

**YORK CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD
MINUTES
of the Regular Board Meeting**

Tuesday, August 26, 2025

PRESENT:

Members: In Person: F. Alexander, E. Crowe, J. DiMeo, M. Iafrate, T. McNicol, A. Saggese, J. Wigston, Student Trustees S. Cuesta, A. Shenouda
Virtual: M. Barbieri

Administration: In Person: J. De Faveri, J. Sarna, R. Antunes, A. Arcadi, M. Brosens, J. Chiutsi, G. De Girolamo, A. Driscoll, K. Elgharbawy, A. Iafrate, T. Laliberte, C. McNeil, S. Morrow, L. Paonessa, J. Powers, L. Sawicky, S. Wright
Virtual: N/A

Absent with Notice: C. Cotton, A. Grella

Recording Officer: S. Greco

Presiding: E. Crowe, Chair of the Board

2025:454 OPENING PRAYER AND CALL TO ORDER

Chair of the Board, Elizabeth Crowe, welcomed everyone to the Regular Board meeting at 7:45 pm and welcomed Nick Galatianos, Student Success Specialist/ Principal of Indigenous Education and Shannon Ulgiati, Indigenous Lead to lead the prayer service honouring the soul of Todd Jamieson, Indigenous Education Partner, followed by the Land Acknowledgement.

Chair Crowe thanked Mr. Galatianos and Ms. Ulgiati and noted that YCDSB was blessed to have one of Todd's pieces of art hanging in our schools and Board Office with our Land Acknowledgement. *"It was a shock to all of us when we heard he passed away.....Todd Jamieson was very instrumental in helping and guiding us as we started on our journey with Truth & Reconciliation"*, commented Chair Crowe.

2025:455 ROLL CALL: Trustees C. Cotton, A. Grella - Absent with Notice

2025:456 APPROVAL OF NEW MATERIAL:

14a Delegation: Request for Air Conditioning in Schools

MOTION: McNicol/Wigston

THAT the new material be approved.

- **MOTION CARRIED** -

2025:457 APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Move 16a - Approval of Report No 2025:22 CTW to after Info Items

MOTION: Iafrate/Saggese

THAT the agenda be approved as amended.

- **MOTION CARRIED** -

2025:458 DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST FOR CURRENT MEETING: NIL

2025:459 DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST FOR PREVIOUS MEETING: NIL

2025:460 a) APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS:

Regular Board Meeting of June 16, 2025
 Special Board Meeting of June 17, 2025
 Special Board Meeting of June 26, 2025
 Special Board Meeting of July 16, 2025
 Special Board Meeting of August 14, 2025

MOTION: Wigston/Saggese

THAT the Minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of June 16, 2025, Special Board Meeting of June 17, 2025, Special Board Meeting of June 26, 2025, Special Board Meeting of July 16, 2025, and Special Board Meeting of August 14, 2025 be approved as presented.

– MOTION CARRIED –

2025:461 BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING: NIL**2025:462 CHAIR'S REPORT / UPDATE / INSPIRATIONAL MESSAGES:**

Elizabeth Crowe, Chair of the Board, included her Chair's Report as part of the August 26, 2025 Regular Board Agenda. Topics included: The Gift of Catholic Education, Catholic Education Mass, First Director's Council.

a) Commissioning of Student Trustee and Senior Administration

Chair of the Board, Elizabeth Crowe and Vice-Chair Maria lafrate, participated in a ceremonial swearing in/pledge of service ceremony with Abby Shenouda, Student Trustee and Amanda Driscoll, Human Rights and Equity Advisor. A candle and a Bible to commemorate the occasion was provided.

2025:463 OCSTA BOARD OF DIRECTORS UPDATE:

Trustee Jennifer Wigston OCSTA Regional Director, representing York Catholic District School Board, advised that she would provide her OCSTA report at the September 30th Regular Board Meeting as there is a OCSTA Board of Directors Meeting on September 12, 2025.

2025:464 DIRECTOR'S REPORT/ UPDATE:

Director of Education, J. De Faveri, provided his Director's Report in the August 26, 2025 Regular Board Agenda package. Topics included: Welcome Back, Never Stop Learning, ShareLife School Fundraising, Welcoming Two New Members of the Senior Team, Top Scholars.

