

YORK CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

MINUTES of the Regular Board Meeting

Tuesday, March 28, 2023

PRESENT:

Members: In Person: F. Alexander, M. Barbieri, C. Cotton, E. Crowe, J. DiMeo, A. Grella,
M. Iafrate, T. McNicol, A. Saggese, J. Wigston
Student Trustees A. Peta-Dragos, J. James

Administration: In Person: D. Scuglia, J. Sarna, R. Antunes, A. Arcadi, M. Brosens, D. Candido,
J. Chiutsi, K. Elgharbawy, M. Farrell, M. Gray, T. Laliberte, C. McNeil,
S. Morrow, L. Paonessa, T. Pechkovsky, L. Sawicky, S. Wright

Absent with Notice: N/A

Recording Officer: S. Greco

Presiding F. Alexander, Chair of the Board

2023:160 CALL TO ORDER / OPENING PRAYER

Chair of the Board, Frank Alexander welcomed everyone to the Regular Board Meeting and welcomed the Religious Education Consultants to lead the opening prayer at 7:30 pm. The Land Acknowledgement followed.

2023:161 ROLL CALL – All Trustees Present

2023:162 APPROVAL OF NEW MATERIAL: NIL

2023:163 APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Add: Community Event for the Arts (A. Saggese)
Remove Delegation 15c (D. Scuglia)

MOTION: Iafrate/Saggese

THAT the agenda be approved as amended.

– MOTION CARRIED –

A formal request for a copy of the YouTube video of the March 28th Regular Board Meeting was requested by Trustee Theresa McNicol.

2023:164 DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST FOR CURRENT MEETING: NIL

2023:165 DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST FROM PREVIOUS MEETING: NIL

2023:166 APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING(S):

Regular Board Meeting of February 28, 2023
Special Board Meeting of March 7, 2023

MOTION: Saggese/DiMeo

THAT the Minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of February 28, 2023 and Special Board Meeting of March 7, 2023 be approved as presented.

– MOTION CARRIED –

2023:167 BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING: NIL

2023:168 ACTION ITEM:**a) APPROVAL OF REPORT NO. 2023:02 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

Frank Alexander, Chair of the Board presented Report No. 2023:02 from the Executive Committee Meeting held on March 21, 2023.

MOTION: Alexander/Cotton

Whereas the Mission statement of the York Catholic District School Board is Guided by Gospel values and Catholic Virtues, in partnership with home and Church, we educate and inspire all students to reach their full potential in a safe and caring environment;

Whereas the York Catholic District School Board Multi-Year Strategic Plan identifies the core values of excellence, equity, fiscal responsibility, Catholicity, inclusion, integrity and respect;

Whereas the delegations presented on February 28, 2023 violated the core values of equity, inclusion and respect and may have contributed to students and staff feeling unsafe.

THAT the York Catholic District School Board re-affirms its commitment to the inclusion of all students and staff and provision of educational services in a safe and caring environment and regrets any statements in delegations from the public on February 28, 2023, that might have contributed to students and staff feeling unsafe in their school.

-MOTION CARRIED -

2023:169 CHAIR'S REPORT / UPDATE / INSPIRATIONAL MESSAGES:

Frank Alexander, Chair of the Board provided his report in the March 28, 2023 Regular Board Agenda package. Topics included: 2023-2024 Budget Survey, Feast Day of St. Patrick, Feast Day of St. Joseph, Markham East Boundary Review, SEAC Meeting, MACCA Awards, STREAM Centres of Excellence – Virtual Reality Experience.

2023:170 OCSTA / BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S UPDATE:

Trustee Jennifer Wigston, OCSTA Regional Director representing York Catholic District School Board reminded the Board of Trustees of the OCSTA AGM and Conference taking place on April 27 – 29, 2023.

2023:171 DIRECTOR'S REPORT / UPDATE:

Director of Education, Domenic Scuglia provided his report in the March 28, 2023 Regular Board Agenda package. Topics included: March Break, ShareLife Week, Pope Francis CES, St. Jerome Penpals, Welcome to Canada Orientation Day, Toonie Fundraiser for Syria and Turkey, Governor General Award, Trevor Coll – Rock of Ages, Other Important Dates, School Activities and March School Visits.

2023:172 STUDENT TRUSTEES' REPORT:

Student Trustee Jonah James reported as follows:

"March was a busy but restful month, as students had the opportunity to step away and relax from their academic pursuits over the March Break. Whether it was leaving the country, or if you were like me, and slept in all week, students had a valuable opportunity to rest and prepare to finish the last 3 to 4 months left of school. Many school communities also had the opportunity to travel abroad together, and explore parts of Europe and other countries. We wish everyone the best of luck and all the strength needed to finish off the year.

On Monday 20th, The OCSTA Student Trustee Advisory Council met for the first time. The OCSTA Student Trustee Advisory Council, which was established at the OSTA-AECO Board Council Conference back in February, serves the purpose of gaining input from student trustees and inform the OCSTA Board of Directors on the priorities of Catholic Student Trustees and with regard to promoting the distinct identity of publicly funded Catholic education in Ontario. The council consists of 5 trustees representing all OCSTA regions, OCSTA President Pat Daly, OSTA-AECO President and Vice-President Stephanie De Castro and Katie Bowie, and the support of OCSTA staff. The council was able to put together an informal and productive meeting, and look forward to future council meetings.

Also on Monday 20th, The YSCPC met for the last time for the 2022/2023 school year. The topic of this meeting was 2SLGBTQIA+ Inclusion Within The YCDSB, and how we as a community can take action and create a more inclusive school community.

Student Trustee Anthea Peta-Dragos reported as follows:

"I would like to, first of all, thank Mr. Scuglia for taking the time to attend the YSCPC meeting on March 20th, to explain to the YSCPC executives and student leader participants the position of the YCDSB in regards to the previous Regular Board meeting from February 28th. Thank you Mr. Scuglia, the students appreciate the information that you provided and your time to answer their questions.

Over the past weeks, many reactions from the student body in support of the 2SLGBTQIA+ students within the YCDSB schools have arisen. An open letter was sent to the YCDSB Senior Admins, Superintendents and Trustees and a petition was started by a group of YCDSB students requesting the YCDSB to create a safer, more welcoming and inclusive school environment for the 2SLGBTQIA+ students.

In this context, I will share with the Board of Trustees a statement issued by the OSTA-AECO President, Aisha Mahmoud, and the OSTA-AECO Catholic Board Council President, Stephanie De Castro, in support of the 2SLGBTQIA+ students in the YCDSB schools.

Student Trustee James and I remain committed to represent the student voice from the YCDSB community at the board table and are looking forward to further discussions on this important topic."

2023:173 RECOGNITIONS / OUTSIDE PRESENTATIONS: NIL

2023:174 DELEGATIONS:

Chair Alexander welcomed the Delegations and recited the following:

"The York Catholic District School Board recognizes that stakeholders should have an opportunity to address the Board of Trustees. The Board has established a delegation process and this process is clearly outlined in Policy 106 Delegations to the Board and Input to Agenda Items. This policy reflects the guidelines to which delegations may come forward. To YCDSB community members visiting tonight, I wish to be very clear that views expressed by the delegations are those of the speakers. We will not be engaging in question or debate and I will be asking Trustees if they have questions at the end of your presentation. Although we will be listening carefully to your presentations, according to our Operational Bylaws, Trustees can only ask clarifying questions of delegates. We have read your presentations in advance and we have a good understanding of what you are about to say.

Delegations submitted have been pre-approved based on the content we received. If the delegate deviates from the pre-approved submission the delegation will be terminated.

Please be reminded that York Catholic District School Board promotes positive, respectful, and civil behaviour. Therefore, the expectation is to treat one another with dignity and respect at all times, and if you do not adhere to these instructions, your delegation will be terminated."

a) Catholic Values in Our Schools

Cinzia DeFrancesco and Frank DeFrancesco expressed their concerns about supporting inclusion and an inclusive learning environment in our schools.

b) Catholic Values in Our Schools

Dina Mayr presented her support for 2SLGBTQ students attending Catholic schools.

c) Catholic Values in Our Schools

Marrick Baici presented his support for celebrating Pride 2023.

Chair Frank Alexander commented as follows:

"I would like to thank everyone who shared their perspective with us tonight. The Board of Trustees is appreciative whenever parents, students and community members take the time to make delegations to us. I would like to recognize the fact that so many of our students chose to exercise their civic responsibility by joining us tonight. All of the Trustees are grateful that you are actively engaged in your education and exemplify the Gospel of Jesus who taught us that every person is a child of God and is worthy of love, dignity and respect.

