

YORK CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

MINUTES of the Regular Board Meeting

Tuesday, November 28, 2023

PRESENT:

Members: In Person: F. Alexander, M. Barbieri, C. Cotton, E. Crowe, M. Iafrate, J. DiMeo, A. Saggese, Student Trustees M. Galstyan, J. James
Virtual: A. Grella, J. Wigston

Administration: In Person: 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, A. McDonald
Virtual: D. Scuglia

Absent with Notice: Student Trustee A. Zamanifar

Approved Absence: Trustee T. McNicol

Recording Officer: S. Greco

Presiding: E. Crowe, Chair of the Board

2024:017 CALL TO ORDER / OPENING PRAYER

Chair of the Board, Elizabeth Crowe, welcomed everyone to the Regular Board Meeting and received the Faith Ambassador to lead the opening prayer at 7:36 pm. The Land Acknowledgement followed. Chair Crowe explained that the Director was virtual (due to illness) and that the Education Act required a designated person to be in place in person. As a result, Associate Director Sarna was seated next to the Chair of the Board.

2024:018 **ROLL CALL** – Student Trustee A. Zamanifar - Absent with Notice
Trustee T. McNicol - Approved Absence

2024:019 APPROVAL OF NEW MATERIAL:

YCPIC 2024:01 Report to Board

MOTION: Cotton/Saggese

THAT the new material be approved as presented.

- MOTION CARRIED -

2024:020 APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Vice-Chair Iafrate asked that Discussion Item 17a be moved to the December 19th Board Meeting. Trustee Alexander advised that he would be presenting a Motion

MOTION: Iafrate/Barbieri

THAT the agenda be approved as amended.

- MOTION CARRIED -

2024:021 **DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST FOR CURRENT MEETING: NIL**

2024:022 **DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST FROM PREVIOUS MEETING: NIL**

2024:023 APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING(S):

Special Board Meeting of October 17, 2023
 Regular Board Meeting of October 30, 2023
 Special Board Meeting of November 7, 2023
 Special Board Meeting of November 13, 2023
 Inaugural Board Meeting of November 20, 2023 - Part One
 Inaugural Board Meeting of November 22, 2023 - Part Two

MOTION: Barbieri/DiMeo

THAT the Minutes of the Special Board Meeting of October 17, 2023, Special Board Meeting of October 30, 2023, Special Board Meeting of November 7, 2023, Special Board Meeting of November 13, 2023, Inaugural Board Meeting of November 20, 2023 Part One, Inaugural Board Meeting of November 22, 2023 - Part Two, be approved as presented.

– MOTION CARRIED –

2024:024 BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING:

Elizabeth Crowe, Chair of the Board, read the following statement:

“At the November 20th, 2023 Inaugural Board meeting. As noted in the minutes, Vice Chair lafrate addressed the Director to ensure our lawyer understood that there were ten votes. She then repeated ten different votes. My reaction to her comments was not worthy of the decorum expected of a York Catholic Trustee. I apologize to Vice Chair lafrate. I am also taking this opportunity to remind everyone, trustees and senior staff, that we all need to carefully listen to and respect each other in a manner worthy of the leadership positions we hold in service of the students of the wise. That's my statement. Thank you.”

Trustee Jennifer Wigston read the following statement:

“I'd like to address an issue brought to my attention following Monday's meeting. A video clip shows me smiling and nodding my head following the request above by the Vice Chair. I'm afraid it has been suggested that I was laughing at her and mocking her request. While this conclusion is incorrect, given the tensions and emotions on Monday, I can understand how it could have been misinterpreted. However, I do not want to cause or be the source of any further pain or anxiety for Vice-Chair lafrate, inadvertently or otherwise. So, to move forward together, I offer Vice-Chair lafrate a wholehearted apology for any distress my reaction caused. Thank you so much.”

2024:025 CHAIR'S REPORT / UPDATE / INSPIRATIONAL MESSAGES:

Elizabeth Crowe, Chair of the Board, provided the following comments:

“Good evening to everyone in the boardroom and those joining us virtually.

I am honoured to be Chair of the York Catholic District School Board for the upcoming year. I thank my fellow Trustees for trusting me to oversee these meetings, as we will need to discuss many significant issues over the next several months. In the following year, we will face continued declining enrollment and a budgetary deficit that will be challenging to address.

This Board will have to remain focused on efficiency while striving to meet the complex needs of all our students in a budgetary paradigm that leaves little room for flexibility. We welcome the Ministry of Education Audit and look forward to their independent recommendations, which we trust will help us to develop our Multi-Year Financial Recovery Plan. After 25 years, the Ministry of Education has developed a new transparent funding model for transportation based on standardized benchmarks. We have been advocating for a new model for almost all those years. Although we did not get a financial windfall, we can now compare our policy and procedures to standardize benchmarks and perhaps make corresponding policy changes. Therefore, we have established a Transportation Ad-Hoc Committee, and our first meeting is Thursday at 6:30 pm.

I know we will strive to make informed decisions that ensure that our students continue to learn in safe, nurturing, creative, and faith-filled schools. For this reason, I know we are all excited by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops' new document named Template for Pastors on the Evangelization of Young People in Canada. The paper provides excellent advice for working with young people in an authentically Catholic way. We look forward to helping our pastors share the documents. The message is that Jesus loves everyone and died for each one of us. Once it's available, I trust that the Director of Education will share copies with us. As a Catholic learning community, we believe that everyone is made in the image of God. This should make our school inclusive by its very nature. Unfortunately, too many of our students feel disengaged, valued and disenfranchised. This is unacceptable. As a board, we will approve a board equity plan that will help us focus our resources where they will impact the lives of the students in our care. For the Board Equity Plan to be practical and helpful, it will require many forms of consultation, including in the student census, which will be administered in 2024. We will ensure our schools are safe and caring places for all students, staff and families. At the same time, we will continue to face challenges in the public domain that will threaten the very existence of our Catholic system. I do not doubt that we will remain strong as one board united in our vocation as Catholic school Trustees, making hard decisions when necessary to ensure that our schools are beacons of hope and faith—proclaiming and living God's message of love in a secular world.

As you can see, a lot of work must be done. During this time, let us remember the importance of the work that we are doing by reflecting on the wisdom from St Paul's letter to the Galatians. Let us not grow weary in doing what is right, for we will reap a harvest time if we do not give up. Whenever we have an opportunity, let us work for the good of all, and especially for those of the family of faith. And that concludes my chair report for this evening.

a) International Language Program Announcement Video

A video was shared highlighting the Minister of Education's announcement of the International Language Extended Day Program at YCDSB. YCDSB received funds from the Ontario government for \$350,000 to support the Italian language program for the 2023-2024 school year. Trustee Angela Saggese was highlighted in the video.

b) Meet the 2023-2024 YCDSB Student Trustees Video

A video highlighting and introducing the three Student Trustees was shared. Kudos to Student Trustees Jonah James, Amira Zamanifar and Monica Galstyan.

2024:026 OCSTA / BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S UPDATE:

Trustee Jennifer Wigston, OCSTA Regional Director representing York Catholic District School Board, advised that she would attend the OCSTA Board of Directors meeting in early December and provide a fulsome report at the December 19th Board Meeting.

2024:027 DIRECTOR'S REPORT / UPDATE:

Director of Education Domenic Scuglia, provided his report in the October 30, 2023 Regular Board Agenda package. Topics included Remembrance Week, Secondary School Open House and French Immersion Information Nights, Blanket Exercise, St. Brendan Students Meet the Lieutenant Governor, International Extended Day Language Program, Christmas Card Contest, Advent, and School Visits.

2024:028 STUDENT TRUSTEES' REPORT:

Student Trustee Monica Galstyan reported as follows:

"The beginning of November brings a sense of fear and urgency - midterms have arrived! Students across the York Catholic District School Board have been tasked with tackling the exponential increase in assignments and assessments come these tiresome weeks. However, these students never falter and continue to foster school environments full of collaboration, community growth, and glee. For example, to start on a very 'sweet' note, the OLQW Hospitality and Tourism classes baked various baked goods to be sold at the OLQW Church Craft Show over the weekend of November

*11th and 12th. The event was full of joy and glee and truly brought many smiles to the greater community, even outside of the YCDSB. Thank you to all students, school and church staff, and all visitors, and a **special** thank you to Trustee lafrate for her gracious donations of the ingredients!*

Of course, like clockwork, student leaders from across the board came together on Monday, November 20th, for their monthly YSCPC meeting. November was themed as Student Achievement; leaders discussed their resources, defined student success, and acknowledged the financial and technological barriers to student success. The meeting concluded with insightful ideas and proposals that will be discussed in future sessions. Moreover, the transition between the 8th and the 9th grades is difficult for many students, and I am sure my fellow students' trustees and I will relate. Feeling this sense of unease, nervousness, or even fear is normal! However, whichever of the 17 secondary schools in the YCDSB you choose to attend, you will find a second home and family in no time. Throughout November (or possibly before or after), YCDSB secondary schools have organized their annual Open Houses for students and families to be greeted with open arms. Thank you to all student volunteers who attended to help at each of their respective schools, the staff who worked hard to develop and support the event, and all students and families who attended and witnessed the glory of YCDSB schools! Grade 8s, we wish you a smooth transition into high school next year and would like to remind you and emphasize that there are individuals and resources to help you at every step of the way, so always reach out! In addition, many secondary schools have already had or are highly anticipating their feeder school visits! Those days full of performance and laughter bring students together and put smiles on their faces.

Finally, on Monday, November 13th, YCDSB schools across the Board recognized World Kindness Day. Although the values of this day should be respected on every date of the calendar, this particular day allowed students to truly take a moment and appreciate the true strength of kindness. As an example from my and Student Trustee Zamanifar's schools – respectively– Our Lady Queen of the World CA students represented this day through writing words of encouragement on the cafeteria windows, and St. Maximilian Kolbe students had the opportunity to share actions of kindness during the day on the school's equality Instagram account.

Student Trustee Monica Galstyan reported Student Trustee Zamanifar's report as follows:

"On the first day of this month, we observed All Saints Day. Keeping with our core values as a Board, we celebrated all the Saints, recognizing the ideal examples we receive from the lives they lived as good people who modelled the Biblical virtues we strive to attain every day of our lives. This appreciation took place in various ways across our Board, and I was personally impressed with how students and staff incorporated the heart of this special day within their respective schools. To name some, at Our Lady Queen of the World CA, they lit candles in honour of all parted souls of the school community. While at St. Maximilian Kolbe CHS, student leaders held a "Saint lottery," where individual students chose and learned about a saint by a random draw. It is ever so important to continue our education about becoming better disciples of Christ, which is why I found this idea so fantastic! Not because it was from my high school.

Student Trustee Jonah James continued Student Trustee Zamanifar's report as follows:

"In line with student-led initiatives, I wanted to give a brief update about the York Secondary Catholic Presidents' Council's Christmas Initiative spearheaded by President Dabria-Peta Dragos. All 75 envelopes planned to be sent to children from kindergarten to Grade 3 in Nunavut have been sent off! As seen in Instagram posts from various high schools on our board and the YSCPC, it is with outstanding pride that we were able to observe the overflow of love and generosity from our students. We are all very excited about the arrival and distribution of gifts this holiday in the community we serve in Nunavut.

Lastly, I am pleased to announce that the York Secondary Catholic Presidents' Council has established a new executive position as an Indigenous Student Representative. Noah McLeod, a grade 12 student from St. Maximilian Kolbe CHS, has been selected to fulfil this school year's role. A Junior Student Representative has also been established, with Issac Aide of St. Theresa fulfilling the role. Previous student trustees Alessandro Casbarro and Anthea Peta-Dragos originally proposed this initiative two years ago. Last year, student trustees Peta-Dragos and James

continued to advocate for its implementation. This is why it is with great happiness that we deliver this new change as the position brings an authentic Indigenous perspective voice and vote to all YSCPC meetings. We are so excited to see what stems from this addition to our Board's family. "

Student Trustee Jonah James reported as follows:

"Throughout the month, the OSTA-AECO Catholic and Public Education working groups have been working together to help OSTA envision the future of education with our Vision Document re-work. As the Vision Document approaches its 5th anniversary, OSTA-AECO aims to update the document to ensure that everyone in education will hear the issues students face today and tomorrow. The Students' Vision for Education lays out a broad, bold, and ambitious roadmap to improve our education system.

The Vision Document lays out 35 recommendations across 6 pillars:

Enhancing Equity

Funding Formula Reform

Strengthening Rural & Northern Schools

System Modernization for 21st Century Learning

Supporting Student Well-Being

School Board Governance

The Students' Vision for Education is rooted in research and student voice, incorporating results from 3 surveys of 20,000 Ontario students in the past seven years and testimonials from students across the province. As part of the Consultation, Cabinet members had the opportunity to discuss the current Vision document, connect on various issues of today and tomorrow in education, and help formulate possible recommendations for the re-worked document. The topics that came up in conversation included funding, transportation, ensuring kids are up to standard in education, the impact and benefits of de-streaming, and what it will mean for future students. The students make the Students' Vision for Education plan, and indeed for the students.

We look forward to continuing working with OSTA, key stakeholders, and students to help in-vision the future vision of Education.

The YSCPC has been working and delivering on various projects and continuing to start new ones! As you've heard, The YSCPC has just wrapped up its meeting on Student Achievement and has just introduced the new Indigenous Representative, Noah Mcleod. On top of all that, YSCPC and High schools continue to create their "Good News Movement" videos, and they do not disappoint! From Sacred Heart and acknowledging Remembrance Day, to St. Theresa capturing the beautiful smiles of STL, to blooming Holy Cross handing out beautiful flowers, to Cardinal Carter students showing appreciation and spreading kindness to each other, to Father Bressani's Student Council showing appreciation to its students on world kindness day through the universal love language of chocolate, Our YCDSB schools continue to deliver moving and passionate videos of truly good movements."

2024:029 RECOGNITIONS / OUTSIDE PRESENTATIONS:

a) Daniela Sambolec, OCEC Teacher of the Year Award

J. Chiutsi, Superintendent of Education, introduced Daniela Sambolec, Department Head of Special Education at St. Katharine Drexel CHS, for receiving the Teacher of the Year Award from the Ontario Council for Exceptional Children. The honour was in recognition of Daniela's remarkable dedication and service to exceptional children and youth, commitment to equity, and commitment to ensuring that every student succeeds, which inspires all.

2024:030 DELEGATIONS: NIL

2024:031 JOURNEY TOWARDS OUR VISION:**a) YCDSB Student Mental Action Plan**

M. Prinzo, YCDSB Mental Health Lead, updated the YCDSB Student Mental Health Action Plan. In May 2023, students, staff, students, parents/guardians were asked to participate in a survey to help inform the 2023-2028 Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategic Plan, asking what should be done more, what should be done less, or what other things should be considered? An infographic providing a high-level overview was shared, including the Priorities divided into 3 Tiers. A summary of in-services, workshops and referrals was provided.

The Board of Trustees had the opportunity to ask questions for clarification. The Board of Trustees thanked the staff for an informative presentation.

b) Update on the Office of the Human Rights & Equity Advisor

A. Battick, Interim Human Rights & Equity Advisor, provided information on the role of the Office of the Human Rights & Equity Advisor. Mr. Battick advised that two primary functions of the HREA Office is 1) to receive, review complaints and determine if there has been a potential violation of one or more Protected grounds and seek ways to remedy or rectify the situation and 2) to build a culture for human rights within the school board. The HREA will reflect and provide recommendations on human rights-related matters considering all relevant legislative and educational documents. A summary of the number of consultations was provided. The HREA office is reviewing the Equity Policy and looking to create a Human Rights Policy, Discriminatory Statement Operating Procedures and Complaints and Resolution Operating Procedures.

2024:032 ACTION ITEM(S) (including Committee Reports):**a) RECEIPT OF REPORT NO. 2024:01 SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Committee Chair Angela Grella presented for receipt Report No. 2024:01 of the The special Education Advisory Committee meeting was held on November 14, 2023.

MOTION: Grella/Wigston

THAT the Report No. 2024:01 from the Special Education Advisory Committee meeting held on November 14, 2023, will be received as presented.

- MOTION CARRIED -

b) RECEIPT OF REPORT NO. 2024:01 YORK CATHOLIC PARENT INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE

Committee Member Frank Alexander presented for receipt Report No. 2024:01 of the York Catholic Parent Involvement Committee meeting held on November 27, 2023.

MOTION: Alexander/lafrate

THAT Report No. 2024:01 from the York Catholic Parent Involvement Committee meeting held on November 27, 2023, be received as presented.

- MOTION CARRIED -

c) TRUSTEE MOTION: Trustee Review and Consultation on all Existing and New Vacant Positions (J. DiMeo)

- Whereas** *the Board is currently in a deficit and will experience severe financial pressures in upcoming years as the deficit elimination plan is implemented;*
- Whereas** *upon completion, the Board's Annual Audit, Year-End Budget Update, RIAT internal audits and upcoming Ministry of Education audit may provide more accurate fiscal updates;*
- Whereas** *the Board is committed to ensuring that the Director and all his staff consistently follow ethical, equitable and transparent hiring practices;*

Whereas *the Board's 2023-2024 budget was a deficit budget and did not allow for any reserves for elimination, terminating, litigation or organizational restructuring of positions, requiring Board approval.*

LET IT BE RESOLVED

THAT *effective immediately, all hiring for non-union and non-Ministry mandated positions will cease until the Ministry completes our Board's audit;*

THAT *any union positions continue to be filled as per the Collective Agreements that we have in place;*

THAT *any Ministry-supported positions funded through TPA's (Transfer Payment Agreements) continue to be filled as per the parameters set within the approved Board budget.*

THAT *before backfilling of any job openings, even if within approved budget parameters they are referred to Trustees for review and recommendation to find budget savings.*

THAT *all Board hiring follows the framework delineated within policy 405 A, B, C, which mandates fair, equitable and transparent hiring practices*

Trustee DiMeo introduced his Motion and stated that he would rename his motion from *Temporary Hiring Freeze* to *Trustee Review and Consultation on all Existing and New Vacant Positions*.

Trustee Cotton asked that the Director receive a legal opinion before the approval of this Motion to ensure the Motion can't be contested by anyone who would be impacted. Especially that we have a Ministry audit, Trustee Cotton did not want to be noncompliant with passing the Motion.

MOTION TO DEFER TO PENDING LEGAL OPINION : Cotton/Grella

- MOTION CARRIED -

For: Alexander, Cotton, Crowe, Grella, Wigston

Against: Barbieri, DiMeo, Iafrate, Saggese

The Director was tasked with receiving a legal opinion. A Special Board Meeting would be scheduled if needed.

d) SCHOOL SITE DESIGNATION - WESTON 7 SECONDARY PLAN

T. Pechkovsky, Coordinating Manager of Planning & Operations, requested direction from the Board to Designate an elementary school site in the Weston 7 Secondary Plan area in the City of Vaughan.

MOTION: Wigston/Grella

THAT the Board designates one elementary school site in the Weston 7 Secondary Plan.

- MOTION CARRIED -

e) DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARDS PROCEDURES

J. Sarna, Associate Director, presented for approval, revisions to the Distinguished Alumni Awards Procedures.

MOTION: Iafrate/Barbieri

THAT the Board approve the revised Distinguished Alumni Awards Procedures as presented.

- MOTION CARRIED -

f) APPROVAL OF TRUSTEE REP FOR YCDSB DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI SELECTION COMMITTEE

E. Crowe, Board Chair, presented the Trustee Rep for the YCDSB Distinguished Alumni Selection Committee for approval.

MOTION: Barbieri/DiMeo

THAT the Board appoint Trustees Angela Grella and Maria Iafrate to the YCDSB Distinguished Alumni Selection Committee.

- MOTION CARRIED -

2024:033 DISCUSSION ITEM(S): NIL

2024:034 INFORMATION ITEM(S):

a) Student Trustee Expenditures Report 2022-2023

C. McNeil, Chief Financial Officer & Treasurer of the Board, shared an expenditures report for each Student Trustee from September 1 to August 31, 2023. This report will be posted on the Board's website.

b) Stouffville Multi-Use Project Update

K. Elgharbawy, Superintendent of Facilities Services and Plant, provided an update on the progress of the Stouffville Multi-Use project. Recent photographs capturing the building's current state were provided in the report.

c) York Region Transit Service

T. Pechkovsky, Coordinating Manager of Planning and Operations, provided information regarding a recent meeting with York Region staff and identified the next steps for our school communities. Staff will seek input on school specials from YRT and share the information accordingly.

2024:035 NOTICES OF MOTION: NIL

2024:036 FUTURE AGENDA ITEM(S) / REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

RECESS AT 9:39 PM TO RECONVENE THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING

RECONVENE IN PUBLIC SESSION AT 10:30 PM

2024:037 APPROVAL OF REPORT NO. 2024:01 COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Vice-Chair Maria Iafrate presented, for approval, Report No. 2024:01 of the Committee of the Whole private session held on November 28, 2023.

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

(ii) CLASSIFIED:

MOTION: Iafrate/Barbieri

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

– MOTION CARRIED –

2024:038 ADJOURNMENT: 10:31 PM

ON MOTION: Iafrate/Saggese and CARRIED

Secretary of the Board

Chair of the Board