

YORK CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

MINUTES

of the Inaugural Board Meeting in 2023

Monday, November 20, 2023 at the Catholic Education Centre, 320 Bloomington Road W, Aurora, Ontario

PRESENT:

Members:

Trustees for the Term 2022 – 2026

Elizabeth Crowe, Trustee for Aurora, King and Whitchurch-Stouffville
 Theresa McNicol, Trustee for East Gwillimbury, Georgina and Newmarket
 Carol Cotton, Trustee for Markham Area 1: Wards 1,2,3, 6
 Frank Alexander, Trustee for Markham Area 2: Wards 4,5,7,8
 Maria Iafrate, Trustee for Richmond Hill
 Joseph DiMeo, Trustee for Richmond Hill
 Angela Saggese, Trustee for Vaughan Area 1: Ward 1
 Michaela Barbieri, Trustee for Vaughan Area 2: Ward 2 (Virtual)
 Angela Grella, Trustee for Vaughan Area 3: Wards 3,4,5
 Jennifer Wigston, Trustee for Vaughan Area 3: Ward 3,4,5

Student Trustees:

Jonah James, Senior Student Trustee
 Amira Zamanifar, Senior Student Trustee
 Monica Galstyan, Junior Student Trustee

Administration:

D. Scuglia, J. Sarna, R. Antunes, A. Arcadi, A. Battick, M. Brosens,
 D. Candido, J. Chiutsi, K. Elgharbawy, T. Laliberte, C. McNeil, S. Morrow,
 B. Pageau, L. Paonessa, T. Pechkovsky, L. Sawicky, S. Wright

Legal Counsel:

Gillian Tuck-Kutarna, Miller Thomson LLP

Absent with Notice:

All present

Recording Officer:

S. Greco

Presiding:

Domenic Scuglia, Director of Education and Secretary of the Board for the Election of the Chair and the Election of the Vice-Chair of the Board.

2024:001 CALL TO ORDER

The Secretary of the Board opened the Inaugural Meeting of the Board for the Election of Officers for Years 2023-2024 at 7:30 p.m. and thanked His Excellency Bishop John Boissonneau for leading the assembly in a celebration of Mass before the Board Meeting. The Opening Prayer and Land Acknowledgement were recited.

2024:002 ROLL CALL / INTRODUCTION OF TRUSTEES FOR THE 2022-2026 TERM

- Elizabeth Crowe, Trustee for Aurora, King and Whitchurch-Stouffville
- Theresa McNicol, Trustee for East Gwillimbury, Georgina and Newmarket
- Carol Cotton, Trustee for Markham Area 1: Wards 1,2,3, 6
- Frank Alexander, Trustee for Markham Area 2: Wards 4,5,7,8
- Maria Iafrate, Trustee for Richmond Hill
- Joseph DiMeo, Trustee for Richmond Hill
- Angela Saggese, Trustee for Vaughan Area 1: Ward 1
- Michaela Barbieri, Trustee for Vaughan Area 2: Ward 2
- Angela Grella, Trustee for Vaughan Area 3: Wards 3,4,5
- Jennifer Wigston, Trustee for Vaughan Area 3: Ward 3,4,5
- Jonah James, Senior Student Trustee
- Amira Zamanifar, Senior Student Trustee
- Monica Galstyan, Junior Student Trustee

2024:003 DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS

Director D. Scuglia welcomed everyone to the Board meeting and made the following remarks:

"We welcome everyone to our Inaugural Board Meeting. Each year, at the Inaugural Board Meeting, we start a new chapter by electing a Chair and Vice-Chair of the Board. I want to thank all of our trustees, with a special thank you to Frank Alexander for serving as the Chair and Maria lafrate for serving as the Vice-Chair.

I look forward to serving with you in the best interests of Catholic education and the many people enriched by it. I warmly welcome back all of our returning and student trustees. Thank you for your continued dedicated service to the York Catholic District School Board.

New Beginnings

We are excited about launching two new schools in Whitchurch-Stouffville: Blessed Chiara Badano CES and St. Katharine Drexel CHS. Work on the Stouffville Multi-Use Facility, which will be the home of these schools, is progressing, and we hope it will be ready to open its doors to students soon. The YCDSB community thanks the students and families of St. Brendan and St. Mark CES for welcoming the Blessed Chiara Badano and St. Katharine Drexel students into their schools as construction works complete.

We also thanked St. Teresa of Calcutta Virtual School's students, families, and staff for their hard work and innovative approach to education. This school was an excellent opportunity for some of our students as we moved out of the worst days of the pandemic. As we looked toward the 2022-23 school year, an overwhelming number of students and families felt comfortable returning to in-person learning, and there needed to be more interest necessary to keep the school operational. But St. Teresa of Calcutta will remain a success story of how the YCDSB supports its community.

A New Roadmap – The YCDSB's New MYSP

Much gratitude needs to be extended to the students, staff, families, parishes, and community partners who shared their feedback on what the Mission, Vision, Values, and Strategic Commitments of the YCDSB should be for the next five years as we created our new Multi-Year Strategic Plan. We are proud of our Mission: "With Jesus Christ as our model, we provide all students with a Catholic education rooted in equity, well-being and learning." For the next five years, we will be guided by our Vision, "A recognized leader in Catholic education committed to inclusion, excellence and innovation that develops socially responsible global citizens." The staff of the YCDSB are ready to implement the four Strategic Commitments found in this plan: Catholic Faith, Equity and Inclusion, Student Achievement, and Well-being. The Senior Team will provide regular reports to the Board of Trustees on how we are achieving the SMART goals that will bring these commitments to life.

Charity

The year was another example of YCDSB's long-standing commitment to supporting ShareLife, the charitable arm of the Archdiocese of Toronto. Every single one of our schools participated in the ShareLife campaign. Our students and staff donated \$139,120 to the over 30 charitable agencies that ShareLife assists. Once again, almost half of the top 50 fundraising schools in the Archdiocese of Toronto came from our Board, including St. Robert CHS in Thornhill, the top fundraising school for ShareLife in the entire Archdiocese. I want to thank all our students and staff for their incredible generosity in supporting this vital lifeline to the most vulnerable in our communities. Last school year, we also received a milestone donation recognition from the Terry Fox Foundation for the more than \$4.5 million the YCDSB has fundraised for cancer research since our schools started supporting this vital cause. Thank you to all our students and staff for living the Gospel with your good works throughout each school year.

Made in the Image and Likeness of God

As a Catholic learning community, we believe that every person is a child of God and is worthy of dignity and respect. Diversity and Inclusion is a Strategic Commitment of our new MYSP, and it was lived out in several ways during the previous school year. We hosted our first Changemakers Conference at St. Elizabeth CHS, where secondary students learned how to promote equity in their school communities. The Our Voice Conference at the CEC was a fantastic way to start Black Heritage Month. The Reconcili-ACTION trip to Saskatchewan is beginning to bear fruit this

year with many projects that will advance Indigenous reconciliation in our secondary schools. The YCDSB is committed to ensuring that every student knows they are loved.

Academic Achievement

This year, we had much to celebrate. York Catholic students continue to perform exceptionally well across the province on all standardized tests. The EQAO Provincial Assessment and the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test results demonstrate that York Catholic is consistently one of the top-performing school boards in Ontario. Our students at Our Lady Queen of the World Catholic Academy were recognized for their extraordinary work. They were led by teacher Cynthia Bettio, who won the Governor General's Teaching Award for History. As a testament to our dedication to year-round learning, the Continuing Education department and YCDSB teachers helped 2,600 elementary and 11,500 secondary students to continue their learning throughout the summer. Last school year, almost 10,000 students participated in Phase 2 of the provincial government's tutoring support program. Well done, everyone!

Final Comments

Finally, thank the Board of Trustees for their service over the past year. Many of you were learning new roles and taking on new responsibilities during a time when we were faced with many complicated questions and challenging situations. Thank you for your willingness to take on these challenges and learn as you did. I want to recognize the Senior Administration, Principals, Vice-Principals, Teachers, Education Workers, and all staff. We need all of our staff and trustees to work closely together to achieve the tremendous success highlighted in this report. I say "Thank you" to each of you for all you have done and continue to do. The positive impact you have made on YCDSB is immeasurable. Every time I visit a school, I am struck by the tremendous honour and responsibility of serving as the Director of Education for the York Catholic District School Board. I sincerely believe in the direction that the YCDSB is taking, as articulated in our new MYSP, and I am excited to be part of a team that brings that plan into reality. God Bless."

2024:004

ELECTION OF OFFICERS FOR YEAR 2023-2024

"We will now turn our attention to the task of electing our Board Officers for 2023-2024. Our Operating By-Law #1, Section 2, states that the Director of Education shall preside until the election of the Board Chair and the Vice-Chair. The Board shall proceed to elect by separate vote a Chair and a Vice-Chair.

The following are the procedures for election:

- *A seconder is NOT required for nomination.*
- *Trustees joining the meeting remotely will be permitted to be nominated as Chair and Vice-Chair of the Board.*
- *Trustees joining the meeting remotely may participate in the secret ballot process.*
- *All nominees will be permitted to address the Board members before voting commences for a maximum of two minutes each.*
- *All nominators will be permitted to introduce the nominee for a maximum of one minute.*
- *Election shall require a clear majority of the votes cast.*
- *Votes will be emailed to the Board's legal counsel who has joined the meeting to oversee the voting process. (Welcome to our Legal Counsel, Gillian Tuck-Kutarna)*
- *In the event of three or more candidates, the candidate receiving the lowest number of votes will be eliminated, and another vote will be held until there is a clear majority.*
- *In the event that there are three or more candidates – and after the vote there is still no clear majority - but there is a tie between the candidates receiving the lowest vote -- so that no candidate can be eliminated -- a second vote by ballot will be held.*
- *If there is still a tie after that vote, I will draw lots between the candidates who have a tie vote, and the candidate whose name is drawn will be eliminated.*
- *In the event of two candidates and after the vote there is no clear majority, a second vote by ballot will be held.*
- *If there is still a tie after that vote, I will draw lots between the candidates that have a tie vote, and the candidate whose name is drawn will be eliminated.*

a) Election of Chair of the Board

The Director called for nominations for the office of Chair of the Board.

Nominations:

- i) Elizabeth Crowe was nominated by Jennifer Wigston.
Elizabeth Crowe accepted the nomination.
- ii) Frank Alexander was nominated by Joseph DiMeo.
Frank Alexander accepted the nomination.

**See Appendix A for nomination remarks.*

The Director thrice repeated the call for nominations for Chair of the Board. Nominations for Chair of the Board were closed on **Motion by Cotton/DiMeo and CARRIED.**

D. Scuglia, Director of Education invited each candidate to address the Board of Trustees for a maximum of two minutes before voting commenced.

**See Appendix A for nominees' remarks".*

The Board of Trustees emailed Legal Counsel directly with their vote.

Upon counting the votes, Legal Counsel, Gillian Tuck-Kutarna declared Elizabeth Crowe, Chair of the York Catholic District School Board for the year 2023-2024.

Trustee Maria lafrate asked the Director to ensure that our lawyer understood that there should be 10 different votes. Trustee lafrate repeated herself twice.

MOTION to Destroy the Email: Cotton/McNicol

- MOTION CARRIED -

b) Election of Board Vice-Chair

The Director called for nominations for the office of Vice-Chair of the Board.

Nominations:

- i) Maria lafrate was nominated by Michaela Barbieri
Maria lafrate accepted the nomination.

**See Appendix A for nomination remarks.*

The Director thrice repeated the call for nominations for Vice- Chair of the Board.

There being no other nominations, the Director declared Maria lafrate, Vice-Chair of the York Catholic District School Board for the year 2023-2024.

Director Scuglia extended gratitude to outgoing Chair Frank Alexander for his ongoing continued commitment to Catholic Education and to York Catholic District School Board.

Presiding: Elizabeth Crowe, newly elected Chair of the Board

2024:005 CHAIR'S REMARKS:

Newly elected Chair Elizabeth Crowe remarked as follows:

"I'd like to thank my fellow Trustees for your support for this evening. I really do appreciate the heartfelt thanks. Thank you so much. I was not so presumptuous as to have prepared Chair remarks for this evening. Thank you to our Board Legal Counsel, Gillian Tuck-Kutarna for her work. We really appreciate you coming this evening.."

2024:006 VICE-CHAIR'S REMARKS:
Vice-Chair Maria lafrate had no remarks.

2024:007 APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA
MOTION: McNicol/DiMeo
THAT the agenda be approved as presented.
- **MOTION CARRIED –**

2024:008 ACTION ITEM(S):

a) TRUSTEE APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES

Chair E. Crowe proposed the appointments to Board Committees for the year November 2023 to November 2024 as follows:

STANDING COMMITTEES

MOTION: Cotton/DiMeo (ON BLOCK)

THAT the Trustee appointments to the Standing Committees for the year November 2023 to November 2024 be as follows:

- a) **Corporate Services** - All Trustees
- b) **Executive Committee** (*Chair of the Board, Vice-Chair of the Board and 1 Trustee*)
Chair, Vice Chair, A. Saggese
- c) **Human Resources Committee** (*5 Trustees*)
F. Alexander, M. Barbieri, E. Crowe, M. lafrate, A. Saggese
- d) **Joint Board Consortium Committee** (*Chair of the Board and 2 Trustees*)
Chair, J. DiMeo, A. Grella
- e) **Policy Review Committee** (*7 Trustees*)
F. Alexander, M. Barbieri, C. Cotton, A. Grella, J. DiMeo, M. lafrate, A. Saggese
- f) **Student Success & Pathways Committee** (*5 Trustees*)
F. Alexander, M. Barbieri, J. DiMeo, A. Grella, A. Saggese
- g) **Surplus Asset Review Committee** (*3 Trustees*)
E. Crowe, J. DiMeo, J. Wigston

STATUTORY COMMITTEES

THAT the Trustee appointments to the Statutory Committees for the year November 2023 to November 2024 be as follows:

- a) **Audit Committee** (*3 Trustees*)
C. Cotton, J. DiMeo, M. lafrate
- b) **Board Safe Schools Committee** (*3 Trustees and 1 Alternate*)
A. Grella, A. Saggese, J. Wigston
Alternate Member: M. Barbieri
- c) **Special Education Advisory Committee – 4 Year Term** (*2 Trustees and 1 Alternate*)
A. Grella, J. Wigston
Alternate Member: M. Barbieri
- d) **Supervised Alternative Learning for Excused Pupils** (*1 Trustee and 1 Alternate*)
J. Wigston
Alternate Member: E. Crowe
- e) **York Catholic Parent Involvement Committee** (*2 Trustees*)
F. Alexander, M. lafrate
Alternate Member: A. Saggese

TRUSTEE AD-HOC COMMITTEE

THAT the Trustee appointments to the Trustee Ad-Hoc Committee for the year November 2023 to November 2024 be as follows:

- a) **International Language Extended Day Committee (3 Trustees)**
J. DiMeo, M. Iafrate, A. Saggese (serve for the duration of the Ad-Hoc Committee)
- b) **York Catholic District School Board (YCDSB) Charitable Foundation**
M. Barbieri, E. Crowe J. Wigston (serve for the duration of the Ad-Hoc Committee)
- c) **Transportation Review Committee**
E. Crowe, M. Iafrate, A. Saggese

STAFF COMMITTEE

THAT the Trustee appointments to the Staff Committee for the year November 2023 to November 2024 be as follows:

- a) **Mental Health Advisory Group: 4 Year Term**
A. Saggese, J. Wigston
- b) **Religious Education Advisory Committee**
C. Cotton (until June 2024 as per Terms of Reference)
- c) **Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) Natural Science & Education Committee: 4 Year Term**
A. Grella
- d) **YCDSB Accessibility Committee: 4 Year Term**
J. Wigston
- e) **YCDSB Archives Committee**
E. Crowe, M. Iafrate, A. Saggese, J. Wigston (serve for the duration of the Staff Committee)
- f) **YCDSB Distinguished Alumni Selection Committee**
A. Grella, M. Iafrate
- g) **YCDSB Gender, Sexuality and Catholic Education: (3 Trustees)**
M. Iafrate, A. Saggese J. Wigston (serve for the duration of the Staff Committee)

2024:009 **ADJOURNMENT: 7:58 P.M.**
ON MOTION: Wigston/Barbieri and CARRIED

Secretary of the Board

Chair of the Board

POST MEETING – *Upon adjourning the Inaugural Board Meeting on November 20, 2023, It was brought to the attention of Legal Counsel that the voting for the position of Chair was incorrect. The Board of Trustees, that were still in attendance, agreed to hold a Part Two Inaugural Board Meeting on Wednesday, November 22, 2023 to revote for the position of Chair of the Board.*

APPENDIX A**NOMINATION REMARKS FOR THE POSITION OF CHAIR****Nomination of Elizabeth Crowe****Nomination Remarks by Jennifer Wigston**

No nomination remarks were given.

Acceptance Remarks by Elizabeth Crowe (Prior to Elections)

"I am honoured to be elected this evening. My commitment is not to lead, but to serve. Using the example of Jesus washing the feet of his apostles. I will strive to ensure that all Trustees have the information they need to make strategic decisions during these difficult times that we face. This is key as we keep our focus on the Multi-Year Strategic Plan and addressing the Board's deficit without impacting student achievement. We all welcome the Ministry audit and their impartial recommendations for efficiencies. Our community has told us that they have waited long enough and I will work with the Vice-Chair and Director to bring to the Board an Equity Plan based on our "We are diverse. We are one in Christ". I ask my fellow Trustees for your support."

Nomination of Frank Alexander**Nomination Remarks by Joseph DiMeo**

No nomination remarks were given.

Acceptance Remarks by Frank Alexander (Prior to Elections)

"My request to my fellow Trustees to support me is simply this, I stand for God and for His Glory and the service of His children. That's all I do."

NOMINATION REMARKS FOR THE POSITION OF VICE-CHAIR**Nomination of Maria lafrate****Nomination Remarks by Michaela Barbieri**

"This evening I am delighted to nominate Trustee lafrate for the position of Vice-Chair at YCDSB. Over the past year, working closely with Trustee lafrate has revealed not only her hardworking and dedicated nature, but also her unwavering commitment to accountability and transparency. She consistently operates with a high level of integrity, ensuring that her actions are guided by the principles of openness and responsibility. Her pure intentions and motivation for the betterment of our Board and students are complemented by a strong-minded approach that places accountability at the forefront. Trustee lafrate's efforts, particularly in collaboration with Trustee Saggese and myself, resulted in securing funding to sustain the Italian Heritage Program at YCDSB, showcasing her ability to navigate challenges with transparency and diligence. Maria lafrate, in her role as Vice-Chair, has been a beacon of accountability, actively engaging in initiatives that enhance transparency within the Board. Her commitment to fulfilling Trustee duties effectively goes hand in hand with her dedication to maintaining an open and accountable governance structure for the benefit of all stakeholders."

Acceptance Remarks by Maria lafrate

Trustee lafrate thanked Trustee Barbieri for her remarks.