I recognize that preparing a delegation, from request to presentation, is a very time consuming process. We thank you for undertaking this process and for sharing your perceptions. After two Board Meetings which have included delegations on the topic of Safe Space stickers, I think it is important for me to share some information with our YCDSB community.

The Safe Space stickers were created and distributed by the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association. These stickers were not submitted to the Board of Trustees for review or approval prior to their distribution in our schools.

Whether these stickers are displayed or not displayed is an operational matter that is ultimately decided upon by the Director of Education and the individual classroom teacher. The Board of Trustees appreciates the fact that we have been made aware of varying community opinions with regards to this topic and has asked the Director of Education to carefully consider all of the presentations when making his decision. The Board of Trustees will not be hearing any future delegations on the issue of posting Safe Space stickers and recommends that any additional comments be submitted directly to the office of the Director of Education.

Please be assured that the entire Board of Trustees is deeply committed to performing their governance role in ways that support all students in safe, inclusive and nurturing school environments. We reaffirm our commitment to uphold the doctrines of Catholic education by teaching Gospel values of love, acceptance, dignity and inclusion. Thank you once again for your engagement in Catholic Education."

Domenic Scuglia, Director of Education and Secretary of the Board commented as follows:

"Since the York Catholic District School Board's February 28 Board Meeting, there have been a number of questions about the inclusion of 2SLGBTQIA+ students in Catholic schools. The YCDSB is involved in ongoing conversations with our community members, but I feel that I must make a public statement tonight.

Among the YCDSB's core values are: Catholicity, Inclusion and Equity. Those will always be some of our core values because they complement each other. We are all one in Christ. While Pope Francis does indeed remind us that there are two genders, we are created male and female, he also calls us to love and care for 2SLGBTQIA+ people. There is no "but" in his statement; there is only an "and." This is very deliberate language to reflect that the Pope calls us to include all of God's people into His embrace. The staff of the York Catholic District School Board will continue to love, protect and care for all our students, while sharing Christ's teachings with them.

I think it would be helpful to clarify some misunderstandings about what is happening in our schools.

The Family Life curriculum uses as its foundational resource the Fully Alive program, which is vetted and approved by the Catholic bishops of Ontario. This is the only text for teaching love and sexuality in our schools. That curriculum and program remains unchanged.

The only thing that has changed is that “Safe Space” stickers have appeared outside of some classrooms. Canadian Mental Health Association tells us that 2SLGBTQIA+ people have higher rates of depression, anxiety, self-harm, suicidality and substance abuse. An Ontario study reported that 77 per cent of trans youth have seriously considered suicide. For Catholics, who believe that every life is sacred, those numbers are unacceptable. I have listened carefully to all the comments that have been made here tonight. I assure you that the YCDSB will continue to provide all our students with a safe learning environment and that nurtures their whole person.”

2023:175 JOURNEY TOWARDS OUR VISION:

a) 2023-24 Budget Development Process

C. McNeil, Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer of the Board presented an overview of the 2023-24 Budget Development Process. A summary of 2023-24 Budget Challenges were also presented that included, Ministry Funding Announcements (timing), COVID-19 Funding, Absenteeism, Special Education, Declining Enrolment, Pay Equity. Key Dates were shared and Mr. McNeil advised the Board of Trustees that next month staff will present preliminary staffing and budget pressures as well as the Budget Consultation Survey Results. It is hoped that the final salary, benefits and FTE Report including the Budget book will be approved at the June 20th Regular Board Meeting.

2023:176 ACTION ITEM(S) (including Committee Reports):

a) APPROVAL OF REPORT NO. 2023:11 COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Vice-Chair Maria Iafrate presented, for approval, Report No. 2023:11 of the Committee of the Whole private session held on March 28, 2023.

(i) DECLASSIFIED (Action Items for Approval): N/A

(ii) CLASSIFIED:

MOTION: Iafrate/Barbieri

THAT the confidential action items from the Private Session held March 28, 2023 be approved as presented.

– MOTION CARRIED –

b) RECEIPT OF REPORT NO. 2023:09 SPECIAL COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Vice-Chair Maria Iafrate presented, for receipt, Report No. 2023:09 of the Special Committee of the Whole private session held on March 2, 2023.

(i) DECLASSIFIED (Action Items for Approval): N/A

(ii) CLASSIFIED:

MOTION: Iafrate/Barbieri

THAT the confidential action items from the Private Session held March 2, 2023 be received as presented.

– MOTION CARRIED –

c) RECEIPT OF REPORT NO. 2023:01 JOINT BOARD CONSORTIUM

Board Chair Frank Alexander presented, for receipt, Report No. 2023:01 of the Joint Board Consortium meeting held on March 1, 2023.

MOTION: Alexander/Iafrate

THAT the Report No. 2023:01 from the Joint Board Consortium meeting held on March 1, 2023 be received as presented.

- MOTION CARRIED -

d) RECEIPT OF REPORT NO. 2023:04 SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Committee Chair Jennifer Wigston presented, for receipt, Report No. 2023:04 of the Special Education Advisory Committee meeting held on March 6, 2023.

MOTION: Wigston/Saggese

THAT the Report No. 2023:04 from the Special Education Advisory Committee meeting held on March 6, 2023 be received as presented.

- MOTION CARRIED –

e) APPROVAL OF REPORT NO. 2023:02 POLICY REVIEW COMMITTEE

Committee Chair Maria Iafrate presented, for approval, Report No. 2023:02 of the Policy Review Committee meeting held on March 21, 2023

MOTION: Iafrate/Crowe

THAT the Board approve the following revised policies:

Policy 104 Participation in Meetings Using Electronic Means
Policy 105 Trustee Professional Development
Policy 107 Student Trustees
Policy 111 Trustee Services & Expenditures
Policy 114 Trustee Honorarium
Policy 309 Assessment & Evaluation
Policy 802 Purchase, Lease and Rental of Goods and Services
Revised Approval and Authority Schedule

- MOTION CARRIED –

f) COMMUNITY PLANNING AND PARTNERSHIP – LIST OF CANDIDATE SCHOOLS (2023-24)

T. Pechkovsky, Coordinating Manager, Planning & Operations presented, for approval, the 2023-24 Candidate Schools for potential facility partnerships, in accordance with Policy 704 Community Planning and Partnerships (CPP).

MOTION: Wigston/Barbieri

THAT the Board approve the list of schools as presented in accordance with Policy 704.

- MOTION CARRIED –

g) APPROVAL OF 2023-2024 SCHOOL YEAR CALENDAR

A. Arcadi, Superintendent of Curriculum and Assessment presented, for approval, the 2023-2024 School Year Calendar for submission to the Ministry of Education.

MOTION: Grella/Wigston

THAT the Board approve the proposed regular school year calendar for 2023-2024 for submission to the Ministry of Education for their approval.

- MOTION CARRIED –

h) RESULTS OF THE PROJECT SEARCH PILOT

D. Candido, Superintendent of Education: Exceptional Learners summarized the results of the Project SEARCH pilot and provided recommendations for next steps. The Board of Trustees were disappointed with terminating this program for our students and asked staff to further investigate.

D. Candido will bring back a report to the April Board meeting outlining details of the TPA/partnership agreement signed with the City of Vaughan - if it was a one-year pilot, it automatically expires and a motion would be needed to renew the pilot or extend the program. The April report will outline how funds were spent and an overview of what's currently happening in our schools for the work experience program.

2023:177 DISCUSSION ITEM(S):**a) TRUSTEE MOTION: York Catholic District School Board Foundation (E. Crowe)**

- Whereas** *studies have shown that when a student's basic needs are not met their ability to learn is impacted;*
- Whereas** *the COVID pandemic highlighted the disparities within our own communities and the subsequent rise in cost of living has made the gaps even wider;*
- Whereas** *our mandate as a Catholic Learning Community is to ensure that all students are fully able to participate in learning;*
- Whereas** *other Boards have set up a charitable foundation whose missions are to provide funds through school/student subsidies that support identified needs that are outside of the Board's GSN funding.*

LET IT BE RESOLVED

THAT a report be brought to the Board outlining the steps involved in creating a charitable foundation to support the needs of YCDSB schools and families.

