



# Regular Board Meeting Agenda

May 20, 2025 7:00 p.m.



Michelle Arseneault  
Trustee  
Town of Whitby

Tracy Brown  
Chair of the Board  
Trustee  
Town of Whitby

Emma Cunningham  
Trustee  
City of Pickering

Donna Edwards  
Trustee  
Town of Ajax

Mark Jacula  
Trustee  
City of Oshawa

Stephen Linton  
Trustee  
City of Pickering

Kelly Miller  
Trustee  
Town of Ajax

Carolyn Morton  
Trustee  
Townships of Brock, Scugog &  
Uxbridge

Deb Oldfield  
Vice Chair of the Board  
Trustee  
City of Oshawa

Shailene Panylo  
Trustee  
City of Oshawa

Christine Thatcher  
Trustee  
Town of Whitby

Vacant  
Trustee  
(First Nations Representative)

Kayla Hoare  
Student Trustee

Nitishan Poopalasundaram  
Student Trustee

Shampavi Vijayakumar  
Student Trustee

Durham District School Board  
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# DURHAM DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

## REGULAR BOARD MEETING

Tuesday, May 20, 2025, 7:00 p.m.

PAGE

1. Call to Order

2. Land Acknowledgement

Verbal

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. O Canada  
(R H Cornish Public School)

4. Declarations of Interest

Verbal

5. Motion to Approve Agenda

Verbal

6. Consent Items

(a) Approval of the following meeting Minutes:

- |     |  |      |
|-----|--|------|
| i.  | DRAFT April 22, 2025 Regular Board Meeting | 1-7  |
| ii. | DRAFT May 5, 2025 Special Board Meeting    | 8-10 |

(b) Adoption of the following Resolution from the April 30, 2025 Governance and Policy Committee meeting, which the Committee recommended to the Board:

- |    |  |    |
|----|--|----|
| i. | That the Board Rescind the Recover of Salary Overpayment Policy and Regulation | 11 |
|----|--|----|

(c) Adoption of Any Resolutions from the May 20, 2025 In Camera, Committee of the Whole Board Meeting

Verbal

7. Public Question Period  
(Chair Tracy Brown)

Verbal

- |     |  |              |
|-----|--|--------------|
| 8.  | <u>Chair's Update</u><br>(Chair Tracy Brown)   | Presentation |
| 9.  | <u>Good News from the System</u><br>(Director of Education Camille Williams-Taylor)  | Presentation |
| 10. | <u>Recommended Actions</u>   |              |
|     | (a) Modified Secondary School Calendar<br>(Associate Director Jim Markovski)   | 12-60        |
|     | (b) Naming of the Unnamed Ajax Coughlan Public School<br>(Superintendent Lauren Bliss)   | 61-80        |
|     | (c) Items Removed from the List of Consent Items   | Verbal       |
| 11. | <u>Information Items</u>   |              |
|     | (a) Report: Approved February 26, 2025 Governance and Policy Committee Meeting Minutes<br>(Trustee Kelly Miller)                                       | 81-85        |
|     | (b) Report: Approved April 3, 2025 Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes<br>(Trustees Michelle Arseneault, Donna Edwards, Kelly Miller) | 86-93        |
|     | (c) OPSBA Update<br>(Trustees Donna Edwards, Kelly Miller)   | Verbal       |
| 12. | <u>Memos</u>   |              |
|     | (a) 2425:76, Trustee Expense Policy  | 94-110       |
|     | (b) 2425:77, Special Education Class – Gifted 2025-2026  | 111-113      |
| 13. | <u>Dates of Significance</u>   | 114-117      |
| 14. | <u>Adjournment</u>   |              |

# DRAFT

## MINUTES

### The Regular Meeting of the Board

Tuesday, April 22, 2025

**A Regular Meeting of the Durham District School Board was held on this date.**

1. Call to Order:

Chair Tracy Brown called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Members Present: Trustees Michelle Arseneault, Emma Cunningham, Donna Edwards, Mark Jacula, Kelly Miller, Carolyn Morton, Deb Oldfield (virtual), Shailene Panylo, Christine Thatcher, Student Trustees Kayla Hoare, Nitishan Poopalasundaram, Shampavi Vijayakumar

Regrets: Trustee Stephen Linton

Officials Present: Director of Education Camille Williams-Taylor, Associate Director David Wright, Associate Director Jim Markovski, Superintendents Lauren Bliss, Michael Bowman, Heather Mundy, Margaret Lazarus, Andrea McAuley, Martine Robinson, Kandis Thompson, General Counsel Patrick Cotter, Senior Manager Dervla Kelly, Head of Facilities Lisa Bianca

Recording Secretary: Gillian Venning

2. Land Acknowledgement

Chair Tracy Brown 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. O Canada

Trustees Donna Edwards and Kelly Miller welcomed and thanked the Applecroft Public School Steel Rhythms for their performance of *O Canada* and *In the Jungle*.

4. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

5. Adoption of Agenda

2025:RB23

MOVED by Trustee Mark Jacula

SECONDED by Trustee Shailene Panylo

THAT THE AGENDA BE APPROVED.

CARRIED

6. Proposed Consent Items

As there were no objections, the following proposed consent items were approved and adopted:

(a) Approval of meeting minutes:

i. DRAFT Minutes of the March 17, 2025 Regular Board Meeting

(b) Adoption of Any Resolutions from the In Camera, Committee of the Whole Meeting of April 22, 2025.

7. Public Question Period

Soham Vyas joined the meeting in person and asked a question regarding the attendance boundary for the Unnamed Coughlan Public School. Staff responded to the question.

Anjali Joshi joined the meeting in person and asked a question regarding special education program placements. Staff responded to the question.

Staff read and responded to a question from Dylan Reynolds regarding elementary school boundaries and feeder pathways to secondary school.

8. Chair's Update

Chair Tracy Brown shared the following update on behalf of the Board of Trustees:

In March, Trustee Linton took part in the *DurhamONE* March Break program at Brooklin High School. One of the highlights was a basketball camp and tournament hosted by Jalyn Babb-Harris, a proud J. Clarke Richardson graduate and former Team Canada Basketball player. Trustee Linton had the chance to engage with students, discussing the important role of a Trustee and exploring ways Trustees can better support their needs. The students passionately expressed their desire for more accessible spaces and free programs during school breaks. We also want to extend a heartfelt thank you to the custodians at Brooklin High School for their dedication and professionalism, ensuring everything ran smoothly during the March Break program.

On March 17, Trustee Thatcher had the pleasure of visiting both Brooklin Village and Winchester Public Schools, where excitement was in the air! At Brooklin Village, students

and staff were eager to share their enthusiasm for the upcoming spring production of *Shrek*. With more than 200 students involved—ranging from the cast to the crew and behind-the-scenes helpers—the energy around the show is palpable, and it's clear that this will be an event to remember.

Meanwhile, over at Winchester, the staff and School Community Council are working hard to make sure students from primary through intermediate have access to a wide variety of fun activities and sports. They are also preparing for their own spring show—*Frozen Junior*. It's inspiring to see the creativity and commitment to creating vibrant school communities.

Vice Chair Oldfield and I are excited to have launched our School Community Council Listening Tour, visiting schools across the District to connect directly with parents and guardians. So far, we've had warm welcomes from SCC members at Maamawi Iyaawag, Viola Desmond, Mary Street, and Dunbarton High School. During these visits, parents and guardians have shared valuable insights into the priorities that matter most to them, as well as areas where they'd like to see additional support. These conversations have been thoughtful and impactful, and we look forward to continuing the tour with upcoming visits to Pringle Creek and William Dunbar Public Schools.

On March 18, I had the incredible honour of welcoming secondary students to *Cultivating Possibilities*, the highly anticipated annual Durham Black Educators' Network (DBEN) high school conference. This year's theme—*Pathways: Believe, Build, Become*—set the stage for an inspiring day. In the spirit of this theme, I shared the story of DBEN's origins, reflecting on the incredible journey we've been on and the profound impact our events and programs have had on empowering Black youth. The room was captivated as Trustee Panylo took the stage for the keynote, offering a raw and powerful account of her own remarkable journey, which left everyone feeling motivated and ready to take on their own paths of possibility. Following the keynote, students participated in powerful breakout sessions centered on themes like Black icons, solidarity, embracing your roots, and healing to thrive.

In light of the recent Islamophobic attack, the Town of Ajax hosted a Community Healing Event on April 4<sup>th</sup>. Trustees Kelly Miller and Donna Edwards along with community members, elected officials, advocates, and media were invited to connect with one another to promote equity and inclusion and highlight the importance of addressing anti-Muslim racism. Racism and hate have no place in our community, and as Trustees, we will keep advocating for policies and actions that promote dignity, understanding, support, and inclusion.

Closing out this month's update, all of the trustees would like to extend their congratulations to DDSB teacher Susan Shoemaker, the 2024 OTIP Teaching Award recipient in the Secondary Teacher category! Let's take a look at this short video to hear more about how Sue is making a difference.

#### 9. Good News from the System

Warren and Nelly from Brooklin High School shared good news from across the system on behalf of DDSB students via video presentation.

10. Recommended Actions

(a) Modified Secondary School Calendar

Associate Director Jim Markovski provided an overview of the report, which outlines the community consultation process that took place in response to a June 2024 resolution of the Board of Trustees directing staff to undertake a review of DDSB's secondary modified calendar schools (Brock High School, Henry Street High School and Maxwell Heights Secondary School).

Throughout the consultation process, feedback was collected from students, families and staff at the three schools via a survey and small focus groups, which was analyzed and included in the report. Staff noted that overall, the percentage of survey responses was notably low, despite multiple rounds and methods of surveying over several months.

In considering a number of significant factors as outlined in the report such as attendance concerns and added operational costs for example, staff recommend through the report that the three modified calendar secondary schools be transitioned to the regular school year calendar beginning in September 2026.

2025:RB24

MOVED by Trustee Christine Thatcher

SECONDED by Trustee Carolyn Morton

THAT THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES APPROVE THE STAFF RECOMMENDATION TO RETURN THE THREE SECONDARY SCHOOLS ON MODIFIED CALENDARS (BROCK HIGH SCHOOL, HENRY STREET HIGH SCHOOL AND MAXWELL HEIGHTS SECONDARY SCHOOL) TO THE REGULAR SCHOOL YEAR CALENDAR FOR THE 2026-2027 SCHOOL YEAR.

Discussion took place and trustee questions were answered. Trustees noted that additional background information and detail on the impacts of either maintaining or ending the modified secondary school year calendar be provided when the report is returned next month so that a fully informed decision be made.

Through discussion, a subsequent motion was moved, which took precedence.

2025:RB25

MOVED by Trustee Donna Edwards

SECONDED by Trustee Emma Cunningham

THAT THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES DELAY THE DECISION ON THE MODIFIED SECONDARY SCHOOL YEAR PROGRAM UNTIL THE NEXT BOARD MEETING IN ORDER TO RECONSIDER THE CANCELLATION OF THE MODIFIED SECONDARY SCHOOL YEAR CALENDAR.

Seeing no objection from trustees, the above foregoing motion was amended as follows:

THAT THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES DELAY THE DECISION ON THE MODIFIED SECONDARY SCHOOL YEAR PROGRAM UNTIL THE NEXT BOARD MEETING IN

ORDER TO RECONSIDER THE CANCELLATION OF THE MODIFIED SECONDARY SCHOOL YEAR CALENDAR AND THAT BETWEEN NOW AND THE NEXT BOARD MEETING STAFF UPDATE THE REPORT WITH FURTHER DATA.

CARRIED

(b) Consideration of Integrity Commissioner Report

Chair Tracy Brown shared that a report has been received from the Integrity Commissioner and that it sets out findings that a trustee has breached sections of the Board's Code of Conduct. Having received the reports from the Integrity Commissioner, the Board of Trustees must make its own assessment of whether a breach or breaches of the Code of Conduct have occurred, and if so, determine whether there is an appropriate sanction or sanctions.

General Counsel Patrick Cotter provided trustees with information and context as to the process to be followed by the Board of Trustees in considering reports from the Integrity Commissioner. It was noted that the conduct at issue occurred in November 2024, predating the in-force date of recent revisions to the Education Act and related provisions, meaning that the conduct is to be considered under the terms of the Education Act and Code of Conduct as they existed in November 2024.

Trustee questions were answered.

2025:RB26

MOVED by Trustee Deb Oldfield

SECONDED by Trustee Mark Jacula

THAT TRUSTEE THATCHER HAS CONTRAVENED THE SECTIONS OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT AS OUTLINED IN THE REPORT DATED MARCH 21, 2025.

CARRIED

2025:RB27

MOVED by Trustee Donna Edwards

SECONDED by Trustee Carolyn Morton

THAT THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES NOT IMPOSE ANY SANCTION ON TRUSTEE THATCHER.

CARRIED

(c) Items Removed from the List of Consent Items

There were no items removed from the consent list.

11. Information Items

(a) 2024-2025 Student Achievement Plan



Superintendent Erin Elmhurst provided an overview of DDSB's Student Achievement Plan, which reflects the District's ongoing commitment to anti-oppression, well-being and academic excellence in alignment with the Ministry of Education's identified priorities. It was noted that the Student Achievement Plan is reflective of and aligned with broader departmental and District-wide plans to provide a comprehensive and cohesive approach to student success. The Student Achievement Plan presents data collected through 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 EQAO assessments and student assessments.

Trustee questions were answered.

(b) Unnamed North Oshawa Secondary School Boundary Review

Associate Director David Wright introduced Lisa Bianca, Head of Facilities Services, who provided an overview of the report which outlines the establishment of a public consultation process towards establishing the permanent attendance boundary of the new North Oshawa Secondary School, scheduled to open in September 2026. It was noted that the consultation process will take place between April and September 2025, with a report summarizing all feedback collected along with a final boundary recommendation being presented to the Board of Trustees for approval in October 2025.

Trustee questions were answered.

(c) Integrity Commissioner Annual Report

General Counsel Patrick Cotter provided an overview of the Durham District School Board Integrity Commissioner Annual Report for the operating period of January 22, 2024 to January 21, 2025.

There were no trustee questions.

(d) Report: Approved February 6 and March 20, 2025 Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Trustee Donna Edwards shared the minutes and highlights of discussion that took place at the February 6 and March 20, 2025 SEAC meetings.

Trustee questions were answered.

(e) OPSBA Update

Trustee Donna Edwards noted there was no report at this time.

12. Dates of Significance

The dates of significance were shared for information.

Minutes - Regular Meeting of the Board

April 22, 2025

13. Adjournment

2025:RB28

MOVED by Trustee Kelly Miller

SECONDED by Trustee Mark Jacula

THAT THE MEETING DOES NOW ADJOURN.

CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:54 p.m.

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Chair

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Secretary

# **8 DRAFT MINUTES**

## **The Special Meeting of the Board**

**Monday, May 5, 2025**

**7:30 p.m.**

A Special Meeting of the Durham District School Board was held on this date.

1. Call to Order:

Roll Call: Chair Tracy Brown

The Chair called the meeting to order at 8:00 p.m.

Members Present: Trustees Michelle Arseneault, Emma Cunningham, Donna Edwards, Mark Jacula, Stephen Linton, Kelly Miller, Carolyn Morton, Deb Oldfield, Shailene Panylo, Student Trustees Kayla Hoare, Nitishan Poopalasundaram, Shampavi Vijayakumar

Regrets: Trustee Christine Thatcher

Officials Present: Director of Education and Secretary to the Board Camille Williams-Taylor, Associate Director Jim Markovski, Associate Director David Wright, General Counsel Patrick Cotter, Superintendents of Education Lauren Bliss, Michael Bowman, Erin Elmhurst, Mohamed Hamid, Margaret Lazarus, Andrea McAuley, Heather Mundy, Stephen Nevills, Martine Robinson, Kandis Thompson, Senior Manager Dervla Kelly

Recording Secretary: Gillian Venning

2. Land Acknowledgement

Chair Tracy Brown gave the Land Acknowledgment: the Durham District School Board acknowledges that many Indigenous Nations have longstanding relationships, both historic and modern, with territories upon which our school board and schools are located. Today, this area is home to many Indigenous peoples from across Turtle Island (North America). 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. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest at this time.

4. Adoption of Agenda

2025:SB05

MOVED by Trustee Kelly Miller

SECONDED by Trustee Emma Cunningham

THAT THE AGENDA BE APPROVED.

CARRIED

5. Recommended Actions

(a) Naming of the Unnamed Pickering Seaton Public School

Superintendent Martine Robinson provided an overview of the report which outlines the process undertaken towards naming of the new Unnamed Pickering Seaton Public School. The process took place in accordance with the Naming of Schools Policy and Procedure and included the establishment of a Naming Committee and a community consultation to receive proposals. The naming Committee recommends to the Board of Trustees that the name of the new school be Josiah Henson Public School, a name which aligns with the criteria established in the Naming of Schools Policy.

Trustee questions were answered.

2025:SB06

MOVED by Trustee Stephen Linton

SECONDED by Trustee Emma Cunningham

THAT THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES SELECT THE RECOMMENDED NAME AS DETERMINED BY THE NAMING COMMITTEE, JOSIAH HENSON PUBLIC SCHOOL, AS THE OFFICIAL NAME OF THE NEW UNNAMED PICKERING SEATON PUBLIC SCHOOL IN PICKERING, ONTARIO.

CARRIED

6. Adjournment

2025:SB07

MOVED by Trustee Shailene Panylo

SECONDED by Trustee Mark Jacula

THAT THE MEETING DOES NOW ADJOURN.

CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 8:06 p.m.

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Chair

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Secretary



**Durham District School Board**

**May 20, 2025 Regular Board Meeting**

**Resolution: April 30, 2025 Governance and Policy Committee Meeting**

At the Governance and Policy Committee meeting of April 30, 2025, the Committee made the following recommendation to the Board of Trustees, including that the matter be dealt with at this meeting of the Board of Trustees:

**i. Rescission of the Recovery of Salary Overpayment Policy and Regulation**

THAT THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES RESCIND THE RECOVERY OF SALARY OVERPAYMENT POLICY AND REGULATION.

Link to April 30, 2025 Governance and Policy Committee agenda package which includes the staff report on the aforementioned item:

[Agenda: April 30, 2025](#)

Link to Draft, unapproved April 30, 2025 Governance and Policy Committee meeting minutes:

[Draft Minutes: April 30, 2025](#)

## DURHAM DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

**REPORT TO:** Durham District School Board

**DATE:** May 20, 2025

**SUBJECT:** Modified Secondary School Calendar

**PAGE:** 1 of 20

**ORIGIN:** Camille Williams-Taylor, Director of Education and Secretary to the Board  
 Jim Markovski, Associate Director of Equitable Education  
 David Wright, Associate Director of Corporate Services  
 Chris Conley, Manager, Research and Strategic Analytics  
 Denise Nickerson, System Lead, Operations

The Durham District School Board (DDSB) recognizes Indigenous rights are distinct. In the exercise of those rights, Indigenous staff and students shall not be subjected to actions with the aim or effect of depriving these distinct rights.

The Durham District School Board is committed to providing learning and working environments that centre human rights and equity and are safe, welcoming, respectful, equitable, accessible, inclusive and free from all forms of discrimination, oppression, harassment and harm.

### 1.0 **Abstract**

This report provides further insight into the impact of the modified calendar as measured against the goals for the initiated pilot. The report concludes with a staff recommendation based on the value proposition of the structure. Given that the related data collected over time and provided throughout this report does not conclusively indicate measured improvements towards the identified goals that would justify the continued financial and operational investment required to maintain the secondary modified calendar, the recommendation is to return all secondary schools to the standard system-wide calendar.

In addition to student, family, and staff survey information, additional subsections will be highlighted as they relate to the three current Secondary Modified Calendar schools.

### 2.0 **Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to provide additional information to the Board of Trustees in relation to the Secondary Modified School Year Calendar and to recommend that the three modified secondary calendar schools return to the regular calendar for the 2026-2027 school year.

### 3.0 **Background**

In response to a June 3, 2024 Board motion, a report was provided to Trustees on April 22, 2025. The following motion was passed regarding additional information on student achievement, attendance and attitudinal information:

THAT THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES DELAY THE DECISION ON THE MODIFIED SECONDARY SCHOOL YEAR PROGRAM UNTIL THE NEXT BOARD MEETING IN ORDER TO RECONSIDER THE CANCELLATION OF THE MODIFIED SECONDARY SCHOOL YEAR CALENDAR AND THAT BETWEEN NOW AND THE NEXT BOARD MEETING STAFF UPDATE THE REPORT WITH FURTHER DATA.

#### **What does the “modified school year calendar” mean in the DDSB?**

There are two models in place at present, an elementary model and a secondary model. This report addresses the secondary model.

#### **Key Facts:**

- Three secondary schools:
  - Brock High School (Brock Township)
  - Henry Street High School (Whitby)
  - Maxwell Heights Secondary School (Oshawa)
- Calendar:
  - Starts in August, 5 days earlier than regular calendar schools
  - Has a one-week break in November (November 4-8, for the 2024-2025 school year).
  - PA Days are the same as for regular calendar secondary schools.
- Access and Boundaries:
  - Access is based on address and boundaries like all other schools. Students do not choose modified calendar high schools. The modified calendar high schools are not explicitly connected to modified calendar elementary schools.

#### **History:**

The adoption of a secondary modified school calendar began in 2005:

- **2005** (February): implemented the modified school year calendar as a pilot project at Brock H.S.
- **2008** (September): Brock H.S. and Henry Street H.S. requested the modified school year calendar no longer be considered a pilot project.
- **2011** (September): inquiry into the interest of adopting a modified school year calendar was conducted for Maxwell Heights S.S.
- **2012** (September): Maxwell Heights S.S. adopted the modified school year calendar.



The adoption of modified school year calendars was expected to have a positive impact on student achievement and attendance including, but not limited to:

1. Improved student achievement.
2. Improved student attendance.
3. Reduction in student discipline issues including suspensions.
4. Enhanced transitions from elementary to secondary school.
5. Improved student engagement.
6. Increased extra-curricular participation.
7. Enhanced parental and community involvement.

Although mentioned in recent updates and reviews, the initial focus on the impact of a modified school calendar did not include a focus on student mental health at that time.

A full history of the adoption of the Modified School Year Calendar is available in the June 3, 2024 report to the board, included in Appendix A of this report.

#### **4.0 Analysis**

Each year, secondary students across the DDSB engage with their teachers and classmates for 187 instructional days. However, for secondary students at schools with a modified calendar, their school year starts five days earlier with a pause of five days in November (November 4-8 in the 2024-2025 school year).

For the following analyses, data for secondary schools with modified school year calendars are presented alongside secondary schools with regular calendars. The schools listed for comparison have been selected based on the similarity in the programs they offered, the school size, the community socio-economics, and the community characteristics (urban or rural). Since it is not possible to find a perfect match between schools for these features, additional schools have been included for consideration, where there are notable differences:

1. Henry Street High School comparison schools:
  - Anderson C.V.I.: similar size and similar demographics but different programs. Anderson has Gifted and French Immersion programs.
  - Sinclair Secondary: similar programs, a little larger, some differences in demographics.
2. Maxwell Heights S.S. comparison school:
  - J. Clarke Richardson Collegiate: similar size, similar programs, similar demographics

### 3. Brock H.S. comparison schools:

- Uxbridge S.S.: very different size, different program (FI), different demographics, not as rural but closer and part of the municipalities in north Durham.
- G.L. Roberts C.V.I.: much larger student enrolment, similar programs, very different demographics and context (urban versus rural).
- Sutton District High School: a school in the York Region District School Board with a similar size. Data for this school is from the public EQAO website and is only included as a comparison for the EQAO summary tables.
- Norwood District High School: a school in the Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board with a similar size, a rural context, and similar programs. Data for this school is from the public EQAO website and is only included as a comparison for the EQAO summary tables.

### **Access and Boundaries**

Throughout the DDSB, students attend schools based on where they live. Every home in Durham is associated with both an elementary and a secondary school and it is this process that helps make it possible to anticipate how many students will be attending schools from one year to the next. Even programs such as Gifted or French Immersion have school boundaries (catchment areas) that determine which school a student would attend in secondary school. Although schools can, and do, accept students from outside their boundaries, these are special circumstances that are dependent on the school having space to accommodate a request and is not a guarantee from year to year.

As would be expected in this context, a preliminary review of the October 31, 2024 enrolment of students at Henry Street H.S. found that most students attending Henry Street H.S. lived within the school's catchment area. Of those students who lived outside that boundary, there were no students enrolled, at the time of this analysis, who previously attended an elementary school with a modified school boundary. Consequently, at the secondary level, the modified school calendar is a school context, not a student choice.

However, for staff, this is more of a choice as they can apply to schools for vacant positions either at a school with a modified calendar (if they prefer it) or elsewhere at a school with a regular calendar (if they do not prefer it).

### **Improved Student Achievement?**

Each year all students across the DDSB participate in EQAO assessments which provides a consistent point of comparison for student achievement. In the Board report that was shared in June 2024, found in Appendix A, Henry Street H.S. and Maxwell Heights S.S. had a larger percentage of students at levels 3 and 4 on the Grade 9 assessment and who were successful on the OSSLT than the DDSB average and Brock H.S. had a lower percentage than the DDSB on both of those percentages.

As can be seen in the following table, in the most recent administration of the EQAO Grade 9 Assessment (2024), Maxwell Heights S.S. had a higher percentage of students at levels 3 and 4 than the DDSB average results, whereas Brock H.S. and Henry Street H.S. both had lower percentages than the DDSB average. Looking at the achievement across the last three years, the achievement of the schools has fluctuated around the DDSB results, with all three schools lower than the DDSB in 2022, two schools higher than the DDSB in 2023, and two schools lower than the DDSB in 2024.

For the purpose of this report, the schools with a modified calendar are compared to similar schools on a regular calendar to consider the correlation between the modified calendar and student experiences and outcomes at school.

Table 1: EQAO Grade 9 Online Assessment, Percentage of Students at Levels 3 and 4

School	2022	2023	2024	3-Year Average
<b>Brock H.S.</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>34%</b>
G.L. Roberts C.V.I.	28%	38%	28%	31%
Norwood District H.S.	26%	17%	18%	20%
Sutton District H.S.	28%	25%	21%	25%
Uxbridge S.S.	63%	65%	54%	61%
<b>Henry Street H.S.</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>55%</b>
Anderson C.V.I.	61%	67%	67%	65%
Sinclair S.S.	63%	60%	55%	59%
<b>Maxwell Heights S.S.</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>58%</b>
J. Clarke Richardson Collegiate	64%	64%	60%	63%
<b>DDSB</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>55%</b>

As can be seen in the following table, in the most recent administration of the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT) 2024, Maxwell Heights S.S. and Henry Street H.S. had a higher percentage of successful First Time-Eligible students than the DDSB, whereas Brock H.S. had a lower percentage than the DDSB. Looking at the achievement across the three years, Henry Street H.S. was lower than the DDSB in the first assessment in 2022 and higher than the DDSB in the second and third assessments. This fluctuation is consistent with the achievement history of schools with regular calendars.

Table 2: EQAO OSSLT Online Assessment, Percentage of Successful First-Time Eligible Students

School	2022	2023	2024	3-Year Average
<b>Brock H.S.</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>73%</b>
G. L. Roberts C.V.I.	65%	67%	69%	67%
Norwood District H.S.	61%	76%	65%	67%
Sutton District H.S.	75%	72%	73%	73%
Uxbridge S.S.	89%	86%	88%	88%
<b>Henry St. H.S.</b>	<b>86%</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>92%</b>	<b>89%</b>
Anderson C.V.I.	88%	87%	93%	89%
Sinclair S.S.	89%	82%	92%	88%
<b>Maxwell Heights S.S.</b>	<b>82%</b>	<b>89%</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>87%</b>
J. Clarke Richardson Collegiate	85%	88%	89%	87%
<b>DDSB</b>	<b>84%</b>	<b>85%</b>	<b>87%</b>	<b>85%</b>

The fluctuation of the school results around the DDSB results has been observed throughout the reporting of EQAO results from 2006 to 2024.

### Improved Student Attendance?

In the June 3, 2024, board report, found in Appendix A, a summary table was prepared that highlighted historical attendance patterns that were shared in a previous board report, along with updates for the previous two school years. This table highlights that, with the exception of the 2022-2023 school year where it was equal, there is a larger percentage of students in schools with modified school year calendars that were absent more than five days during the school year.

For the purpose of this report, the schools with a modified calendar are compared to similar schools on a regular calendar to consider the correlation between the modified calendar and student experiences and outcomes at school.

Table 3: Historical Attendance for Secondary Schools (Appendix A page 6 of 10)

**Percentage of Students with More than five days Absent**

		Years						
School	09-10	10-11	11-12	12-13	13-14	...	22-23	23-24
Henry St. H.S.	91%	91%	91%	84%	89%		86%	80%
Maxwell Heights S.S.	93%	94%	90%	85%	91%		82%	72%
Brock H.S.	97%	97%	95%	91%	89%		91%	91%
Regular Calendar Schools (% absent)	89%	89%	88%	81%	82%		85%	78%
Modified Calendar Schools (%absent)	93%	94%	91%	86%	90%		85%	80%

In the following tables, a supplemental analysis was conducted of student absenteeism in the first five days of school with a comparison between schools with a modified school year calendar and schools with a regular school year calendar.

Table 4: Percentage of Students with at least 1 absence in the first 5 days of school (Week 1)

School	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
<b>Brock H.S.</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>33%</b>
G.L. Roberts CVI	40%	37%	37%
Uxbridge S.S.	19%	18%	19%
<b>Henry St. H.S.</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>28%</b>
Anderson CVI	19%	20%	17%
Sinclair S.S.	21%	17%	24%
<b>Maxwell Heights S.S.</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>27%</b>
J. Clarke Richardson Collegiate	20%	21%	24%
<b>Modified Calendar</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>28%</b>
<b>Regular Calendar</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>23%</b>

Table 5: Average Days Absent per Student in the first 5 days of school (Week 1)

School	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
<b>Brock H.S.</b>	<b>0.54</b>	<b>0.40</b>	<b>0.39</b>
G.L. Roberts CVI	0.43	0.44	0.52
Uxbridge S.S.	0.14	0.15	0.15
<b>Henry St. H.S.</b>	<b>0.43</b>	<b>0.19</b>	<b>0.31</b>
Anderson CVI	0.15	0.15	0.17
Sinclair S.S.	0.19	0.17	0.23
<b>Maxwell Height S.S.</b>	<b>0.31</b>	<b>0.36</b>	<b>0.33</b>
J. Clarke Richardson Collegiate	0.23	0.24	0.24
<b>Regular Calendar</b>	<b>0.21</b>	<b>0.22</b>	<b>0.22</b>
<b>Modified Calendar</b>	<b>0.38</b>	<b>0.31</b>	<b>0.33</b>

As can be seen in tables 3, 4, and 5, schools with modified school year calendars continue to have a higher proportion of absenteeism (Table 4) with longer average times absent (Table 5) than schools with regular school year calendars. This trend has generally been consistent over time (Table 3).

### Reduction in Student Discipline?

The following table presents the percentage of students that have been suspended in each of the past five years. The calculation of the suspension rate uses the Ministry of Education's methodology of dividing the number of students with a suspension record by the total number of students enrolled (general enrolment) and multiplying by 100. Where there were fewer than 10 students with a suspension record, the calculation of a suspension rate has been suppressed to protect against the possibility of identifying individuals.

For the purpose of this report, the schools with a modified calendar are compared to similar schools on a regular calendar to consider the correlation between the modified calendar and student experiences and outcomes at school.

Table 6: Percentage of students suspended (Ministry calculation)

School	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
<b>Brock H.S.</b>	<b>11.54%</b>	<b>4.94%</b>	<b>Suppressed</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>13.41%</b>
G.L. Roberts C&VI	9.20%	9.57%	2.63%	0.00%	6.59%
Uxbridge S.S.	7.17%	3.54%	Suppressed	0.00%	4.21%
<b>Henry Street H.S.</b>	<b>8.64%</b>	<b>4.79%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>5.64%</b>
Anderson C.V.I.	5.29%	7.36%	Suppressed	0.00%	4.30%
Sinclair S.S.	2.73%	1.24%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
<b>Maxwell Heights S.S.</b>	<b>5.60%</b>	<b>3.99%</b>	<b>Suppressed</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>
J. Clarke Richardson Collegiate	4.23%	3.37%	0.00%	0.00%	3.24%
<b>DDSB</b>	<b>2.50%</b>	<b>1.86%</b>	<b>0.23%</b>	<b>0.40%</b>	<b>1.58%</b>

As can be seen in this table, and consistent with what has been observed in the achievement summaries, the percentage of students suspended from year to year fluctuates around the DDSB suspension rates.

### Enhanced Transitions from Elementary to Secondary School?

Each year as Grade 8 students consider their move from elementary to secondary schools, they are invited to get to know more about what they can expect in Grade 9 and become familiar with their high school. To help students and families prepare for this transition, a variety of opportunities and resources are provided including:

- Visits to the high school
- A visit from the Indigenous Engagement Coach
- Information about supports offered by the high school
- A visit by the Guidance teacher from the high school
- An opportunity to meet the Transition Pathway counsellor
- Parents/Guardian information nights
- A “Choosing My Success” Student Transition Guide
- A visit by the Special Education teacher from the high school

At the end of the school year, Grade 8 students are invited to participate in an Exit Ticket survey to share how helpful they have found these opportunities and resources to help them feel prepared for high school. The following table shares the percentage of students from 2019 to 2024 administrations of the Exit Ticket Survey who felt they were “Very Prepared” or “Somewhat Prepared” for their transition to high school.

For the purpose of this report, the schools with a modified calendar are compared to similar schools on a regular calendar to consider the correlation between the modified calendar and student experiences and outcomes at school.

Table 7: Percentage of Students who feel “Very Prepared” or “Somewhat Prepared” for their Transition to High School

School	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	3-Year Average
<b>Brock H.S.</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>62%</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>62%</b>
G.L. Roberts C.V.I.	67%	67%	62%	70%	57%	43%	57%
Uxbridge S.S.	76%	63%	62%	78%	67%	66%	70%
<b>Henry St. H.S.</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>79%</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>66%</b>	<b>70%</b>
Anderson C.V.I.	77%	67%	60%	66%	74%	63%	68%
Sinclair S.S.	73%	68%	66%	66%	67%	68%	67%
<b>Maxwell Heights S.S</b>	<b>76%</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>66%</b>	<b>69%</b>	<b>71%</b>
J. Clarke Richardson Collegiate	72%	71%	68%	63%	70%	68%	67%
<b>DDSB</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>66%</b>	<b>68%</b>
<b>Total participants</b>	<b>3921</b>	<b>3437</b>	<b>3478</b>	<b>3615</b>	<b>4127</b>	<b>3405</b>	

As can be seen in the table, the percentage of students who feel some measure of preparedness for their transition to Grade 9 fluctuates around the DDSB results.

Supporting Grade 8 students through the transition to Grade 9 is a cross-panel effort between high schools and their elementary feeder schools, where guidance departments send special event information to feeder schools to participate in school-specific initiatives such as tours, events, visits, open houses, and transition planning etc. These efforts are indicative of the relationships between feeder schools and high schools in their efforts to set up purposeful connections and transition planning for all students. It is not evident that anything different occurs related to transitioning from a regular calendar in elementary to a modified calendar in secondary school.

### Improved Student Engagement?

Unfortunately, the original proposal identifying student engagement as a potential area of impact lacks clarification on what constitutes engagement. In the absence of a clear outline of what was intended, the following summaries are included from the School Climate and Student Well-Being Survey which draws on questions related to meaningful and engaged learning and the student’s feelings about having a voice at their school.

For the purpose of this report, the schools with a modified calendar are compared to similar schools on a regular calendar to consider the correlation between the modified calendar and student experiences and outcomes at school.



Table 8: Percentage of Students who agree they are encouraged to make decisions

School	2018-2019	2020-2021	2022-2023	3-Year Average
<b>Brock H.S.</b>	<b>55.6</b>	<b>67.8</b>	<b>64.4</b>	<b>62.6</b>
G.L. Roberts C.V.I.	61.3	65.2	57.9	61.5
Uxbridge S.S.	61.0	67.5	65.3	64.6
<b>Henry St. H.S.</b>	<b>63.1</b>	<b>72.0</b>	<b>60.4</b>	<b>65.2</b>
Anderson C.V.I.	61.1	67.9	61.6	63.5
Sinclair S.S.	54.5	68.9	64.8	62.7
<b>Maxwell Heights S.S.</b>	<b>53.7</b>	<b>62.8</b>	<b>69.5</b>	<b>62.0</b>
J. Clarke Richardson Collegiate	63.2	76.6	70.4	70.1
<b>DDSB</b>	<b>59.3</b>	<b>69.0</b>	<b>64.4</b>	<b>64.2</b>

Table 9: Percentage of Students who agree they feel they have input

School	2018-2019	2020-2021	2022-2023	3-Year Average
<b>Brock H.S.</b>	<b>38.3</b>	<b>45.7</b>	<b>48.3</b>	<b>44.1</b>
G.L. Roberts C.V.I.	44.1	48.6	42.7	45.1
Uxbridge S.S.	43.6	56.2	47.7	49.2
<b>Henry St. H.S.</b>	<b>46.1</b>	<b>56.6</b>	<b>43.2</b>	<b>48.6</b>
Anderson C.V.I.	40.1	47.3	45.6	44.3
Sinclair S.S.	36.6	47.5	46.6	43.6
<b>Maxwell Heights S.S.</b>	<b>36.8</b>	<b>46.9</b>	<b>49.3</b>	<b>44.3</b>
J. Clarke Richardson Collegiate	41.9	56.4	51.7	50.0
<b>DDSB</b>	<b>39.8</b>	<b>51.4</b>	<b>46.2</b>	<b>45.8</b>

Table 10: Percentage of Students who agree they have a say

School	2018-2019	2020-2021	2022-2023	3-Year Average
<b>Brock H.S.</b>	<b>46.5</b>	<b>49.7</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>48.7</b>
G.L. Roberts C.V.I.	47.3	50	45.5	47.6
Uxbridge S.S.	50.4	54.9	49.9	51.7
<b>Henry St. H.S.</b>	<b>52.9</b>	<b>56.0</b>	<b>50.0</b>	<b>53.0</b>
Anderson C.V.I.	50.5	51.4	49.5	50.5
Sinclair Secondary	37.5	55.7	48.6	47.3
<b>Maxwell Heights S.S.</b>	<b>40.3</b>	<b>51.6</b>	<b>52.0</b>	<b>48.0</b>
J. Clarke Richardson Collegiate	48.7	61.9	56.3	55.6
<b>DDSB</b>	<b>45.0</b>	<b>55.4</b>	<b>49.5</b>	<b>50.0</b>

### Increased Extra-Curricular Participation?

For the three previous administrations of the School Climate and Student Well-Being Survey, students were invited to share whether they participate in school clubs or clubs outside of school, and whether they volunteer their time. The following tables present the school and DDSB summaries for each of these questions for the 2018-2019, 2020-2021, and 2022-2023 administrations of the survey.

For the purpose of this report, the schools with a modified calendar are compared to similar schools on a regular calendar to consider the correlation between the modified calendar and student experiences and outcomes at school.

Table 11: Percentage of Students Indicating they Participate in School Clubs

School	2018-2019	2020-2021	2022-2023	3-Year Average
<b>Brock H.S.</b>	<b>86.8</b>	<b>81.6</b>	<b>86.2</b>	<b>84.9</b>
G.L. Roberts C.V.I.	86.1	73.7	86.1	81.9
Uxbridge S.S.	91.3	89.3	94.2	91.6
<b>Henry St. H.S.</b>	<b>91.8</b>	<b>90.1</b>	<b>92.5</b>	<b>91.5</b>
Anderson C.V.I.	92.2	87.2	95.0	91.5
Sinclair S.S.	90.2	91.5	94.3	92.0
<b>Maxwell Heights S.S.</b>	<b>87.7</b>	<b>86.7</b>	<b>94.6</b>	<b>89.7</b>
J. Clarke Richardson Collegiate	87.9	89.2	93.5	90.2
<b>DDSB</b>	<b>89.4</b>	<b>87.5</b>	<b>92.8</b>	<b>89.9</b>

Table 12: Percentage of Students Indicating they Participate in Clubs Outside of School

School	2018-2019	2020-2021	2022-2023	3-Year Average
<b>Brock H.S.</b>	<b>51.2</b>	<b>60.4</b>	<b>56.2</b>	<b>55.9</b>
G.L. Roberts C.V.I.	41.8	43.2	42.9	42.6
Uxbridge S.S.	69.5	73.7	76.8	73.3
<b>Henry St. H.S.</b>	<b>64.6</b>	<b>68.4</b>	<b>69.6</b>	<b>67.5</b>
Anderson C.V.I.	64.0	67.3	69.4	66.9
Sinclair S.S.	72.7	66.0	68.9	69.2
<b>Maxwell Heights S.S.</b>	<b>63.4</b>	<b>65.1</b>	<b>72.1</b>	<b>66.9</b>
J. Clarke Richardson Collegiate	59.4	61.1	67.5	62.7
<b>DDSB</b>	<b>63.7</b>	<b>64.8</b>	<b>67.4</b>	<b>65.3</b>

Table 13: Percentage of Students Indicating they Volunteer

School	2018-2019	2020-2021	2022-2023	3-Year Average
<b>Brock H.S.</b>	<b>60.0</b>	<b>51.4</b>	<b>53.8</b>	<b>55.1</b>
G.L. Roberts C.V.I.	55.0	42.7	48.6	48.8
Uxbridge S.S.	70.6	65.3	63.2	66.4
<b>Henry St. H.S.</b>	<b>69.0</b>	<b>56.9</b>	<b>63.6</b>	<b>63.2</b>
Anderson C.V.I.	65.1	53.7	60.1	59.6
Sinclair S.S.	70.9	60.7	59.8	63.8
<b>Maxwell Heights S.S.</b>	<b>66.1</b>	<b>57.5</b>	<b>66.6</b>	<b>63.4</b>
J. Clarke Richardson Collegiate	67.4	57.3	67.9	64.2
<b>DDSB</b>	<b>65.9</b>	<b>54.8</b>	<b>61.0</b>	<b>60.6</b>

Although it is not possible to comment on increases to participation, it is worth noting that the modified school year calendar does not pose an obstacle for more formal sports activities such as football, soccer, cross country, volleyball, and basketball. All three schools with modified school year calendars participate in Lake Ontario Secondary School Athletics (LOSSA) activities, which accommodate the school calendars by not scheduling fall sport competitions during the fall break.

### Enhanced Parental and Community Involvement?

Currently there is insufficient information available to directly explore whether parental and community involvement could be impacted by starting the school year five days earlier. All three schools with modified school year calendars have active volunteer pages on their school websites with School Community Council (SCC) brochures available in several languages. However, only one school had an active SCC page with the SCC Chair named for the current school year. Aside from having Volunteer of Distinction named at each school, the parent engagement of each modified calendar school is not apparent.

One possible consideration, albeit weak, for parental involvement is parental participation on the School Climate Survey.

For the purpose of this report, the schools with a modified calendar are compared to similar schools on a regular calendar to consider the correlation between the modified calendar and student experiences and outcomes at school.

Table 14: Number of Parents completing the School Climate and Student Well-Being Survey

School	2018-2019	2020-2021	2022-2023
<b>Brock H.S.</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>22</b>
G.L. Roberts C.V.I.	25	31	22
Uxbridge S.S.	96	61	5
<b>Henry Street H.S.</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>35</b>
Anderson C.V.I.	57	73	47
Sinclair Secondary	88	61	65
<b>Maxwell Heights S.S.</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>62</b>
J. Clarke Richardson Collegiate	68	26	72
<b>Modified Calendar</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>116 (-45%)</b>	<b>119 (+2.5%)</b>
<b>Regular Calendar</b>	<b>8635</b>	<b>5525 (-36%)</b>	<b>4241 (-23%)</b>

As can be seen in this table, there was a large decline in participation during the 2020-2021 administration of the School Climate and Student Well-Being survey. This decline coincided with the protocols that were put in place during COVID. In general, Henry Street H.S. and Brock H.S. had the largest decline in participation during this time in 2020-2021, whereas Maxwell Heights S.S. had the largest decline in parental participation in the 2022-2023 administration. Just as student achievement varied around the board outcomes, parental participation also varies with a larger decline in

2020-2021 than the schools with regular school year calendars, due to large declines in Henry Street H.S. and Brock H.S. participation, and a stabilized participation in 2022-2023, due largely to the decline in Maxwell Heights S.S. parent participation.

### Student Well-Being?

Although not included in the initial proposals as an area the modified school year calendar was expected to impact, the feedback from students, staff and parents/guardians administered earlier this year included reflections on the positive impact of the November break on student well-being. The following tables provide a summary of student perceptions on their feelings of belonging and mattering from the School Climate and Student Well-Being Survey.

For the purpose of this report, the schools with a modified calendar are compared to similar schools on a regular calendar to consider the correlation between the modified calendar and student experiences and outcomes at school.

Table 15: Percentage of Students that report feeling like they belong

School	2018-2019	2020-2021	2022-2023	3-Year Average
<b>Brock H.S.</b>	<b>64.3</b>	<b>69.7</b>	<b>63.6</b>	<b>65.9</b>
G.L. Roberts C.V.I.	67.4	71.4	51.2	63.3
Uxbridge S.S.	74.8	77.6	72.7	75.0
<b>Henry St. H.S.</b>	<b>74.5</b>	<b>80.9</b>	<b>69.2</b>	<b>74.9</b>
Anderson C.V.I.	68.6	74.6	70.8	71.3
Sinclair S.S.	70.7	76.7	71.5	73.0
<b>Maxwell Heights S.S.</b>	<b>69.3</b>	<b>76.3</b>	<b>78.7</b>	<b>74.8</b>
J. Clarke Richardson Collegiate	69.6	78.0	75.0	74.2
<b>DDSB</b>	<b>70.0</b>	<b>75.8</b>	<b>68.9</b>	<b>71.6</b>

Table 16: Percentage of Students that report feeling like they matter to staff

School	2020-2021	2022-2023	2-Year Average
<b>Brock H.S.</b>	<b>74.3</b>	<b>68.6</b>	<b>71.5</b>
G.L. Roberts C.V.I.	45.5	45.3	45.4
Uxbridge S.S.	78.7	67.7	73.2
<b>Henry St. H.S.</b>	<b>78.1</b>	<b>62.4</b>	<b>70.3</b>
Anderson C.V.I.	68.0	66.7	67.4
Sinclair S.S.	70.5	66.5	68.5
<b>Maxwell Heights S.S.</b>	<b>69.1</b>	<b>66.7</b>	<b>67.9</b>
J. Clarke Richardson Collegiate	71.0	66.1	68.6
<b>DDSB</b>	<b>70.9</b>	<b>64.2</b>	<b>67.6</b>

### University Campus Visits

Students shared through the survey administered earlier this year and the focus groups that the November Break (November 4 to 8 in 2024-2025) provided an opportunity to visit university campuses. As can be seen in the following compilation of open houses and campus events held at universities, with the exception of Trent University's Peterborough Campus, the fall, winter, and spring open houses are scheduled for Saturdays and Sundays. This makes campus tours accessible to students across the province regardless of their school year calendar.

Table 17: Compilation of University Campus Open Houses scheduled for 2024-2025

University	Fall Campus Event	Winter Campus Event	Spring Campus Event
Algoma University	Sat., Nov. 9, 2024	Sat., March 29, 2025	
Brock University	Sun., Nov 3, 2024		Sun., April 6, 2025
Carleton University	Sat., Oct. 26, 2024	Sat., March 8, 2025	Sat., May 10, 2025
University of Guelph	Sun., Nov. 3, 2024 Sun., Nov. 10, 2024	Sun., March 23, 2025	
Lakehead University	Sat., Nov. 9, 2024		
Laurentian University	Sat., Oct. 26, 2024	Sat., March 15, 2025	
McMaster University	Sat., Nov. 16, 2024	Sat., May 10, 2025	
Nipissing University	Sat., Nov. 2, 2024	Sat., March 8, 2025	
OCAD University	Sat., Nov. 16, 2024		
Université de l'Ontario français	unable to locate an open house date		
Ontario Tech University	Sat., Oct. 26, 2024		
University of Ottawa		Sat., March 22, 2025	
Queen's University	Sat., Oct. 26, 2024 Sun., Oct. 27, 2024	Sat., March 8, 2025	Sat., May 24, 2025
Royal Military College of Canada	Sat., Nov. 16, 2024		
University of Toronto (St. George)	Sun. Nov. 3, 2024		
University of Toronto (Mississauga)	Sun., Oct. 20, 2024	Sun., March 30, 2025	
University of Toronto (Scarborough)	Sun., Nov. 10, 2024	Sat., March 22, 2025	
Toronto Metropolitan University	Sat., Nov. 9, 2024	Sat., March 29, 2025	
Trent University (Durham)	Sat., Nov. 16, 2024	Sat., March 1, 2025	
Trent University (Peterborough)	Friday, Nov. 8, 2024	Sat., March 15, 2025	

Table 17 continued: Compilation of University Campus Open Houses scheduled for 2024-2025

University	Fall Campus Event	Winter Campus Event	Spring Campus Event
University of Waterloo	Sat., