessionals	13,942,947	16,404,060	2,461,113	17.7%	e.
Library and Guidance	5,727,011	5,729,141	2,130	0.0%	
Staff Development	1,272,866	1,466,082	193,216	15.2%	f.
Department Heads	518,472	525,508	7,036	1.4%	
<b>Total Classroom</b>	<b>233,105,263</b>	<b>238,268,675</b>	<b>5,163,412</b>	<b>2.2%</b>	
<b>Non-Classroom</b>					
Principal and Vice-Principals	10,693,336	10,707,641	14,305	0.1%	
School Office	6,607,450	6,660,816	53,366	0.8%	
Co-ordinators and Consultants	5,813,198	8,559,897	2,746,699	47.2%	g.
Continuing Education	9,471,498	10,770,042	1,298,544	13.7%	h.
<b>Total Non-Classroom</b>	<b>32,585,482</b>	<b>36,698,396</b>	<b>4,112,914</b>	<b>12.6%</b>	
<b>Administration</b>					
Trustees	314,247	328,444	14,197	4.5%	
Director and Supervisory Officers	1,561,063	1,629,226	68,163	4.4%	
Board Administration	9,318,090	10,406,343	1,088,253	11.7%	i.
<b>Total Administration</b>	<b>11,193,400</b>	<b>12,364,013</b>	<b>1,170,613</b>	<b>10.5%</b>	
<b>Transportation</b>	<b>7,865,761</b>	<b>7,845,427</b>	<b>(20,334)</b>	<b>(0.3%)</b>	
<b>Pupil Accommodation</b>					
School Operations and Maintenance	26,801,830	27,720,435	918,605	3.4%	
School Renewal	371,756	371,756	-	0.0%	
In-Kind Donation	22,509	100,000	77,491	344.3%	j.
Other Pupil Accommodation	2,203,219	2,207,749	4,530	0.2%	
Amortization and Write-downs	19,488,603	20,482,330	993,727	5.1%	
<b>Total Pupil Accommodation</b>	<b>48,887,917</b>	<b>50,882,270</b>	<b>1,994,353</b>	<b>4.1%</b>	
<b>TOTAL OPERATING</b>	<b>333,637,823</b>	<b>346,058,781</b>	<b>12,420,958</b>	<b>3.7%</b>	

<b>Explanations of Material Budget Variances</b>
a. Decrease due to unfilled jobs offset with increased sick leave trends.
b. Increase due to missed planning time as a result of teacher vacancies.
c. Increase due to targeted grants announced since budget and increased software costs.
d. Increase due to opening St. Josephine Bakhita school, implementing new MYSP and targeted grants announced since budget.
e. Increase due to sick leave trends, targeted grants announced since budget and to support overall school needs.
f. Increase due to targeted grants announced since budget.
g. Increase due to resources required for school opening and additional supports for learning recovery.
h. Increase due to targeted grants announced since budget and expansion of LINC program offset with reduced ESL program costs.
i. Increase due to investment in network security, MYSP implementation, supply training costs, administrative needs and targeted grants announced since budget.
j. Increase due to additional personal protective equipment requirements than previously estimated.

**Notes:**

1. Budget is the 2022 - 2023 Estimates Budget as approved by the Board of Trustees in June 2022



**Date:** April 3, 2023  
**To:** Board of Trustees  
**From:** Director of Education  
**Subject:** Response to the Provincial Review of Incident at John Sweeney CES Recommendations Update

**Type of Report:**  Decision-Making  
 Monitoring  
 Incidental Information concerning day-to-day operations

**Type of Information:**  Information for Board of Trustees Decision-Making  
 Monitoring Information of Board Policy **XX XXX**  
 Information only of day-to-day operational matters delegated to the CEO

**Origin: (cite Education Act and/or Board Policy or other legislation)**

Executive Limitation IV 012 Communication to Board

**Policy Statement and/or Education Act/other Legislation citation:**

Policy 1 001 Ends  
 Policy IV 003 Treatment of Students  
 Policy IV 013 Leadership  
 Calming Rooms as a Proactive Self-Regulation Strategy [APH 029](#)  
 Physical Containment of Students [APH 012](#)  
 Workplace Violence Prevention [APH023](#)  
 Fair and Equitable Hiring Promotions (revised 2021) [APO 028](#)  
 Equity and Inclusive Education Policy [APC 037](#)

**Alignment to the MYSP:**

**Awaken to Belong**

- Every student can see themselves reflected in their learning.
- Staff experiences a positive, healthy, and inclusive workplace.
- Are aware of and/or use the available resources to assist in navigation of the school system.

**Ignite to Believe**

- Every student experiences the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations (OCSGEs) and the WCDSB pastoral plan within their learning environments.
- Staff are welcomed and invited to continue to be a partner in their adult faith formation journey.
- The relationship between home, parish and school is strengthened.



**Strengthen to Become**

- Every student reaches their full potential.
- Staff see their impact on student achievement.
- Are engaged as active partners in our students' Catholic education journey.

**Background/Comments:**

On November 28, 2022 a report was shared with the Board of Trustees, Response to Provincial Review of Incident at John Sweeney Catholic Elementary School Update that outlined the recommendations provided to the WCDSB by an external reviewer, whose review had been ordered by the Minister of Education and provided an update. At that time the report outlined those recommendations, as well as provision of a summary of equity work that the WCDSB has been engaged in ahead of and during the 2022/23 school year.

The report highlighted the need for a variety of approaches to serve our families. We need to ensure that we have culturally responsive, early intervention supports and services. Supports and services need to be provided equitably with an anti-racism and anti-oppression lens.

As the last update was provided in November, there are some recommendations whose status has not changed since that time. Listed below are the recommendations provided in the report, as well as a recap of where we our work is currently.

**A. Amend all board policies and procedures, relating to staff conduct, to ensure that, the enactment and/or the perpetuation of racism and other forms of discrimination, are subject to disciplinary measures.**

Our Board policies are reviewed annually by the Board of Trustees. At that time, they may be referred to the Governance Committee for further review through an equity lens and for any additional updates. The policies are then brought back to the Board of Trustees to be approved.

Our administrative policies are reviewed over a three-year cycle. If a policy or procedure is up for review, the superintendent or senior manager who manages that policy's portfolio works with the Senior Manager of Equity Services to review the policy and procedure from an equity lens. The next step is to have our Executive Council review and approve the revised policy or procedure. This team also applies an equity lens during that process.

While an equity lens sounds like a "buzz" word, it is a deliberate procedure to help organizations make decisions and develop inclusive policies and procedures. It allows for reflective inquiry. There are a set of questions that need to be asked and acted upon that help decision and policy makers focus on equity in their process to achieve equitable outcomes. When we use this lens, we are explicitly considering marginalized populations, including communities of colour, communities from lower socioeconomic statuses, gender and sexual minorities, and, of course, the intersectionality of these groups. Ultimately, the foundation of the equity lens has decision and policy makers consider equity dimensions of involvement, process, values, assumptions, and outcomes from the perspective that highlights how practices hold potential shifts in power toward inclusion and equity.

The initial set of questions are around the process of developing a policy/procedure or making a decision. They are listed below:

- Who is not included in the work you do?
- What could contribute to this exclusion?
- What can you do differently to ensure inclusion?



There are many other questions that need to be asked when using an equity lens. However, before the policy is enacted we need to address the impact of the policy. Listed below are the questions to be asked:

- Does the policy, program, or decision improve, worsen, or make no change to existing disparities?
- Does the policy, program, or decision produce any intentional benefits or unintended consequences for the affected groups?
- What is the real impact likely to be for different groups who are important to the organization?

**B. Revise performance appraisal and review processes to include measures that are related to advancing and protecting human rights, anti-racism and anti-discrimination, and which hold senior and school leaders responsible, through accountability measures, for actions or omissions found to perpetuate racism or other forms of discrimination.**

School administrators were asked to develop their School Improvement and Equity Plans (SIEP) with a strong emphasis on equity action plans this fall. Before the superintendents commenced their Fall 2022 visit to the schools, they asked administrators to complete a survey that would help the superintendents understand and support the strategies, resources, and/or tools that each school is using as they develop, implement, and monitor improvements in the schools. One of the questions in this survey to administrators was, “How have you determined your equity priorities this year.” During the superintendent’s visits to each they have asked follow-up questions about the equity work the principals were leading in the schools, how the principals were assessing the work to ensure the work was making a positive difference and leading to equitable outcomes and any necessary supports that are still needed to assist in this work.

At the end of the academic year, the director will be assessed by the trustees and the trustees have included accountability questions around equity. The director will assess the senior team and then again there will be specific accountability questions around equity. The superintendents will assess the school administrators’ work around accountability around equity. These are formalized processes already in place.

Ahead of any changes to the Principal Performance Appraisal process a legal opinion will be sought from our counsel, along with conversation including the Ministry of Education. A request for a conversation with the Ministry of Education has been placed.

**C. Hire Black and other equity-deserving para-professionals to consult, support and address student learning and behavioral concerns when they arise.**

This is not a realistic request within a year. However, we can improve our strategies for attracting qualified Black and other equity-seeking professionals to our board.

We revised our Fair and Equitable Hiring and Promotion Policy in Spring 2021. To support that policy, we have improved our employment webpage to include the following statements:

“At the Waterloo Catholic District School Board we recognize supporting diversity and engagement is the right thing to do for our students and communities. This commitment is woven throughout our values and vision; our schools are the hearts of their communities, providing success for each and a place for all. We know we are at our best when we embrace the full spectrum of humanity, regardless of what we look like, where we come from, or who we love. That means building a more diverse and inclusive workforce and fully engaging in the communities we serve.