This Motion will be an Action Item at the April 25, 2023 Regular Board Meeting.

b) TRUSTEE MOTION: St. Cecilia CES Boundary Review (A. Saggese)

- Whereas** *the Board has been reviewing the dual feeder schools in Maple;*
- Whereas** *the boundary for St. Cecilia CES was established just before the school opened in September of 2010 identifying St. Elizabeth CHS as its feeder school and then in the fall of 2010 St. Joan of Arc CHS was added as a dual feeder;*
- Whereas** *the enrolment of St. Joan of Arc CHS currently has declined. The programming and administrative staff at both St. Joan of Arc CHS and St. Elizabeth CHS has evolved and progressed in a positive direction;*
- Whereas** *after 13 years, we acknowledge community development and growth and continue to provide families with the opportunity to adapt their alignment according to their changing needs.*

LET IT BE RESOLVED

THAT a review of the secondary boundaries for St. Joan of Arc CHS and St. Elizabeth CHS be reviewed with respect to the alignment of St. Cecilia CES community by the fall of 2023 with any possible changes effective September 2024.

This Motion will be an Action Item at the April 25, 2023 Regular Board Meeting.

c) TRUSTEE MOTION: Board-Wide Strategy to Address Secondary Enrolment (J. Wigston)

- Whereas** *at the February 7, 2023 Corporate Services Meeting staff reported that three secondary schools are operating below 85% capacity (as at 2022) and;*
- Whereas** *enrolment projections for 2027 indicate that the number of secondary schools operating below 85% capacity will increase to five and;*
- Whereas** *students attending schools with lower enrolment do not have the same equity of access to programming as students attending schools with high enrolment and;*
- Whereas** *enrolment projections for 2027 indicate that seven YCDSB secondary schools will be operating over capacity and;*
- Whereas** *boundaries for schools projected to be operating over capacity about the boundaries of schools projected to operate below capacity.*

LET IT BE RESOLVED

THAT a board-wide strategy be developed to address secondary enrolment across all of the YCDSB in order to assist in balancing student populations, address equitable access to secondary programming and help achieve sustainable futures for all YCDSB secondary schools and;

THAT the development of this strategy be immediately prioritized and;

THAT the development of this strategy be part of the MYSP to allow for consideration of a marketing and communication plan, Specialty Programs or SHSMs as part of the proposal.

This Motion will be an Action Item at the April 25, 2023 Regular Board Meeting.

2023:178 INFORMATION ITEM(S):**a) Student Mental Health**

D. Candido, Superintendent of Education: Exceptional Learners shared information related to student mental health in Ontario in the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years.

b) Vaughan School Crossing Guard Program – Revision

T. Pechkovsky, Coordinating Manager Planning & Operations provided information regarding the School Crossing Guard Program at the City of Vaughan. It was noted that all existing school crossing guard locations will remain in place until 2025 with a plan to evaluate schools against the established criteria on an on-going basis.

c) Grade 8 to Grade 9 Movement: TCH 36

T. Pechkovsky, Coordinating Manager Planning & Operations provided information regarding the movement of students from Grade 8 to Grade 9, commonly referred to as the TCH 36 Report.

d) VIP Gap Analysis

J. Sarna, Associate Director provided information with regard to the impact the “pause” of the Values, Influences and Peers (VIP) program is having on our elementary schools. Trustees asked that we look at developing lesson plans in consultation with an expert in areas of law to put together modules for teachers.

e) STREAM Centres of Excellence Report

A. Arcadi, Superintendent of Curriculum & Assessment provided an update on the STREAM Centres of Excellence initiative; the scale of its service across the system as well as projections for the upcoming 2023-2024 school year.

f) Ministry Response re: Replacement Project St. Robert CHS

A copy of the Ministry’s response regarding St. Robert CHS was provided.

g) April Calendar

The calendar was shared.

h) Community Event for the Arts

Trustee Angela Saggese shared information regarding an Opera Performance that will be held at St. Elizabeth CHS Theatre for the Arts. Information will be sent to the Secondary Schools.

2023:179 NOTICES OF MOTION: NIL**2023:180 FUTURE AGENDA ITEM(S) / REQUEST FOR INFORMATION****2023:181 ADJOURNMENT: 9:14 PM
ON MOTION: Wigston/Grella and CARRIED**

Secretary of the Board

Chair of the Board