2025:465 STUDENT TRUSTEES' REPORT: NIL**2025:466 RECOGNITIONS / OUTSIDE PRESENTATIONS: NIL****2025:467 DELEGATIONS: (Chair Crowe read an introductory statement)****a) Request for Air Conditioning in Schools**

Mrs. Zheni Alico and her son, Ambli expressed their concerns with the lack of air conditioning in their school. (See Appendix A)

2025:468 JOURNEY TOWARDS OUR VISION: NIL**2025:469 ACTION ITEM(S) (including Committee Reports)**

a) A MOTION TO RE-ESTABLISH CHRIST AS THE ONLY WAY, THE ONLY TRUTH, AND THE ONLY LIFE AND LIFESTYLE AT THE YORK CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD (YCDSB) (F. Alexander)

Whereas The York Catholic District School Board is a Catholic institution founded in Christ;

Whereas Christ is the Way, the Truth and the Life;

Whereas As followers of Christ we are to eschew all practices, doctrines and ideologies that are contrary to the teachings of Christ;

Whereas Certain ideologies, practices and doctrines which are popular with the world, but contrary to Christ's teachings are now practiced and spread in our classrooms;

Whereas Such ideologies, practices and doctrines are creating confusion among our students and endangering their souls;

MOTION: Alexander (No seconder) – MOTION did not progress.

LET IT BE RESOLVED THAT:

1. The Director of Education launch an investigation into secular practices in all our schools;
2. The investigation include a review of:
 - a. Artifacts
 - b. Fine arts – including (paintings, etchings, pictures, tapestries, etc.)
 - c. Literature
 - d. Publications
 - e. Belief systems and practices that are contrary to Christ's teachings
3. A list by school is produced, showing the items from 2. Above, being conducted at each school;
4. A plan be produced, no later than December 31, 2025, showing timelines by which the anti-Christian elements will be removed;
5. The Religion Department work with the Conference of Catholic Bishops to create a training module for all educators;
6. The course be ready for March 31 2026;
7. The course includes guidelines for determining what ideologies, practices and doctrines are contrary to Christ's teachings;
8. The course be focused on The New Testament with emphasis on The Acts of the Apostles;
9. The course be specifically designed to combat secular ideologies and practices at YCDSB, as well as educate staff;
10. The course include:
 - a. A unit on how to study the Bible – to learn how to search for answers
 - b. Quizzes for each unit
 - c. A final written exam
11. The learning outcomes of the course include:
 - a. Who Christ is
 - b. What He stands for
 - c. His expectations of His followers
 - d. The Guidelines around His Way, His Truth and His Life
12. The course becomes a mandatory requirement for all Trustees and staff;
13. The guidelines and content of the course be made into Board Policy titled: "Jesus: The Way, The Truth and The Life"
14. The policy be the "Meta Policy" for operations decisions impacting our Faith.

b) TRUSTEE MOTION: Luke 4:18 Symposium Event T-Shirts (M. Iafrate, A. Saggese)

- Whereas** *the York Catholic District School Board is a Catholic school board committed to the teachings of our faith;*
- Whereas** *our students are actively engaged in faith formation and witness through various initiatives of social justice;*
- Whereas** *each elementary school in the Board has a Luke 4:18 Committee, open to all students;*
- Whereas** *students involved in Luke 4:18 participate in a biennial symposium at the Catholic Education Centre (CEC), and traditionally purchase and wear t-shirts for this event.*

MOTION: Iafrate/Saggese

LET IT BE RESOLVED:

THAT moving forward, all Luke 4:18 activity fees, including the cost of symposium t-shirts, be covered through the CEC's School Uniform Commissions, and that all participating students receive a t-shirt at no cost to them.

- MOTION CARRIED -

The Board of Trustees agreed that students will not be charged to participate in or attend the biennial Luke 4:18 Symposium. This includes all associated costs such as t-shirts, fees, paraphernalia, crosses, and any other related expenses. This excludes transportation. This decision will be communicated to the Religious Education Department, as they are responsible for overseeing the Luke 4:18 Symposium.

c) TRUSTEE MOTION: Relocation of Grade 9 Students from St. Theresa of Lisieux CHS (M. Iafrate, J. DiMeo)

- Whereas** *St. Theresa of Lisieux Catholic High School (STL) is overpopulated, resulting in overcrowding in the cafeteria;*
- Whereas** *to relieve pressure on students and staff, consideration has been given to relocating Grade 9 students to a building located a few hundred feet from the STL campus;*
- Whereas** *Father Henri Nouwen Catholic Elementary School (FHN) is experiencing declining enrolment, with several classrooms currently mothballed;*
- Whereas** *FHN students could be relocated to St. Mary Immaculate or St. Marguerite d'Youville Catholic Elementary School, while still allowing graduating students to attend STL. Transportation may be provided;*
- Whereas** *staff could contact the Ministry of Education to explore the feasibility and potential supports for such relocations;*

MOTION: Iafrate/DiMeo

LET IT BE RESOLVED:

THAT staff prepare and bring a report to the Board outlining the feasibility of relocating Grade 9 students from STL to an adjacent building, including potential impacts, costs, timelines, and Ministry approvals required.

