

**Report of the Durham District School Board  
Standing Committee Public Session  
March 4, 2024**

A meeting of the Standing Committee of the Durham District School Board was held on this date.

1. Call to Order:

The Chair of Standing Committee, Deb Oldfield called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Roll Call: Chair Deb Oldfield

Members Present: Trustees Michelle Arseneault, Tracy Brown, Emma Cunningham, Donna Edwards, Stephen Linton, Kelly Miller, Carolyn Morton, Shailene Panylo (virtual), Christine Thatcher, Student Trustees Ben Cameron, Neha Kasoju

Regrets: Trustees Jill Thompson, Stephen Linton, Student Trustee Kayla Hoare

Not In Attendance: Trustee Linda Stone

Officials Present: Associate Directors Jim Markovski, David Wright, Superintendents Michael Bowman, Georgette Davis, Erin Elmhurst, Mohamed Hamid (virtual), Margaret Lazarus, Heather Mundy, Stephen Nevills, Martine Robinson, Kandis Thompson, Executive Lead Robert Cerjanec, General Counsel Patrick Cotter

Recording Secretary: Gillian Venning

2. Land Acknowledgement

Chair Deb Oldfield gave the Land Acknowledgment: The Durham District School Board acknowledges that many Indigenous Nations have longstanding relationships, both historic and modern, with the territories upon which our school board and schools are located. Today, this area is home to many Indigenous peoples from across Turtle Island. We acknowledge that the Durham Region forms a part of the traditional and treaty territory of the Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation, the Mississauga Peoples and the treaty territory of the Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation. It is on these ancestral and treaty lands that we teach, learn and live.

3. Statement from the Chair on behalf of the Board of Trustees

Board Chair Christine Thatcher shared the following statement on behalf of the Board of Trustees:

I want to take this opportunity to emphasize the unwavering commitment of the Board of Trustees of the Durham District School Board in combatting anti-Black racism and

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all forms of racism and discrimination. On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I also express the Board's support for all groups who continue to be discriminated against in our schools, workplaces and communities.

The Board's commitment and support are not confined to a particular month or date of significance. Rather, it is a year-round focus deeply ingrained in our actions and guided by the DDSB's Indigenous Education Policy, the Human Rights, Anti-Discrimination and Anti-Racism Policy and the Safe and Respectful Workplace Policy. For example, the DDSB actively engages in initiatives beyond Black History Month events, such as the implementation of the second version of the Compendium of Action for Black Student Success and continuous community partnerships and engagement.

Improving student and staff experiences, advancing achievement, building relationships and fostering well-being are fundamental to our new strategic plan. Our guiding principles include caring for each other and upholding Indigenous rights and human rights. To do this, we recognize our shared responsibility to respond to the diverse and intersectional experiences of students, staff, and community members. By listening attentively and acting accordingly, we are actively addressing systemic inequities in public education.

Dismantling systemic racism and all forms of discrimination requires persistence, humility, empathy and learning. The DDSB understands that there is more work to do to intentionally address discrimination based on all Human Rights Code-protected grounds and intersections of grounds, including and not limited to ancestry, race, ability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and religion. The Durham District School Board remains dedicated to this ongoing work of creating a safe inclusive and supportive environment, where everyone is treated with dignity and respect.

Thank you for your attention. The DDSB appreciates the ongoing support of, and collaboration with, community members as we work towards our shared goals and responsibilities to ensure that all students, staff and families know that they belong here at the DDSB.

#### 4. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest at this time.

#### 5. Motion to Approve the Agenda

Chair Deb Oldfield shared an amended agenda that included two additional items under Recommended Actions:

- 8(b) Letter to Ministry of Education Regarding Education Development Charges Cap
- 8(c) OPSBA Policy Resolution

2024:SC07

MOVED by Trustee Kelly Miller

SECONDED by Trustee Carolyn Morton

THAT THE AMENDED AGENDA BE APPROVED.

CARRIED

6. DDSB Presentations

(a) Secondary Pathways: Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program

Superintendent Stephen Nevills introduced Brie-Ann Brown, Instructor, Durham Hairstylist Academy, Anna-Lise Burke, Facilitator, Secondary Co-Op Education and OYAP Program and Monique Muller, System Lead, who provided a presentation and overview of the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program opportunities available to DDSB students.

Trustee questions were answered.

7. Director's Update

Associate Director David Wright provided trustees with the following update on behalf of the Director:

On February 28, DDSB students and staff recognized Pink Shirt Day in schools and workplaces with the goal of continuing to foster understanding, respect, and kindness and enhance awareness of the harmful effects of bullying, homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia. Pink Shirt Day serves as an important reminder of our individual and collective responsibilities to create and maintain safe, welcoming, respectful, and inclusive environments for all students, staff, and community members. Sometimes small actions can create significant positive change.

Last Thursday in partnership with the Robert McLaughlin gallery in Oshawa, the *For Arts Sake* DDSB Secondary Student Gallery opened. The bi-annual exhibition celebrates the artistic talent of DDSB students and showcases works from nearly every high school in the District. The exhibition will remain open until March 17 and we encourage everyone in the community to visit and view the outstanding artwork created by our students.

Students in our elementary modified calendar schools began their March Break today and all other schools will be closed for March Break beginning this Friday, reopening on Monday, March 18. We hope everyone in the DDSB community has a fun, safe and restful break!

8. Recommended Actions

(a) Motion – Modified School Year Calendars

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Trustee Michelle Arseneault provided trustees with an overview of the motion, noting that it is being presented in response to questions received from families and as a way for trustees to better understand DDSB's modified school year calendars and the associated benefits and challenges.

Trustee questions were answered.

2024:SC08

MOVED by Trustee Michelle Arseneault

SECONDED by Trustee Kelly Miller

THAT STAFF PREPARE AN INFORMATION REPORT ON MODIFIED SCHOOL YEAR CALENDARS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE FOR TRUSTEE CONSIDERATION AT A STANDING COMMITTEE MEETING.

CARRIED

(b) Letter to Ministry of Education Regarding EDC Cap

Trustee Carolyn Morton provided trustees with an overview of the proposed motion, with regards to the Education Development Charges cap established in 2019 by the Ministry of Education.

2024:SC09

MOVED by Trustee Carolyn Morton

SECONDED by Trustee Kelly Miller

THAT THE CHAIR WRITE AN OPEN LETTER TO THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION SEEKING A CHANGE TO THE EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT CHARGE CAP WHICH WAS ESTABLISHED IN 2019, EMPHASIZING THE GROWTH IN DURHAM AND THE NEGATIVE IMPACT OF THE CAP ON OUR FINANCIAL POSITION.

CARRIED

(c) Notice of Motion: OPSBA Policy Resolution

Trustees Kelly Miller and Donna Edwards provided trustees with an overview of the notice of motion, which is being presented in response to OPSBA's annual call for school boards to submit proposed policy resolutions and constitutional changes for consideration at the 2024 OPSBA Annual General Meeting.

The following motion will be presented for consideration at the Board meeting of March 18, 2024:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT OPSBA TAKE A LEADERSHIP ROLE IN ADDRESSING ACCESSIBILITY BARRIERS FOR STUDENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES IN THE PUBLIC EDUCATION SYSTEM BY:

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1. ENDORSING IN PRINCIPLE THE RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE 4<sup>TH</sup> LEGISLATIVE REVIEW OF AODA.
2. REVIEWING THE MISSED OPPORTUNITIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE 4<sup>TH</sup> LEGISLATIVE REVIEW OF AODA TO ADDRESS HOW OPSBA CAN BECOME A LEADER AND ROLE MODEL IN ADDRESSING THE MISSED OPPORTUNITIES IN PUBLIC EDUCATION.
3. ENSURING, WHERE APPLICABLE AND WHERE EVER POSSIBLE, WHEN OPSBA RESPONDS TO OR SUBMITS RESPONSES TO THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION THAT ACCESSIBILITY BARRIERS ARE ADDRESSED.

Trustee questions were answered.

### 9. Information Items

#### (a) Student Trustee Report

Student Trustee Neha Kasoju provided the following update:

The final round of Student Trustee elections has come to a close. Student Trustee Kasoju congratulated new Student Trustees for the 2024-2025 school year; Shampavi Vijayakumar, Nitishan Poopalasundaram and returning for a second year, Kayla Hoare.

Throughout the last month, the Black Student Associations from various secondary schools have organized assemblies to honour Black excellence and educate fellow students in the celebration of Black History Month! We take great pride in the dedication shown by students and remain committed to supporting initiatives that highlight Black achievements and brilliance.

In February, Student Trustees Ben Cameron and Kayla Hoare had the opportunity to participate in OSTA's Education Action Conference. They attended workshops covering essential topics relevant to student education and well-being, such as menstrual equity and privatization of schools. These sessions provided valuable insight into trustee responsibilities, including boardroom etiquette and networking strategies.

Student Trustees have embarked on a series of school visits and appreciated the warm welcome from staff and students, and extend our thanks for allowing us to immerse ourselves in the day-to-day experiences of students within the diverse school communities. During the visits, we spoke to Grade 11 English and Civics & Careers classes, Student Council Committees, and other groups about the role as Student Trustees and the importance of student voice at the board level.

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(b) OPSBA Report

Trustee Donna Edwards shared that the OPSBA Board of Director's met last weekend. Trustee Edwards provided an overview of the presentations and items that were discussed. Trustee Edwards shared a listing of important upcoming events:

- April 6, 2024: OPSBA Central East Regional meeting to be hosted by Simcoe County DSB
- April 24 & 25: OPSBA Labour Symposium
- April 26 & 27: OPSBA Board of Directors meeting
- May 21-24: Take your MPP to School Week
- July 4-6: Joint Canadian School Board Association and OPSBA AGM

Trustee questions were answered.

10. Correspondence

The following was shared with trustees for information:

- (a) DDSB Letter Endorsing Toronto Youth Cabinet Statement

11. Adjournment

2024:SC10

MOVED by Trustee Carolyn Morton


SECONDED by Trustee Tracy Brown

THAT THE MEETING BE ADJOURNED.

CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at approximately 7:45 p.m.

  
Chair

  
Secretary