All members of the Waterloo Catholic District School Board community – students, staff, parents and guardians have a role to play in advancing this commitment. For some, it means summoning the courage to stand up and speak out, sharing opinions, or experiences. For others, it means listening with patience and empathy, creating an environment conducive to dialogue. For all, it means asking questions, respecting answers, being open to fresh



perspectives, and most importantly, appreciating one another's contributions. In doing so, we ensure we meet our Mission that, as disciples of Christ, we educate and nurture hope in all learners to transform God's world."

"The Board conducts intentional recruitment and selection as it seeks to achieve a state of greater equity for employees and students and to diversify its workforce."

"All qualified applicants are welcome and encouraged to apply and applicants may choose to indicate if they are from a group who has experienced racial or social discrimination. Self-identification data will be used as a consideration in this posting. Aggregate data will be stored anonymously to support improvements to the Board's hiring processes."

Since the update in November the following have/are occurring:

- Equity Services and Human Resource Service launched a new [WCDSB careers page](#) in February with a focus on equity, diversity, inclusion and belonging (EDI-B)
- The HR team has sponsored career fairs for potential employees with international training and experience in a variety of professions including, educational assistants, childcare workers, child and youth care workers, custodians, and clerical roles
- We had 24 racialized secondary school students attend the Faculty of Education at Wilfrid Laurier University for their careers day
- We are planning how we will conduct a systematic audit of our board website to begin revising pictorial and text content to ensure it is welcoming, inclusive and represents the diverse communities WCDSB is comprised of.

All Human Resources specialists at WCDSB conduct their work with an equity lens. As noted in November we hired a human resource and equity officer, in September 2022, to help build a culture of welcoming, respecting, and valuing staff for who they are as individuals, learning from their similarities and differences, embracing their uniqueness, and a positive workplace for all.

Our Human Resources and Equity Officer:

- Applies equity, diversity, and inclusion lens and HR knowledge to our local landscape to promote inclusion and belonging across the school board
- Supports recruitment and employee retention, make recommendations to identify barriers to employment and provide recommendation to either eliminate or modify policies, practices and systems that hinder retention, development, and advancement of under-represented groups
- Engages in case management as part of a team for staff issues—analyze, and identify issues, provide mediation, and conflict resolution services, to achieve early resolution, and determine appropriate recommendations

In spring 2022, we provided mandatory training for all individuals who were sitting on hiring panels. There was a 1-hour session and 2-hour online session for each participant. This training emphasized the importance of diversity in workplaces. Participants learned about implicit biases and how to minimize those biases. Participants were taught to use standardized procedures throughout the hiring process to ensure fair, equitable hiring practices. This training is being revisited with each hiring cycle to monitor that the panel members training is up to date.

**D. Hire Black consultants to work with Black families to navigate school board special education, discipline, academic and well-being conversations and processes.**

In January 2022, we began working with the African Family Revival Organization (AFRO) and their three systems navigators in Cambridge, Kitchener, and Waterloo. School administrators and superintendents began reaching out



to AFRO when Black families wanted help navigating the school system. We have continued to work with AFRO throughout the current academic year and also hired an internal systems navigator in September 2022.

Our Equity Systems Navigator bridges the gap between equity-seeking students, families, communities, and the school system to prevent, address, and resolve real or perceived issues of bias, discrimination, racism, sexism, homophobia, and transphobia at Waterloo Catholic District School Board.

Our Systems Navigator:

- Provides support and advocacy to Indigenous, Black, racialized and 2SLGBTQIA+ students, families, and caregivers in navigating the school system
- Engages in case management, as part of school team, to resolve conflicts or disagreements with students and families and to ensure everyone's voice is heard
- Works with school administrators to develop productive partnerships with families, caregivers, and the community
- Fosters peer support opportunities for Indigenous, Black, racialized and 2SLBTQIA+ students
- Establishes space for equity-seeking groups to be heard and recognized as valued, respected members of the WCDSB community.

The Equity Systems Navigator position is continuously being developed to serve families. We are:

- Clearly defining the role of the system navigator with an emphasis on serving the families who are disengaged from the school system
- Developing a system for families to contact the school board outside of the traditional communication route; specifically, we will launch a webpage with a survey that goes directly to the Equity Systems Navigator and the Senior Manager of Equity, so families can report communication breakdowns with their home school.

**E. Hire and work closely with Black special education experts to develop affirming, culturally reflective and responsive procedures, policies and processes and supports to address *school identified* behavioral concerns during the A1-3, safety plan, IEP and other processes that support student learning needs. Include clear notifications, appeals and complaints procedures for families to access at each stage of the process.**

This has not occurred. Please see response for recommendation C.

**F. Create a communications plan, support templates and accountability measures for record keeping to ensure timely relay of information to families whenever injury, holds, or significant escalations occur with students.**

These plans and forms are in place. They can be found in our AP Memo on Physical Containment of Students ([APH012](#)).

**G. Revise local Police/School Board Protocol and Safety Plan templates for kindergarten to grade three, limiting 911/Community Support to ambulatory services only and as a last resort. Include clearly outlined, mutually-agreed upon (family and school), time frame for when emergency/community supports will be engaged should parent/guardian contact not be possible.**

As part of our safety plan process parents review and can provide input into the safety plan. Our administrators have been in-serviced at meetings, last spring and this fall, on how to confer with the Senior Manager of Equity, the Systems Navigator, their school Social Worker or their Family of Schools Superintendent to discuss possible resources and supports that could be included in a safety plan for any marginalized or racialized student.



Discussions are currently happening to determine how possible changes to our safety plans, in particular, limiting calls to ambulatory services only for JK to Grade 3. Further conversation will be necessary with partners from other ministries.

**H. Review and develop processes, including demographic data collection specific to exclusions, to ensure that the use of exclusion in K-3 does not result in disparities that negatively impact Black and other already marginalized student groups. Publicly share the data with the school community.**

We are in process to complete this. However, we are collecting demographic data specific to exclusions, suspensions, and other disciplinary acts. Below is an outline of our process.

The 2021 Student Census was an online survey that collected data specifically related to self-identity, demographics, and experiences at school. The census included questions about Indigenous identity, ethnic/cultural background, racial identity, citizenship status, religious/spiritual affiliation, gender at birth/identity, sexual orientation, (dis)abilities, household characteristics, and school experiences.

The Board was authorized to collect personal information from students by the Anti-Racism Act (ARA s.6(2)), Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA s.28(2)), and the Education Act (265(1)(d), 169.1(1)). Our process was developed in accordance with the guidance and legislation provided by the Ministry of Education, the Anti-Racism Directorate, the Ontario Human Rights Commission, and the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

This census was implemented by using the online survey platform Qualtrics. The Board's Privacy Records and Information Management and Research Coordinator assessed the privacy and security practices of Qualtrics and determined we can ensure the data from the census will remain secure. Further, WCDSB's Research & Data Services Department developed a data management plan to comply with Board policies, MFIPPA and the ARA. All identifiable Student Census data will be kept on encrypted servers and password protected devices with role-based access restrictions. Data will be securely disposed of as per the WCDSB Records Retention Schedule.

Please note, the 2021 Student Census was voluntary. Each student could choose if one wanted to complete the survey. Further, the student could stop answering questions at any time. Students could skip any question they did not wish to answer. All students at the WCDSB were invited to participate in the Student Census between Grades 4 and 12. The survey was available online. Teachers, educational assistants, vice-principals, and principals were available to help students access the survey. Staff were asked to ensure student privacy whenever possible as the students were taking the survey. Accommodations were made available for students. For example, if a student required a pen-and-paper version of the census, it was provided by the administrator of the school. Further, if a student had regular and recurring classroom supports to complete schoolwork and assessments (e.g., EAs, CYWs, SERTs, ESLs), those supports would be in place to access the census. The census was available in six languages: English, Arabic, Portuguese, Spanish, Russian, and French.

The Board engaged in a multi-year process to develop and administer the 2021 Student Census in compliance with the Anti-Racism Act. Specifically, during the 2020/2021 academic year, the Equity, Diversity, and Learning Committee (now, called the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee) worked with the Board's Research Coordinator to review other boards' completed Student Census (e.g., Durham District School Board, Peel District School Board, Waterloo Regional District School Board, York Catholic District School Board) and then developed both demographic and school experiences questions for our census. Executive Council provided feedback and recommendations throughout the process. In September and October, we held public consultations for parents/guardians, students, and staff to receive their feedback as well. After the consultations, we finalized the wording of the Student Census with an eye on using age-appropriate language and administered it during the month of November.

There are two phases for the public dissemination of the 2021 Student Census data and interpretation:

1. Phase I: Summary of Student Demographics and Students Experiences across the Board
2. Phase II: Summary Student Census data linked with Personal Information already held by the Board in our Student Information System (i.e., student achievement, credit accumulation, graduation rate, suspensions/expulsions, special education services, and academic/extra-curricular program participation) across the Board

We completed Phase I in Spring 2022. We began Phase II in Summer 2022; the analyses, report writing, and dissemination will continue throughout the 2022-2023 academic year.



**I. Develop and implement a training plan for Superintendents and Administrators on the Board processes leading up to, for and following an exclusion. As part of the process, include clear articulation and accountability measures requiring:**

**i. all other strategies including modified day and parent involvement (where applicable) be exhausted prior to the request for exclusion;**

**ii. culturally responsive supports and strategies be utilized prior to the decision to exclude;**

**iii. reentry criteria be grounded solely in the removal of the threat to the physical or mental wellbeing of other pupils; and**

**iv. that coercive tactics cannot be included in criteria for re-admittance.**

The Senior Manager of Equity Services, who is trained as a social psychologist with a specialty in psychology and the law, has given presentations and workshops across Canada, the UK, and the US on equity issues in the legal system. Further, this Senior Manager of Equity is a professor emeritus after more than 20 years of teaching in post-secondary education. Since joining the Waterloo Catholic District School board, she has provided presentations and workshops across the system to school administrators, teachers, central staff consultants and other central staff personnel (including program services and student services staff).

Listed below:

- Implicit Bias in the Workplace
- Implicit Bias in Education
- Implicit Bias in the Classroom
- Equity in the Classroom
- Importance of Representation in Library Collections
- Reimagining Literature in the Classroom
- Microaggressions
- Adulthood
- Anti-Black Racism
- Anti-Asian Racism
- Anti-Indigenous Racism
- Allyship (and Inauthentic Allyship)
- Racism in Canada
- Racial Gaslighting (Racelighting)
- Covert Racism versus Overt Racism
- Types of Racism (i.e., Individual racism to Systemic Racism)
- Equitable Schools
- Adopting an Equity Lens in Decision Making
- Stereotype Threats
- Equity by Design

For the last year, Waterloo Catholic District School has primarily focused on building capacity among the leadership (i.e., Senior Staff and School Administrators). For example, we had a three-part series called Seeking Positive Solutions: Conflict Management and Equity: Recognizing Power and Privilege from the CPCO Program and Member Services. This series took a case study approach and asked the participants to draw on real life experiences as they engaged in the sessions. While the facilitators were two White women, the facilitators met regularly with the Superintendent of Learning with leadership in her portfolio and the Senior Manager of Equity to make the content was relevant to the needs of our board. This was a mandatory workshop for school administrators.



In June and August 2022, the Senior Staff participated in a multi-day workshop on co-creating equitable, inclusive educational and work environments facilitated by Dr. Kathy Obear. This facilitator was highly recommended by the Senior Manager of Equity who has participated in multiple workshops with this facilitator. This was a mandatory workshop for Senior Staff.

The Senior Manager of Equity ran a 3-day workshop on equity in August for staff around the system who was interested in being an equity champion and facilitating future conversations around race, gender, class, and sexuality. While 37 people signed up for the workshop, 28 people participated. This workshop will be repeated next August for staff who did not participate this year. There will be a Part II for participants who did participate this year.

In fall 2022, both the Senior Staff are participating a 4-session workshop facilitated by Anima Leadership on learning and naming racism. This was a mandatory workshop for all Senior Staff and School Administrators.

The Senior Manager of Equity has attended Catholic School Advisory Council meetings, by invitation, to discuss the equity work that is occurring at the board.

On April 21<sup>st</sup>, all staff will participate in a 2 hour anti-racism workshop with an emphasis on anti-Black and anti-Indigenous racism.

The New Teachers Induction Program (NTIP), the school leaders mentor program, and leadership program for aspiring leaders in the system have all embedded equity training through their program.

Dr. Kristen McLeod, a registered clinical developmental psychologist, has been providing bi-monthly interactive presentations and workshops for student services staff through the 2022-2023 academic year. Her focus is on trauma-informed practices in education. There are presentations and workshops from our Mental Health Lead for our superintendents, administrators and teachers on trauma-informed schools as well.

As we move forward, we continue to determine what equity training is mandatory and what is optional professional development. Traditionally, we have not had any mandatory training on anti-racism, anti-Black racism and bias, etc. for staff when they onboard with WCDSB. Our Senior Manager of Equity, Superintendent of Human Resources, and our Human Resources and Equity Officer are working together to build a plan of systematic training for new employees and continuing professional development on anti-racism, implicit bias, and microaggressions.

Finally, we are in the process of creating onboarding content for all employees on racism, anti-black racism, and anti-racist behavior and mindsets.

**J. Ensure that the process includes accessible language around the appeals process as well as access to supports (see D.) to help families navigate the process.**

We provide translated forms, paperwork, and surveys for our students and families. There is work to be done on this with our Systems Navigator and our English Language Learning Consultant. Not every form or piece of paperwork is translated. We have interpreters come to our schools when needed. As noted, there is work to be done here, which is currently being coordinated between our Equity Services Department, our Superintendent responsible for K – 12 Equity and Inclusion, as well as Multilingual Learners and community partners.

**K. Develop a protocol and communications plan for kindergarten registration/enrollment that allows families multiple and varied opportunities to meet with a diverse and culturally reflective “a school entry team” to discuss transition needs of students not entering from pre-kindergarten formal learning environments**

In our move towards developing a diverse and culturally reflective school entry team there have been connections made with our Ministry and Regional partners to collaborate on best practices to best utilize our new Systems



Navigator staff member to better support our incoming families and students. Our Systems Navigator will be integrated into the process and supporting our new to kindergarten families. Additionally, our Welcome to Kindergarten packages and information sessions include a school entry questionnaire to gather information to assist in being prepared to receive and support all families with students entering Kindergarten.

**L. Develop clear processes, timelines, accountability structures and communications protocols that explains to families the role(s), techniques, supports, timelines, appeals process, and all other information relevant to the inclusion and work of para-professional supports for students (including Applied Behaviour Analyst, Board-Certified Behaviour Analyst, Social Worker, Speech Language Pathologist, Occupational Therapist, Child and Youth Care Worker).**

Currently, the processes, timelines, accountability structures and communications protocols that explain to families the roles, techniques, supports, timelines, appeals process and all other information relevant to the inclusion and work of support staff who assist students can be found in the following locations:

- a. Spec Ed Plan: <https://www.wcdsb.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/36/2020/05/SPECIAL-EDUCATION-PLAN.pdf>
- b. Staff: <https://www.wcdsb.ca/programs-and-services/special-education/contact-us/>

**M. Develop local policies and protocols about the designs, regulations and contents of containment/calming rooms ensuring that they:**

- i. are only used for the purposes of de-escalation;
- ii. meet all local, and provincial health and safety regulations;
- iii. do not include content that will re-escalate the student;
- iv. do not contain items or fixtures that may be potentially harmful to the student in an escalated state;
- v. have a log to record the length of time in the room, the measures/supports used, people in the room; and
- vi. are inviting, calming and supportive of the student's regulation needs.

All schools were visited in the spring of 2022 to have an audit of their calming room policy and procedures. Administrators were provided with an in-service this fall to review calming room policy and procedures. Each school will be visited again this school year to audit for compliance. A process is being developed to ensure an annual audit procedure.

**N. Mandatory professional learning, developed by Black and other racialized external experts, tied to performance appraisals for superintendents, administrators, teachers, para-professionals (inc. Social Workers, Applied Behavioural Analysts, Board-Certified Behavioural Analysts, Child and Youth Care Workers) and support staff (inc. Early Childhood Educators, Educational Assistants, Administrative Assistants) on Human Rights and Equity including, identifying, addressing and dismantling anti-Black racism, with special attention to learning about:**

- i. racial profiling,
- ii. the contexts and impacts of Black youth and police interactions
- iii. disproportionalities in special education service delivery, identifications, programming and achievement for Black children and youth.

There is mandatory training by internal racialized experts (psychologist and social worker). We do have mandatory training that includes external racialized experts (though, not Black) as well.



**Recommendation:**

This report is for the information of the Board

**Prepared/Reviewed By:** Tyrone Dowling  
Director of Education

\*4.2 DIRECTOR Monitoring Reports: Where the Board receives from the CEO a monitoring report that flows from a responsibility delegated to the Director under Board Policy – except where approval is required by the Board on a matter delegated by policy to the Board – the minutes of the Meeting at which the Report is received shall expressly provide that the Board has received and approved of the Report as an action consistent with the authority delegated to the CEO, subject in all instances to what otherwise actually occurred.



# Good Governance for School Boards

## Trustee Professional Development Program

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### Module 14 – School Boards and Human Resources

*Last updated in September 2019*

*Videos developed in 2014*

#### **MODULE 14 IS COMPOSED OF 4 VIDEOS (PART A, B, C AND D) IN WHICH TRUSTEES WILL EXPLORE:**

- The employment function of the school board
- Employment law in the education context
- Labour relations and collective bargaining
- The board's role in health and safety

**Note:** The information provided below is based on a single point in time and may not reflect the current labour relations landscape. For the most up to date central agreement language, please visit the ministry's **Education Labour Updates webpage**  [<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/agreements/index.html>](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/agreements/index.html).

*Before reviewing Part A, please note:*

- O. Reg. 274/12 (Hiring Practices) was amended. Sector differences, based on central agreements, are as follows:
  - The French Public and French Catholic (ACEPO) sectors are exempted from the regulation, but its content is captured in their collective agreement
  - English Catholic sector bargained the regulation into the OECTA collective agreement
  - No amendments to O. Reg. 274/12 arose for members belonging to OSSTF

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- For members of ETFO, the amended regulation allows for greater teacher mobility
- As part of the 2014-17 agreements on central terms, all parties agreed to the transformation and streamlining of health, life and dental benefit plans in Ontario's education sector through the creation of 6 Employee Life and Health Trusts (ELHTs):
  - Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF) ELHT
  - Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association (OECTA) ELHT
  - Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO) ELHT
  - Association des enseignantes et des enseignants franco-ontarien Fiducie de soins de santé au bénéfice des membres (AEFO FSSBM)
  - Canadian Union of Public Employees Education Workers' Benefits Trust (CUPE EWBT)
  - Ontario Non-union Education Trust (ONE-T)
- Between November 2016 to June 1, 2018, 220,000 education-sector employees transitioned from school board benefits plans to the ELHTs and started receiving benefits.
- The ELHTs are governed by Boards of Trustees composed of employer, Crown, and union representatives. The majority of trustees are union appointees.
- Benefits that are provided by ELHTs: Life Insurance, Accidental Death and Dismemberment, Dental, Extended Health. Benefits excluded by ELHTs: Long Term Disability and Employee Assistance Program.
- ELHTs are funded by school boards by flow through funding, provided by the government. School boards no longer hold the responsibility for plan design or implementation, which now rests with the Trusts.
- Trust Agreements establish the terms and conditions for the EHLTs and Administration of benefits [your progress](#)

**<https://vimeo.com/284926263>**

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*Before reviewing Part B, please note:*

- *The Fair Workplaces, Better Jobs Act, 2017* (“Bill 148”) received Royal Assent on November 27, 2017, and amended the *Employment Standards Act, Labour Relations Act, and Occupational Health and Safety Act*. A number of the amendments introduced by Bill 148 were subsequently repealed by the *Making Ontario Open For Business Act, 2018* (“Bill 47”).
- Bill 148 increased the general minimum wage from \$11.60 to \$14 per hour which took effect January 1, 2018. Further increases tied to inflation will begin in 2020.
- Currently, teachers are exempt from some of the standards set out in the *Employment Standards Act*, including minimum wage, vacation and personal emergency leave.
- Some unionized education workers will be affected by amended provisions related to minimum wage, vacation with pay and personal emergency leave if their collective agreements do not provide superior provisions. For those employees without superior provisions, Bill 47 provides:
  - Sick leave: three unpaid days for personal illness, injury, or medical emergency
  - Family responsibility leave: three unpaid days for illness, injury, medical emergency, or urgent matters relating to a parent, grandparent, child, spouse, sibling, or dependent relative of the employee
  - Bereavement leave: two unpaid days for the death of a parent, grandparent, child, spouse, sibling or dependent relative

**<https://vimeo.com/284926298>**

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*Before reviewing Part C, please note:*

- In 2017, following consultations with education sector stakeholders, the government passed several notable amendments to the *School Boards Collective Bargaining Act*.

These changes include:

- Requiring an additional five (5) days' notice in advance of any change to a strike or lock-out that would result in complete withdrawal of services at a school or close a school
- Mandatory participation of all education worker unions in central bargaining
- Clarifying the status of newly established bargaining units during the term of an agreement
- Clarifying the role of the Crown and employer bargaining agents by allowing them to request information from local units and district school boards, as well as assisting in local negotiations
- Requiring trustees' associations to report all labour relations expenditures and the salaries of their labour relations employees whose salary is greater than \$100K
- Permitting extensions to collective agreements by agreement of the central parties and the Crown
- Granting the Crown, in addition to the trustees' associations, the school boards, and the unions/federations, the ability to file complaints with the Ontario Labour Relations Board in the event of a dispute with respect to central and local terms
- Continuing the Education Relations Commission as an entity that can advise the government when a labour disruption jeopardizes the school year
- Employee bargaining agencies, which represent education workers in central bargaining, have undergone compositional changes since 2014 and are subject to

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change in the future. A Minister's Regulation formally establishing bargaining agencies to represent education workers in central bargaining is required to be filed prior to each round of bargaining

**<https://vimeo.com/284926356>**

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*Before reviewing Part D, please note:*

- Coming out of the central collective agreement bargaining, committees were established among the Crown, the unions/federations/associations and the employer bargaining agent(s). One of these committees was The Provincial Working Group on Health and Safety (PWGHS). This committee released **[The Road Map to Reporting Workplace Violence in Ontario School Boards](#)** **<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/workplace/violence.html>**. This document serves as a tool providing school boards with clarity on reporting requirements, legislation, policy, procedures, guidelines, reports, data and other sources of information for incidents of workplace violence within schools.

**<https://vimeo.com/284926392>**

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# Good Governance for School Boards

## Trustee Professional Development Program

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### Module 15 — What Makes a Great Board Chair?

*Last updated in September 2019*

#### IN THIS MODULE, TRUSTEES WILL EXPLORE:

- the skills and knowledge that contribute to being an effective board chair
- a chair's role and responsibilities
- key aspects of leadership

#### INTRODUCTION

This module is intended to be a resource for chairs and vice-chairs, and for trustees considering undertaking the role of chair.

The *Education Act* [s.218.4] requires boards of trustees to elect a chair from among its members for a one-year term. The chair of the board of trustees is an individual trustee chosen by the board as a leader who represents them. As an individual trustee, the chair has no greater rights or powers than any other member of the board. However, the members of the board, as a whole, in electing one of their peers to be the chair of the board, confer on the chair a leadership role. The chair is responsible for fulfilling specific duties as outlined in the *Education Act* as well as setting the tone for a collaborative working environment in which all trustees have a voice.

The board's efficiency, effectiveness and creativity, as well as its ability to successfully resolve conflict and solve problems, are often directly related to the chair's leadership skills and style. The chair's communication and interpersonal skills can also significantly contribute to high levels of trustee and staff morale.

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Through relationships with trustees, the director of education and the community, an effective chair approaches the role with a belief that the chair is first among equals rather than an all-powerful ruler. They understand that the chair fulfills the same role as other trustees, but has the additional responsibility for managing the board's work. The selection of chair is important and should never be taken lightly.

Great board chairs demonstrate the ability to be strategic thinkers, expert facilitators, and clear communicators. They step into their one-year term with the ability to develop and nurture positive working relationships with the director of education and their peers around the board table. They assume a shared responsibility with the director, for achieving success across the system. The partnership of board chair and director serves as a portal through which communication is passed to trustees and to the system.

## **GREAT BOARD CHAIRS:**

### **View the big picture**

Effective board chairs help trustees stay focussed on the 'big picture' without becoming involved in day-to-day operations. When issues that relate to the actual running of the school system are raised, the chair reminds trustees of the direction they have already provided staff through policy and the multi-year strategic plan, and the importance of leaving the solution at that level. They challenge trustees to remember their role as strategic leaders of the system.

### **Facilitate dialogue**

Boards conduct their work through discussion, debate and decisions made at the board table in a public meeting. Chairs need to remember that trustees cannot get together to discuss or otherwise deal with any matter in a way that materially advances the business or decision-making of the board.

While one of the jobs of the chair is to preside over meetings, a characteristic of a great chair is the ability to facilitate the process in a way that encourages meaningful dialogue that explores all sides of issues. When the chair presides, they ensure that meetings are conducted in accordance with legislation, bylaws and policies of the

board, and that meetings run on time. When the chair facilitates, they create a setting where different viewpoints are raised, are listened to and are questioned with the goal of promoting understanding. Chairs who are great facilitators lead the board by making comments like “perhaps we might consider...” and “what viewpoints haven’t we considered or voiced?” as it is the chair’s responsibility to ensure that trustees hold discussions that result in well-thought-out decisions, and that they do so in a climate of trust.

### **Demonstrate strong interpersonal skills**

The job of a board chair is not an easy one. The chair is an equal among their peers, yet may need to address disruptive behaviours and challenge trustees when their individual actions conflict with others. Chairs need a high level of self-awareness, recognizing when they have become so engaged in an issue that they have lost clarity and need to step back. They must be great listeners, not just for the words that are being spoken, but also for the unspoken concerns raised. They need to demonstrate empathy, recognizing the good will of everyone they work with, even when the behaviours they encounter are abrasive or unruly on the surface. Trustees become known as being great board chairs when they can relate to people in a way that addresses important issues while building relationships. They communicate the message that says, “I don’t have to agree with you to ensure that your voice is heard.”

### **Communicate effectively**

Unless the board of trustees assigns someone else the responsibility, the chair is the spokesperson for the board and represents the board to the community and stakeholders. This means that the person who assumes the position of chair must be an articulate and clear communicator and be able to represent the system well. It also means that sometimes the chair will have to respond to challenges to the board’s decisions. It will always require the chair to communicate in a way that demonstrates confidence in the system.

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## UNDERSTANDING THE ROLES OF THE BOARD

In defining the roles and responsibilities of the chair it is essential to consider the roles and responsibilities of the board of trustees as an entity and of the trustees as individuals. In addition, since the chair and the board must work very closely and harmoniously with the director of education, the roles and responsibilities of the director must be clearly understood. A strong and effective board chair understands the distinct roles of board, director and staff and, in leading the board, can assist trustees in maintaining the distinction among these roles.

*For more information about the role of the board of trustees, director of education and individual trustees, please refer to **Module 3 - Roles and Responsibilities**.*

### Chair of the Board - Role and Responsibilities

The chair is chosen by the board of trustees as someone they are proud to have as a leader who represents them. Due to their extra responsibilities, chairs may receive additional honoraria.

The board chair and vice-chair (if a board chooses to have a vice-chair) are appointed for one-year terms at the first meeting in December each year. School boards may choose to have elections for the position of chair and vice-chair by secret ballot or by recorded voting (public). If there is a tied vote, the *Education Act* requires that it shall be decided by the drawing of lots. The *Act* does not indicate the number of times that the same person may be elected as chair, however, boards may create a by-law with term limits (for example, 3 consecutive 1 year terms).

As outlined in section 218.4 of the *Education Act*, the chair of the board shall:

- Preside over meetings of the board
- Conduct the meetings in accordance with the board's procedures and practices
- Establish agendas for board meetings, in consultation with the board's director of education or the supervisory officer acting as the board's director of education
- Ensure that members of the board have the information needed for informed discussion of the agenda items

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- Act as spokesperson to the public on behalf of the board, unless otherwise determined by the board
- Convey the decisions of the board to the board's director of education or the supervisory officer acting as the board's director of education
- Provide leadership to the board in maintaining the board's focus on the multi-year strategic plan
- Provide leadership to the board in maintaining the board's focus on the board's mission and vision
- Assume such other responsibilities as may be specified by the board

### **Role of Vice-Chair**

According to the *Education Act*, trustees may elect a vice-chair to act in the chair's absence. As a member of the board, the vice-chair has the same roles and responsibilities as other trustees and assumes those of the chair in their absence.

Serving in the role of vice-chair offers a valuable opportunity to learn and be mentored about the role and responsibilities of the board chair. Serving as chair of board committees also offers experiences, insights and skill-building that contribute to readiness to take on the role of board chair.

*Additional information about the roles and responsibilities of the chair and vice-chair is available in **Module 3 - Roles and Responsibilities**.*

## **THE BOARD CHAIR AS LEADER**

While each individual trustee is a leader and contributes to the smooth functioning of the board, leadership is a key feature of the chair position. The characteristics of effective leadership that a chair would model include empathy, positive outlook, determination and resolve, objectivity, a talent for team-building and motivation, a capacity to build trust, communication and presentation skills, and resourcefulness.

Strong leadership is crucial to effective board performance. Characteristics of excellent leadership may also include:

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## **Character and Integrity**

A leader's character plays a vital role in determining the effectiveness of their leadership. Trustworthiness and honesty are the two important aspects of a leader's character. Integrity and adherence to strong moral principles are also important features of strong leadership.

## **Vision**

Everyone who runs for office as a school board trustee does so for a reason beyond themselves. As a leader, their challenge is to articulate the vision, describe how it will bring improvements and, through sincere dialogue, find ways to improve it and inspire their colleagues, board staff and the community to share the vision. Vision helps a leader develop goals, chart a direction and inspire others.

## **Positive Outlook, Determination and Resolve**

Presenting a positive attitude even in the worst of situations is a characteristic of a good leader. The attitude and resolve of a leader are important determinants in successfully overcoming challenges. An effective school board chair is, like all trustees, passionate about student success and well-being and public education. Effective leaders believe that their efforts will have a positive effect.

## **Trust and Respect**

A good leader does not demand or command respect, they earn it. Respect must be reciprocal and mutual. A strong leader sets the tone for a working climate where respect is built on a foundation of the kind of social discourse that takes place across the school community, genuinely listening and valuing the opinions of others. Respect and trust are nurtured through honest and open dialogue.

Trust among team members fosters organizational conditions that encourage individuals to initiate and sustain activities that lead to meeting the goals of the board and improving student outcomes. Trust is sustained in relationships where respect, personal regard, competence, and personal integrity are valued and practiced.

## **Objectivity**

Objectivity is an important aspect of leadership. Despite personal opinions, there may be situations in which a leader may need to set their own beliefs aside in the interest of supporting the decisions of the board and presenting a unified front to the media and the public.

## **Resourcefulness**

Managing resources effectively, thinking outside the box and finding solutions to unforeseen problems are all important functions of a leader. Creative

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thinkers believe in their own abilities to meet challenges effectively and efficiently. Creative thinking is the ability to develop original, diverse and elaborate ideas that open doors and create opportunities. In times of budgetary restraint or short timelines, for example, resourceful leaders will find innovative ways to continue to do an excellent job with less money, fewer staff or less time.

## CONCLUSION

Great Board Chairs:

- work well with individual trustees, the board as a group and the director of education
- achieve openness and transparency at the board table
- keep the agenda focussed on student achievement and well-being
- work continuously to improve school board performance
- run a flexible process
- have an open leadership style
- have a broad range of experiences and expertise
- prepare for the role
- balance legislative requirements and board strategy

Board chairs, whether new in the role or with years of experience, strive to strengthen their leadership capacity and further develop the skill sets that allow them to be effective in their service to the school board, staff, students and their families.

There are many ways that board chairs can develop these skills. Attending conferences can deepen their knowledge of the leading education issues affecting their school boards. Participating in workshops related to governance and leadership can enhance their skills in running board meetings, managing public relations, engaging communities and resolving conflict. Networking with other chairs and undertaking formal or informal mentorships will provide practical insights into the day-to-day challenges of their role. Taking advantage of membership in provincial and national **school board organizations** opens access to a broad range of resources specifically developed to support the governance role.

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Ontario Catholic School  
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## Trustee Professional Development Program

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### Module 16 – First Nation Trustees: Unique Roles & Responsibilities

*Last updated in December 2019*

*Video developed in 2014*

#### IN THIS MODULE, TRUSTEES WILL EXPLORE:

- The dual role of the First Nation trustee
- The unique responsibilities of the First Nation trustee;
  - to the First Nation community
  - to the school board
  
- Information about Indigenous students in Ontario
- The responsibility of all trustees to work on behalf of Indigenous students

*Please note - in this module, we use the term “Indigenous” interchangeably with “First Nation, Métis and Inuit”.*

The video presented below was developed in 2014. It features First Nation Trustees sharing their experiences, perspectives and work in supporting and promoting the success of Indigenous students. Please note that references to Canadian Census data may have changed.

**<https://vimeo.com/284933651>**

**[Click here to obtain a transcript of the video.](#)**

#### THE DUAL ROLE OF THE FIRST NATION TRUSTEE

First Nation Trustees (otherwise known as *Trustees to represent the needs of Indigenous Students*) have a unique role in addition to the general role and

responsibilities they fulfill as members of a school board.

First Nation Trustees are appointed to a school board by their community. They have a special responsibility to act in the best interests of the Indigenous students who attend schools of their school board under an Education Services Agreement (ESA) or the Reciprocal Education Approach (REA). As outlined in **Ontario Regulation 462/97, “First Nations Representation on Boards”** [<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/970462>](https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/970462), First Nation representation on a board of trustees is determined by the existence of one or more ESAs or the REA and by the number of Indigenous students attending the board’s schools.

## **Education Services Agreements**

The Education Services Agreement (ESA) are agreements between First Nations and/or education authorities and school boards to support a First Nation student who resides on reserve to attend a provincially funded school. Reverse Education Services Agreements (RESAs) are agreements between First Nations and/or education authorities and school boards to allow a pupil of the board to attend a First Nation-operated or federally-operated school. ESAs are on one level, a purchase-of-service agreement stating that the school board will, for an agreed-upon fee, provide accommodation, instruction, and special services to Indigenous students. Of equal importance, the ESA reflects the relationship and respect between a First Nation community and the school board and supports how the board and community will work together to provide the best possible education outcome for Indigenous students. Today, school boards can view ESAs as positive tools for building relationships, reciprocity and respect for shared histories as opposed to business contracts. ESAs and RESAs can vary depending on the types of services and programs that the First Nation community and the school board agree should be provided. Once the ESA is in place, the school board is committed to providing the programs and services in the agreement.

Beyond the obligations as per the ESA, the school board has a general obligation to provide:

- equitable access to education services and opportunities that are consistent for all students and meet provincial expectations
- an instructional and learning environment that respects and promotes Indigenous culture and shared history

- efforts to recruit, retain and promote Indigenous teaching and support staff
- provision of Indigenous cultural, language and land-based instructional programs
- defined and transparent reporting to each First Nation Education Authority, school boards and First Nation Advisory Committees
- First Nation involvement in schools attended by Indigenous students

## **Reciprocal Education Approach**

Sections 185 and 188 of the *Education Act* were amended in September 2019 to establish the Reciprocal Education Approach (REA). Section 185 of the *Act* addresses situations where students living “off-reserve” wish to attend a First Nation-operated or federally-operated school (“First Nation school”) located “on” or “off-reserve”. These arrangements were formerly known as reverse tuition fee agreements. Section 188 of the *Act* addresses situations where students ordinarily residing “on-reserve” wish to attend a school of a school board.

REA seeks to support First Nation students in achieving greater access to education and strengthen a parent or guardian’s choice when selecting the type of education that best meets their child’s needs. Under the REA, and when specific requirements are met, school boards will be required to take a student-first approach by admitting eligible students who wish to attend a school of a school board and supporting eligible students who wish to attend a First Nation-operated or federally-operated school, subject to that school’s admission policies.

Under the REA, ESAs and RESAs that were entered into prior to September 1, 2019 may remain in effect until the agreement expires or is terminated. Parties may continue to enter into agreements under the REA.

## **The Role of the First Nation Trustee**

The First Nation trustee has a key role in representing the interests of the Indigenous community at the school board level and ensuring that there is dialogue with the community about the work of the board and, in particular, matters affecting Indigenous students.

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Under Ontario's *Education Act* **Ontario Regulation 462/97, "First Nations Representation on Boards"**

**<<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/970462>>**, First Nation trustees are appointed by the community they represent and affirmed by the school board. First Nation trustees are full members of the board of trustees and, as such, have all the rights and responsibilities of any other duly-elected trustee.

The First Nation trustee shares with other members of the board of trustees the responsibility to:

- govern in a manner that is responsive to its entire community
- act in the interests of all learners in the district
- advocate actively for students, their learning and their well-being in the board's work with the community, the municipality and the province
- promote confidence in publicly funded education through communications about the goals and achievements of the board

The board of trustees is responsible for setting the overall direction for the school system through a multi-year strategic planning process that is reviewed annually. The board of trustees also provides direction through its policy processes. These include planning, developing, implementing and evaluating policy. The annual budget also reflects the approved directions of the elected board in the way resources are allocated to schools and programs.

Through the director of education, the board of trustees holds the system accountable for achieving the results established through its planning process. The elected board reports to the public and the province about system and school performance.

The First Nation trustee, while sharing these responsibilities and contributions to the decision-making of the board, ensures the interests of Indigenous students are recognized.

### **The Unique Responsibilities of the First Nation Trustee**

The First Nation trustee contributes to:

- monitoring the negotiation of the education services agreement

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- ensuring that the actions of the board reflect the education services agreement
- ensuring that both parties to the agreement are fulfilling their obligations
- ensuring that mechanisms are in place for effective accountability to the First Nation community
- ensuring a high-quality academic and cultural education for Indigenous students
- ensuring that Indigenous students are free from any expression of racism and harassment as students of the board's schools.

The First Nation trustee is also in a position to encourage the involvement of parents and Indigenous communities in their students' education within the schools of the district school board. This value is embedded in **Ontario's First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework** <<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/aboriginal/fnmiframework.pdf>> (2007-2017).

Some education services agreements specify First Nation representation on the school board's Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC). Where a First Nation trustee is required by regulation to be a member of the board, the SEAC membership must also include a First Nation trustee to represent the interests of First Nation students. As well, a large number of school boards have established First Nation Advisory Committees to provide a forum for discussing Indigenous education issues. When school boards have a First Nation trustee, they may have a First Nation Advisory Committee. In these committees, the First Nation trustee is usually the chair or co-chair, and membership includes a representative from each First Nation that has students in the board's schools. Increasingly in boards, these committees also have a responsibility to consider appropriate programs and other issues affecting Métis and Inuit students.

### **The Responsibilities of Individual Trustees**

While the First Nation trustee's primary role is to represent the needs of Indigenous students, they must, like all trustees, maintain a focus on student achievement and well-being and to participate in making decisions that benefit the entire board district while representing the interests of their constituents. Trustees must also interpret the views and decisions of the

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elected board in their reporting back to their constituents. It is important that trustees are aware of the support and advice available from the director of education and senior staff and are familiar with board policies that may apply to issues under discussion between the trustees and their constituents.

A school trustee is a member of a team – the board of trustees. Only the board of trustees has the authority to make decisions or to take action; an individual trustee in and of themselves does not have this authority. While members of the board of trustees act as representatives of their community, they have a responsibility, as a member of the school board, to participate in policy-making and strategic planning that is in the interests of all of the school board's students and is grounded in promoting student achievement and well-being. In this respect, every trustee of the board has a responsibility for the interests of Indigenous students who attend the schools of the board.

## **INDIGENOUS STUDENTS IN ONTARIO**

### **First Nation Students in Ontario**

The 2016 Canadian Census reports that approximately 236,680 First Nation peoples live in Ontario. Approximately 23% of Ontario's First Nation peoples live on reserves. There are 133 distinct First Nation communities in Ontario. Outside of reserves, about 77% of First Nation peoples live in rural or urban areas and predominantly in urban areas. The census indicates that the overall Ontario school-age (ages 5-19) population of First Nation students is 62,840.

Indigenous students who live in First Nation communities attend schools in their own communities or attend the province's publicly-funded schools. First Nation communities operate a significant number of schools and alternative education programs - the majority of these are at the elementary level. In addition, there are currently six federally administered schools for Grades 1 to 8 in Ontario among the following communities: Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory, near Belleville; and, Six Nations of the Grand River First Nation, near Brantford.

Financial responsibility for the education of First Nation students who reside in First Nation communities, whether they attend publicly-funded schools or schools in First Nation communities, falls under the jurisdiction of Indigenous Services Canada.

As noted previously, First Nation students who live in First Nation communities and attend schools operated by a district school board or

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school authority do so under either the REA or an ESA, where this agreement has not yet expired. These agreements are legal and binding.

As noted in the census data, a large percentage of First Nation students live outside a First Nation community, often in urban areas. These students may have relocated with their families to urban areas or were born in those areas. The challenge for school boards is to encourage confidential voluntary self-identification so that they will know the numbers of Indigenous students in their schools and be able to plan for and allocate resources that meet their specific needs and honour their identity as Indigenous children and youth. Voluntary confidential self-identification policies are developed in collaboration with Indigenous communities and must respect issues of how data is collected, stored, used and shared with the Indigenous community.

### **Métis Students in Ontario**

The 2016 Canadian Census reports that approximately 120,585 Métis people live in Ontario. The census also indicates that the overall Ontario school-age (ages 5–19) population of Métis students is 26,135.

The Métis are a distinct Aboriginal people with a unique history, culture, language and territory that includes the waterways of Ontario, surrounds the Great Lakes and spans what was known as the historic Northwest. Although there is no general agreement on criteria for an exact definition of Métis, Canada's Métis were formally recognized as an Aboriginal people in section 35 of the *Constitution Act*, 1982. In a unanimous decision based on a case involving the rights of a family belonging to the Sault Ste. Marie Métis community, the Supreme Court of Canada confirmed the existence of Métis communities in Canada and the constitutional protection of their existing Aboriginal rights.

The term “Métis” in section 35 of the Constitution does not encompass all individuals with mixed Indigenous and European heritage; rather, it refers to “distinctive peoples who, in addition to their mixed ancestry, developed their own customs, way of life, and recognizable group identity separate from their Indian or Inuit and European forebears.” The Court did not set out a comprehensive definition of Métis for all purposes. It did, however, set out the basic means to identify Métis rights-holders. The Court identified three broad factors – self-identification, ancestral connection to the historic Métis community, and community acceptance:

- **Self-identification** - the individual must self-identify as a member of a Métis community. ~~It is not enough to self-identify as Métis,~~

that identification must have an ongoing connection to a historic Métis community.

- **Ancestral Connection** - Métis rights-holders must have some proof of ancestral connection to the historic Métis community whose collective rights they are exercising.
- **Community Acceptance** - there must be proof of acceptance by the modern community. Membership in a Métis political organization may be relevant but the membership requirements of the organization and its role in the Métis community must also be put into evidence. The evidence must be “objectively verifiable.” That means that there must be documented proof and a fair process for community acceptance.

The Court said that the Métis were included as one of the “aboriginal peoples of Canada” to recognize them, to value distinctive Métis cultures, and to enhance their survival.

As with First Nation students, all school boards in Ontario have a voluntary confidential self-identification policy that applies equally to Métis and Inuit students and is developed in consultation with Métis and Inuit communities.

## **Inuit Students**

There were 3,860 Inuit in Ontario according to 2016 Census figures. The overall Ontario school-age (ages 5–19) population of Inuit students is 1,125. The majority of these students live in the Ottawa area and attend Ottawa schools. Across Canada, the great majority of the entire Inuit population, live in communities in: Nunatsiavut (Labrador); Nunavik (Quebec); Nunavut; and the Inuvialuit Settlement Region of the Northwest Territories. Each of these four Inuit groups has settled land claims. These Inuit regions cover one-third of Canada’s land mass.

The word “Inuit” means “the people” in the Inuit language Inuktitut and is the term by which Inuit refer to themselves. Inuit are the Aboriginal people of Arctic Canada. To understand some of the challenges facing Inuit families in the area of education, it is necessary to review some of the rapid social changes that have occurred in the past 60 years. As recently as the 1950s, the majority of Inuit peoples lived primarily in small semi-nomadic groups relying on the resources of the land and sea for sustenance. During the 1950s, Inuit

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were being relocated from their homes to resettle in communities where their children were assimilated into the Canadian education system, either in residential schools or in schools built in northern communities during the 1960s.

At school, speaking Inuktitut was actively discouraged. Attendance at school was enforced by the RCMP. The curricula followed southern Canadian mainstream models. Further disruptions to learning resulted when families moved into communities from outpost camps to maintain contact with their children. Many Inuit parents and Elders, particularly in small communities, could not comprehend why their able-bodied older children, their helpers, had to sit about in school learning nothing useful for their lives, as they saw it. As soon as children were of legal age to leave school, many families encouraged their children to join their parents in hunting and maintaining their families.

This extremely rapid change has had a significant impact on Inuit children and families. Their adjustment to school life and successes in school are a testament to the resilience of the community. Inuit student achievement and graduation rates are steadily increasing, and the Inuktitut language is one of the strongest Aboriginal languages in Canada.

## **SHARED RESPONSIBILITY FOR INDIGENOUS EDUCATION IN ONTARIO SCHOOLS**

### **The Role of School Boards**

Beyond the obligations boards have under ESAs and the REA, the opportunity is available to them to play a significant role in developing education programs that meet the unique needs of Indigenous students at both the elementary and secondary levels. The opportunity also exists to consult with and involve First Nations, Métis and Inuit leaders in their local communities to create education programs for all students which highlight the benefits for them, their communities and society as a whole, of learning experiences that draw on the rich cultures, histories, perspectives and world views of First Nation, Métis, and Inuit peoples.

**Ontario's First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework**  [<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/aboriginal/fnmiframework.pdf>](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/aboriginal/fnmiframework.pdf) (2007-2017) provided the strategic policy context within which the Ministry of Education, school boards, schools, and Indigenous partners and communities work together to improve the academic achievement of Indigenous students.

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The role of all trustees, not just First Nation trustees, is to help create the vision and set the strategic direction that will guide the board and its schools. As the representative of Indigenous students, the First Nation trustee is in a unique position to ensure that Indigenous culture is part of that vision and that the strategic direction of the board includes the interests of Indigenous peoples.

Indigenous communities are interested in finding ways to promote and support the success and well-being of their children. All trustees have a role in representing Indigenous students and their families at the board table and beyond to ensure their voices are heard and to promote student success and well-being.

### **Truth and Reconciliation Commission**

In 2015, the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was issued. Its **Calls to Action** [<http://trc.ca/assets/pdf/Calls\\_to\\_Action\\_English2.pdf>](http://trc.ca/assets/pdf/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf) represented the Commission's blueprint for Canadians to work together to build a better future for Indigenous Canadians. Two Calls in particular focused on education - calls 62 and 63:

- We call upon the federal, provincial, and territorial governments, in consultation and collaboration with Survivors, Aboriginal peoples, and educators, to:
  - Make age-appropriate curriculum on residential schools, Treaties, and Aboriginal peoples' historical and contemporary contributions to Canada a mandatory education requirement for Kindergarten to Grade Twelve students.
  - Provide the necessary funding to post-secondary institutions to educate teachers on how to integrate Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods into classrooms.
  - Provide the necessary funding to Aboriginal schools to utilize Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods in classrooms.

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- Establish senior-level positions in government at the assistant deputy minister level or higher dedicated to Aboriginal content in education.
- We call upon the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada to maintain an annual commitment to Aboriginal education issues, including:
  - Developing and implementing Kindergarten to Grade Twelve curriculum and learning resources on Aboriginal peoples in Canadian history, and the history and legacy of residential schools.
  - Sharing information and best practices on teaching curriculum related to residential schools and Aboriginal history.
  - Building student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy, and mutual respect.
  - Identifying teacher-training needs relating to the above

The Ontario government has committed to implementing these Calls to Action, and has begun a number of initiatives within the Ministry of Education to do so. In turn, Ontario’s public school boards, school board trustees, schools, teachers, and communities have begun to take action to improve educational experiences and outcomes for Indigenous students. For more information, see **[Module 20 – A Journey Towards Truth and Reconciliation](#)**.

### **Ontario’s First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework**

The Ministry of Education released its **[First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework](#)**

**<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/aboriginal/fnmiframework.pdf>** in 2007.

This framework set out objectives and strategies designed to meet two primary challenges by the year 2016 – to improve achievement among Indigenous students and to close the gap between Indigenous and all students. Progress has been made in both areas, but work continues.

The introduction to the Framework describes its directions as follows:

*“The strategies outlined in the framework are based on a holistic and integrated approach to improving Aboriginal student outcomes. The*

*overriding issues affecting Aboriginal student achievement are a lack of awareness among teachers of the particular learning styles of Aboriginal students, and a lack of understanding within schools and school boards of First Nation, Métis, and Inuit cultures, histories, and perspectives. Factors that contribute to student success include teaching strategies that are appropriate to Aboriginal learner needs, curriculum that reflects First Nation, Métis, and Inuit cultures and perspectives, effective counselling and outreach, and a school environment that encourages Aboriginal student and parent engagement. It is also important for educators to understand the First Nations perspective on the school system, which has been strongly affected by residential school experiences and has resulted in intergenerational mistrust of the education system. It is essential that First Nation, Métis, and Inuit students are engaged and feel welcome in school, and that they see themselves and their cultures in the curriculum and the school community.”*  
(p.6)

Since it was released, intensive and successful efforts have been made in school boards across the province to move towards the realization of the objectives of the Framework. Most recently, a **Third Progress Report** <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/indigenous/third-report.html> on the implementation of the Framework was released in 2018.

## CONCLUSION

While the First Nation trustee has a unique role in working for the best interests of Indigenous students attending Ontario schools, there is the parallel role of serving as a member of the school board to promote student success and well-being for all the students of the board. The First Nation trustee’s fellow board members equally have a responsibility for all students including Indigenous students. Together they can work to ensure that the cultures, histories, perspectives and world views of First Nation, Métis, and Inuit peoples are fully represented in the teaching and learning environments throughout the board, thereby enriching the education experience for all students.

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## Trustee Professional Development Program

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### Module 17 – Trustee Code of Conduct

*Last updated in January 2020*

*Video Developed in 2015*

### **MODULE 17 IS COMPOSED OF 1 VIDEO AND A WRITTEN MODULE IN WHICH TRUSTEES WILL EXPLORE:**

- The benefits of a code of conduct
- The legal context related to a code of conduct
- The components of an effective code of conduct
- Processes in dealing with an alleged breach of a code of conduct

*Before reviewing the video, please note these changes:*

- In April 2018, the Minister of Education made **Ontario Regulation 246/18: Members of School Boards - Code of Conduct** [<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/180246>](https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/180246) under the *Education Act*.
- Every school board is now required to:
  - have a code of conduct for trustees
  - make it available to the public
  - review it by May 15, 2023 and by May 15 every fourth year thereafter
  - after each review, pass a resolution to adopt the code, either as it exists or as amended

**<https://vimeo.com/284937279>**

**[Click here to obtain a transcript of the video.](#)**

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## INTRODUCTION

School board trustees are leaders of their school boards and advocates for a strong education system. A clear understanding of a school board trustee's role and responsibilities is fundamental to good governance. A trustee is a member of a board, not a member of a parliament, and it is important for both trustees and the general public to understand that school board trustees hold no individual authority. Unlike provincial and federal parliaments, school board members do not vote according to an official political "affiliation" nor are there "governing" trustees and "opposition" trustees.

For decisions of a board of trustees to be binding on a school board, they must be made at a legally constituted public board meeting where the board of trustees considers and passes a formal motion that receives a majority (or other applicable voting threshold) of the votes cast by its members. It is vital that trustees understand the requirements for an effective board meeting (See ***Module 12 – Running Effective Meetings***) including the Rules of Order applicable to those meetings. An effective trustee understands their role within the board's governance model and how decisions are made by the board.

In carrying out their role, trustees have the very real challenge of balancing their responsibilities and allegiances as representatives of their communities with their role as education leaders within the decision-making body of the board as a whole. Trustees are committed, and are required under the *Education Act*, to bring forward to the board the concerns of parents, students, and supporters of the board; yet as members of a governing body they must work collaboratively with fellow board members and make policy decisions that are beneficial to the entire school board community. This focus can mean, at times, that the ultimate decisions made are at variance with the specific interests of a particular geographical constituency or interest group.

A trustee's mandate is to maintain a focus on student achievement and well-being and to participate in making decisions that benefit the entire board community while representing the interests of their constituents. Trustees must also be able to explain the decisions of their board when they report back to their constituents. As noted in ***Module 3 – Right from the Start: Roles and Responsibilities***, the interface between a trustee and his or her constituents can be both rewarding and demanding. It is important that trustees are aware of the support and advice available from the director of education and senior staff and are familiar with board policies that may apply to issues under discussion between a trustee and a constituent.

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**Under the *Education Act* (s. 218.1) duties of the individual trustee include:**

- carry out his or her responsibilities in a manner that assists the board in fulfilling its duties under the *Education Act*, including the board’s duties under section 169.1, and under regulations and guidelines under the Act;
- attend and participate in meetings of the board, including meetings of board committees of which he or she is a member;
- consult with parents, students and supporters of the board on the board’s multi-year plan;
- bring concerns of parents, students and supporters of the board to the attention of the board;
- uphold the implementation of any board resolution after it is passed by the board
- entrust the day to day management of the board to its staff through the board’s director of education;
- maintain focus on student achievement and well-being;
- comply with the board’s code of conduct.

## **THE BOARD - WORKING TOGETHER**

Boards of trustees provide policy direction to their schools to ensure opportunity, excellence and accountability in the education system. By modeling collaboration and cooperation, they promote public confidence in the board and in the public school system.

A board of trustees is a group of individual members who can only be effective when they are working together as a cohesive whole. The personality, values, beliefs, strengths and weaknesses of each individual influence how the board works. Just as it is important for individual trustees to be clear about their own values, strengths and limitations, it is equally vital to the effectiveness of the board for the members to understand these characteristics in each other. This makes it possible to build a collective board

where there is strong mutual respect and shared understanding of the role of an individual trustee, of the board as a whole, and of the director of education and their staff. This is what enables effective decision-making that works for the whole board and for the entire school system.

The board of trustees as a whole has to take responsibility to resolve potentially dysfunctional situations and strive to build dynamics that demonstrate a commitment to:

- Collaborative decision-making
- Doing the work required and sharing responsibility
- Contributing to public meetings in a way that earns public confidence in the work of the board
- Putting the good of the school system before individual political agendas
- Focusing on assessing the value of initiatives and controlling costs
- Being open-minded to the views of fellow board members

School board trustees are individuals who have been elected to represent their constituents. At the same time, however, they are members of a board of trustees that must collectively make decisions based on the mission, vision and values of the board. It takes a willingness of board members to explore the very best governing practices available, to examine their own ways of doing business and, as necessary, to adopt practices that will make them more effective governors.

One overall indicator of success is public confidence in the system. A crucial factor in this regard is how well a board governs itself. One of the key tools the board has at its disposal is an effective code of conduct.

## **CODES OF CONDUCT**

Boards are required in **Ontario Regulation 246/18: Members of School Boards - Code of Conduct** [\(<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/180246>](https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/180246) to adopt a code of conduct that applies to the members of the board. The code of conduct is designed for trustees by trustees. It is a policy that demonstrates how trustees have determined to regulate themselves.

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Student trustees are not required by law to have a code of conduct. However, it is expected that in their capacity as recognized leaders contributing to the effective governance of a board, student trustees abide by their board's code of conduct.

A code of conduct serves to define acceptable and respectful behaviours, clarify the rules of civil engagement, promote high standards of practice, and provide a framework for professional conduct and responsibilities. A code of conduct contributes to confidence in public education and respect for the integrity of trustees in the community.

It is suggested that a board's By-Law require that a code of conduct policy be established and include the parameters for doing so. ***Module 7 – Exercising Authentic Governance: The School Board's Role as Policymaker*** provides advice and guidelines with respect to the development and review of policies such as the code of conduct. Boards should also be aware of the requirement for the review of trustee codes of conduct by May 15, 2023 and on or before May 15<sup>th</sup> every four years thereafter under ***Ontario Regulation 246/18: Members of School Boards - Code of Conduct*** [.<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/180246>](https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/180246).

Boards should consider using an informal procedure first and foremost when investigating a breach of the code of conduct and discuss remediation that may positively correct inappropriate behaviour.

Code of conduct policies contribute to confidence in public education and respect within the community for the integrity trustees bring to their role. For this reason, the formal complaint procedure should be reserved for only those egregious and repetitive behaviours that disrupt the ability of a board of trustees to conduct its business.

## **STEPS FOR CREATING AND MAINTAINING A CODE OF CONDUCT**

- Create a committee to draft the code of conduct.
- Review the current legislation and expectations of the Ministry of Education.
- Consider effective examples of codes of conduct in use in school boards.
- Draft the code of conduct. The Ontario Public School Boards' Association has created a ***Trustee Code of*** [Click here to begin tracking your progress](#)

## **Conduct and Enforcement**

**<<https://www.opsba.org/SiteCollectionDocuments/Board%20Member%27s%20Code%20of%20Conduct%20-%20Revised%20Template%20%28January%202019%29.pdf>>**

policy template which provides guidance in drafting a document that addresses key components of an effective code of conduct.

- Present the draft code of conduct and enforcement procedures to the board of trustees for amendments or additions.
- Allow time for adequate review and discussion.
- Pass a resolution approving the code of conduct and enforcement procedures by the board of trustees and add it to the board's Policy Handbook.
- Review the code of conduct annually. (Under Ontario Regulation 246/18, the board must review its code of conduct by May 15, 2023 and every four years thereafter.)
- Make the code of conduct publicly available.

NOTE: It is advisable to consult legal counsel regarding the draft code of conduct and enforcement procedures.

## **ENFORCEMENT OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT**

The enforcement provisions relating to a trustee code of conduct are set out in the ***Education Act [s.218.3]*** **<<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90e02>>**. A trustee who has reasonable grounds to believe that another trustee, who is a member of their board, has breached the board's code of conduct may bring the alleged breach to the attention of the board of trustees.

If an alleged breach of the code of conduct is brought to the attention of the board of trustees, then the board shall make inquiries into the matter and determine whether a member has breached the board's code of conduct.

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If the board of trustees determines that a trustee has breached the board's code of conduct, the board of trustees may impose one or more of the following sanctions:

- Censure
- Bar the trustee from attending all or part of a meeting of the board, or a meeting of a committee of the board, or
- Bar the trustee from sitting on one or more committees of the board, for the period of time specified by the board

## **SAMPLE PROCESS - ENFORCEMENT OF CODE OF CONDUCT**

**Note:** what follows is a sample enforcement process adapted from the Ontario Public School Boards' Association's **Trustee Code of Conduct and Enforcement Policy Template**

**<<https://www.opsba.org/SiteCollectionDocuments/Board%20Member%27s%20Code%20of%20Conduct%20-%20Revised%20Template%20%28January%202019%29.pdf>>**

**. This sample process is presented in "plain language" and builds on the code of conduct enforcement requirements found in the Education Act [s.218.3]**

**<<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90e02>>**

### **Identifying a Breach of the Code**

An allegation of a breach of the code of conduct must be brought forward to the board of trustees no later than six weeks after it becomes known to the trustee reporting the breach. (This is normally done through the chair of the board or committee of the board. If the chair is the subject of the allegation, it would be reported to the vice-chair.) It shall be investigated following the Informal or Formal Complaint Procedure. Whenever possible, the Informal Complaint Procedure should be used.

### **Informal Complaint Procedure**

The chair/committee may meet informally with the trustee who is alleged to have breached the code of conduct to bring the allegation to the trustee's attention and to discuss measures to correct the offending behaviour, e.g., an apology or a commitment to successfully complete professional development. The Informal Complaint Procedure is conducted in private. If it cannot be resolved

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informally, a formal complaint can then be brought against the trustee.

### **Formal Complaint Procedure**

The allegation of a breach of the code of conduct must be a written signed complaint brought to the attention of the board of trustees. It must include the name of the trustee alleged to have breached the code of conduct, information on when the breach became known, grounds for believing a breach to have occurred, contact information for any witnesses or people who have relevant information about the alleged breach. Once a written complaint is received, it must be investigated unless the complainant withdraws it. The chair/committee shall provide all trustees with a confidential copy of the complaint within ten days of receiving it. Information related to the complaint remains confidential until it comes before the board for a decision as to whether a trustee has breached the code of conduct. There are restrictions on bringing forward a complaint in the period leading up to an election.

### **Refusal to Conduct Formal Inquiry**

If the chair/vice-chair/committee consider the complaint out of time, trivial, frivolous, vexatious or not in good faith, or that there are insufficient grounds for a formal inquiry, an informal inquiry will not take place and the trustees of the board will receive a confidential report on the reasons for not pursuing an inquiry. However, if the chair and vice-chair cannot agree, a formal inquiry will take place. If the alleged breach deals with non-compliance with a board policy which has its own complaint procedure, it will be dealt with under that specific procedure.

### **Steps of a Formal Inquiry**

The formal inquiry is undertaken by the chair and vice-chair (or committee or outside consultant or other body determined by the board). The *Statutory Powers Procedure Act* does not apply. The inquiry is governed by procedural fairness and is conducted in private. It may involve both written and oral statements. The trustee alleged to have breached the code of conduct has an opportunity to respond to the allegations verbally in a private inquiry meeting and in writing. This written response must be provided within ten days of receiving written allegations. This deadline may be extended by the investigators. If the trustee refuses to participate in the formal inquiry, it will continue in their absence. The final investigation report is provided to the whole board of trustees who then determine whether

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or not the code of conduct has been breached as alleged. If the chair and vice-chair conduct the formal inquiry and cannot agree on the final finding of facts, it shall be completed by an outside investigator.

### **Suspension of Formal Inquiry**

A formal inquiry will be suspended if it is found that the subject matter is being investigated by the police, a charge has been laid, or the matter is being dealt with under another Act. The suspension continues until the separate process has been disposed of. The suspension shall be reported to the board of trustees.

### **Decision**

The final report shall be delivered to the board of trustees to make a decision on whether or not the code of conduct has been breached and any sanction to be imposed. This will take place as soon as practical. In voting on a decision, trustees will only consider the findings in the final report. If the board of trustees determines there was no breach, or that a contravention was trivial or made through inadvertence, or an error was made in good faith, no sanction will be imposed.

The decision of a breach of code of conduct and the imposition of a sanction must be done by resolution of the board at a meeting of the board. Both resolutions shall be decided by a vote of at least 2/3 of the trustees of the board present and voting. The vote on the resolution shall be open to the public and resolutions and reasons for the decision shall be recorded in the minutes. The part of the meeting where an alleged breach is considered can, however, be closed to the public if it involves matters covered in s. 207(2) (a) to (e) of the *Education Act* (i.e., security of property, personal or financial information of an individual, acquisition/disposal of school sites, decisions on employee negotiations, litigation.) The trustee who brought the allegations may vote. The trustee who is alleged to have breached the code of conduct may be present during deliberations but shall not participate in those deliberations and shall not vote on the resolutions. The trustee shall not influence the vote on the decision regarding the breach or sanction after the final report is completed, except as permitted under provisions for *Reconsideration* (see below).

### **Sanctions**

Permissible sanctions include one or more of: (a) censure of the trustee; (b) barring the trustee from attending all or part of a meeting of the board or of a committee of the board, (c) barring the trustee

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from sitting on one or more committees of the board for a specified period of time.

More onerous sanctions cannot be imposed but a less onerous sanction such as a warning or a requirement to engage in professional development may be imposed. The board cannot declare the trustee's seat vacant. A trustee who is barred from a meeting is not entitled to receive any materials related to the meeting that are not available to the public. Barring a trustee from a meeting is deemed to be authorization for the trustee to be absent and not a violation of the provision regarding absences in the *Education Act*.

### **Reconsideration**

The board, after it has determined that a trustee has breached the code of conduct, will notify the trustee, within 14 days, of the determination, reasons for the decision, any sanction imposed, and inform the trustee of the right to make a written submission in respect of this. The board shall consider any submissions and confirm or revoke its decision(s) within another fourteen days after receiving the submissions.

If the determination is revoked, the sanction is revoked. If the determination is confirmed, the sanction may be confirmed, varied or revoked. If a sanction is varied or revoked, that decision will be deemed to be effective as of the date of the original determination. The decision must be made as a resolution of the board and the vote will be open to the public. The minutes will record the resolutions and reasons for the decision. The trustee alleged to have breached the code of conduct cannot participate in the deliberations or vote on the decision. The trustee who brought the complaint may vote. The original sanction may be stayed pending the reconsideration process.

Boards can seek legal counsel when taking steps in the enforcement process, including conducting inquiries into alleged breaches of the code of conduct and making decisions regarding sanctions, to ensure that such steps are conducted in accordance with the Education Act and observe the principles of procedural fairness.

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## CONCLUSION

The code of conduct should contain well-articulated guidelines for appropriate interaction, participation and respectful communication. Trustees may ask the question: “Is our board behaviour a model for how the children in our district should behave now and in the future?” <sup>[1]</sup> An effective board is a cohesive, collaborative decision-making body that sets high standards for itself. That is what the public expects and a code of conduct helps boards to meet those expectations.

## NOTES

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- *Governance Core: School Boards, Superintendents, and Schools Working Together*, Davis Campbell, Michael Fullan, 2019 [↗](#)

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