- MOTION CARRIED -

Staff will bring a report to the December 16, 2025 Regular Board Meeting.

d) TRUSTEE MOTION: Formal Letter to the Families of East Gwillimbury / Georgina / Newmarket (T. McNicol)

- Whereas** *former Chair Frank Alexander sent out a letter to the community of East Gwillimbury/Georgina/Newmarket regarding the censure of Trustee McNicol (September 27, 2023);*
- Whereas** *former Chair Frank Alexander sent out another letter to the community of East Gwillimbury/Georgina/Newmarket to give an update on the sanctions of Trustee McNicol. (October 8, 2023);*
- Whereas** *the Board has not been transparent with the community of East Gwillimbury/Georgina/Newmarket by not releasing that the Board lost the Judicial Review in court and should inform the community that their Trustee was successful;*
- Whereas** *it's time for the Board of Trustees to set the record straight.*

MOTION: McNicol (No seconder) – MOTION did not progress.

LET IT BE RESOLVED

THAT the Board of Trustees issue a letter to the community of East Gwillimbury/Georgina/Newmarket regarding the results of the Judicial Review.

e) TRUSTEE MOTION: Harassment and Bullying (T. McNicol)

- Whereas** *the York Catholic District School Board has no tolerance policy for harassment or bullying by anyone;*
- Whereas** *I have experienced harassment and bullying for the last five years.*

MOTION: McNicol (No seconder) – MOTION did not progress.

LET IT BE RESOLVED

THAT the Board of Trustees do an investigation into the harassment and bullying.

f) TRUSTEE MOTION: RECOVERY OF TAXPAYERS DOLLARS (T. McNicol)

Whereas *the YCDSB is in debt for over ten million dollars;*

Whereas *the YCDSB has cut programming for students;*

Whereas *the Board of Trustees all signed a Code of Ethics;*

1. *I will act with integrity and work to ensure that all business of the Board is conducted with openness, fiscal accountability and compassion.*

2. *I will report to the Board alleged breaches, frauds, improprieties and/or conflicts which come to my attention.*

Whereas *the YCDSB are to be financially responsible with the Catholic ratepayer's money.*

MOTION: McNicol (No seconder) – MOTION did not progress.

LET IT BE RESOLVED

THAT the Board of Trustees recover all tax dollars that were wasted on the Judicial Review and put back into the classrooms.

g) MULTI-YEAR FINANCIAL RECOVERY PLAN (MYFRP)

C. McNeil, Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer of the Board provided an update on the resubmission of the Multi-Year Financial Recovery Plan (MYFRP) to the Ministry of Education. On July 23, 2025, the Ministry requested that the Board resubmit its MYFRP, excluding committed capital projects, while still achieving elimination of the accumulated deficit by 2030/31. The resubmission reflects this requirement and incorporates updated projections for 2024/25.

MOTION: Wigston/DiMeo

THAT the Board approve the resubmission of the Multi-Year Financial Recovery Plan (MYFRP), reflecting the updated 2024/25 projections and the elimination of the accumulated deficit, excluding committed capital projects, by 2030/31.

– MOTION CARRIED –

2025:470 DISCUSSION ITEM(S): NIL

2025:471 INFORMATION ITEM(S):

a) EV Transition - Maintenance Fleet Upgrade

K. Elgharbawy, Superintendent of Facilities Services and Plant shared an update on the transformative step toward a fully electric maintenance fleet that includes five state-of-the-art Mercedes-Benz eSprinter electric vans. Moving forward, the Board will apply for additional government funding to add 10 more charging ports, continue the EV transition in phases, and expand cost savings and sustainability benefits across the entire maintenance fleet.

b) Changes to Operational By-Law No. 1

E. Crowe, Chair of the Board shared information that will come for Action at the September 30, 2025 Regular Board Meeting. Changes included, Legislative changes requiring Trustees to be physically present, moving a clause that was in the wrong section, changes to committee language to align with legislation and Terms of Reference and Changes to job titles.

c) Ministry Audit and Response

C. McNeil, Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer of the Board shared information on the Ministry of Education's final report prepared by KPMG LLP on the financial and expenditure review of the YCDSB.

d) Policy 203 Student Transportation Services - Semi Annual Report 2024-2025**Transportation Exemptions - Director's Report**

G. De Girolamo, Coordinating Manager of Planning & Operations provided a summary of transportation exemptions approved by the Director for the 2024-2025 school year, as per *Policy 203 Student Transportation Services*.

e) 2025 CCSTA Conference

Trustees Carol Cotton and Jennifer Wigston provided a summary of the 2025 CCSTA Conference that they attended this past June 2025.

f) September 2025 Calendar

The September 2025 calendar was provided with no changes.

2025:472 NOTICES OF MOTION: NIL

RECESS AT 8:39 PM TO CONVENE THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING

RECONVENE THE REGULAR BOARD MEETING AT 10:08 PM

APPROVAL OF REPORT NO. 2025:22 COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Vice-Chair Maria Iafrate presented, for approval, Report No. 2025:22 of the Committee of the Whole private session held on August 26, 2025.

(i) DECLASSIFIED (Action Items for Approval): NIL

(ii) CLASSIFIED:

MOTION: Iafrate/DiMeo

THAT the confidential action items from the Private Session held August 26, 2025, be approved as presented.

– MOTION CARRIED –

2025:473 FUTURE AGENDA ITEM(S) / REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

2025:474 PRAYER TO ST. MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL

**2025:475 ADJOURNMENT – 10:09 pm
ON MOTION: Saggese/Iafrate and CARRIED**

Secretary of the Board

Chair of the Board

Hello, my name is xxxx, and I go to St. Catherine of Sienna School.

I want to tell you how hot it feels in my classroom. Sometimes it feels like we are sitting inside an oven. My head hurts, I get so sweaty, and it's hard to listen to my teacher or do my work.

Some kids even feel sick, and it makes us all really tired.

I know that my cousins and some of my friends at other schools have air conditioning. They don't have to worry about heat like we do.

Please help make our school cooler, so we can learn, play, and feel safe like other kids.

Thank you.

Good evening Chair, Trustees, and members of the Board,

My name is Zheni Alico and I am the mother of xxx and xxx who go to St. Catherine of Sienna school. Hearing my son's words fills me with guilt and helplessness. I go to work in a cool and safe environment, and so do all of you, yet my children—your students—are forced to sit in classrooms that feel like ovens. Every day, for weeks at a time, they are exposed to heat that is unsafe, unhealthy, and unworthy of a school system meant to nurture and protect them.

And when I raise this with the Board, I am told: *"You're not the only one. There's nothing we can do."* But children's health is not negotiable. Their safety is not optional.

No child should suffer heat exhaustion while trying to learn. No child with asthma, epilepsy, or autism should face daily triggers and distress because classrooms are overheated. No parent should feel this powerless.

We live in Canada in 2025. No workplace, no office, no government building would ever tolerate these conditions. Even inmates in correctional facilities are guaranteed safe temperature standards. Why, then, are our youngest citizens treated with less dignity?

The evidence is undeniable: heat impairs memory, concentration, and problem-solving. It is not just uncomfortable—it is dangerous. It puts children at risk of dehydration, heat stroke, and severe medical crises. It leaves teachers overwhelmed and families fearful.

And let us be clear—fans and blinds are not solutions. Fans only push around hot air, sometimes worsening asthma and sensory sensitivities. Temporary gestures do not protect children.

This is not just a moral issue—it is a legal one. Section 7 of the Charter guarantees the right to security of the person. Section 15 guarantees equality. The Ontario Human Rights Code requires schools to accommodate students with medical and developmental needs. And under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, Canada has pledged to protect children’s health and ensure education in safe environments. Right now, our schools are failing those obligations.

Even your own Energy Conservation Plan acknowledges inequities. Twenty-one schools are fully air-conditioned. Some are “ready for cooling.” But St. Catherine of Sienna is not on that list. This creates a two-standards education system: children in “cool” schools versus children in “hot” schools. That is systemic discrimination.

Yes, HVAC upgrades are costly. But children cannot wait five or ten years for equity. Portable air conditioners are an affordable, immediate solution. Parent councils are ready to partner and contribute. Relief is possible now, while permanent systems are developed.

This is about the lessons we teach our children. If we force them to suffer, we teach them that their dignity is negotiable. If we allow inequity, we teach them that fairness depends on where you live. But if you act now—if you provide portable AC units today and commit to HVAC tomorrow—you teach them that leadership means compassion, responsibility, and justice.

I call on you, the Trustees, to act without delay. I call on the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health, and our elected officials, including the Premier, to provide funding and policy support.

Our children’s health, safety, and dignity cannot wait. The time is now.

Thank you.