



## DURHAM DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

**SPECIAL BOARD MEETING**  
**Wednesday, January 29, 2025**  
**6:30 p.m.**

	PAGE
1. <u>Call to Order</u>	Verbal
2. <u>Land Acknowledgement</u>	
<p>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.</p>	
3. <u>Declarations of Interest</u>	Verbal
4. <u>Adoption of Agenda</u>	Verbal
5. <u>Recommended Actions</u>	
(a) Request to Delegate on Behalf of DDSB to Whitby Council and Durham Region Council (Chair Tracy Brown, Trustee Emma Cunningham)	1 - 3
6. <u>Adjournment</u>	Verbal



**Durham District School Board**

**January 29, 2025 Special Board Meeting**

**Proposed Motion for Consideration:**

**THAT THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES APPROVE TRUSTEE EMMA CUNNINGHAM'S REQUEST TO DELEGATE ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD TO WHITBY TOWN COUNCIL AT ITS FEBRUARY 3, 2025 MEETING AND TO DURHAM REGIONAL COUNCIL AT ITS FEBRUARY 12, 2025 MEETING RELATED TO THEIR CONSIDERATION OF MOTIONS AROUND ANTISEMITISM AND NAZI IMAGERY AND THAT THE PROPOSED SPEAKING NOTES AS PROVIDED BE APPROVED.**

## 2

### Delegation Speaking Notes (February 3 and 12, 2025)

Hello, my name is Emma Cunningham and I am a Durham District School Board Trustee.

I want to begin this delegation as a Jew and share the profound emotional impact of encountering a Nazi Swastika or other Nazi imagery. It feels like a punch to the stomach, an unbearable wave of dread and sorrow. It feels as though all the air has been sucked out of your lungs, and everything around you blurs into insignificance. Scientists call this “hijacking,” a psychological response that disrupts the ability to think or focus. Imagine trying to learn, teach, or simply exist in a space where such symbols are visible. It creates a hostile environment, stripping away the sense of safety and belonging that every student and staff member deserves.

On behalf of the Chair and the Board of Trustees, I want to assure you that, like this motion states, we strongly support banning Nazi Swastikas specifically. We understand the importance of respecting cultural and religious communities, such as Hindus and others, for whom the swastika holds a sacred and peaceful meaning. This motion rightly acknowledges the distinction and ensures that symbols of peace and prosperity will not be unfairly targeted.

Jew hate is on the rise. In Durham Region, in 2024, hate crimes saw a 69% increase in religious hate crimes, 19 of these against Jews, the majority of which involved the swastika. With only 0.3% of the population of Durham Region being Jewish, 19 cases is not a small or insignificant number.

We are pleased that this motion calls specifically for public bans on Nazi imagery and would not interfere with rigorous Holocaust education in schools. With recent studies showing that as high as 18% of youth believe that the Holocaust was exaggerated, this education is more important than ever.

At the Board, we have taken steps to challenge antisemitism within our school communities. A dedicated working group, comprised of Jewish community members, is actively identifying ways to create safer and more inclusive environments for our students and staff. This includes educating our community on the impacts of antisemitism and implementing programs to foster understanding and respect.

Seeing the Town of Whitby and the Region of Durham support this work through measures like this ban sends a powerful message to our Jewish families and beyond: that their safety, dignity, and humanity are priorities. Such steps not only contribute to the wellbeing of individuals but also strengthen our community as a whole.

In closing, I urge you to support this motion and affirm your commitment to a community free from hate, where all students and residents can thrive without fear. Thank you for your time and for taking this important stand against antisemitism and intolerance.

**Motions to be considered at Whitby Council on February 3, 2025 and Durham Regional Council on February 12, 2025****Protecting Canadian Values: Ban the Nazi Swastika in Canada**

Whereas, in recent years, Nazi iconography has surfaced with alarming frequency in the public sphere, used by an increasing number of groups and individuals to promote hate and instill fear within Canadian society, and

whereas, Since the atrocities of WWII, the Nazi swastika has become universally synonymous with systematic violence, terror and hate. Its growing presence in our country poses a threat to every single Canadian citizen, undermining the core values of equality, diversity, and inclusion that define our nation, and

whereas, eighteen countries have already taken action to ban these symbols. It is imperative that Canada follow suit, therefore

Be it resolved, that Durham Region Council supports B’Nai Brith’s call to the Government of Canada to pass legislation banning the public display of Nazi symbols and iconography, including the Nazi swastika. Specifically, demanding that the Government of Canada immediately:

1. Ban the Nazi swastika
2. Ban all Nazi symbols and iconography

Durham Region Council agrees that the people of Canada are counting on the federal government to ensure a future free from hate, where every Canadian is protected, valued, and respected.

**Condemn acts of hate and explore protocol to report hate motivated acts to human rights organizations:**

1. Town of Whitby Council condemn in the strongest terms possible the recent acts of antisemitism and hate discovered at the Whitby Public Library and restate its commitment to an inclusive and welcoming town for all Whitby residents.
2. Council re-iterate its support for the past National Action Summit on antisemitism which had the participation of the Federal, Provincial and local governments.
3. Town Council commit to looking for ways to educate residents about antisemitism and way to combat antisemitism including a possible anti-Semitism campaign.
4. Town Council direct the CAO to report on the possibility of establishing a protocol or policy to notify various human rights organizations when hate motivated criminal acts are identified by town staff. The intent of the policy is to assist them in the collection of empirical evidence related to hate crimes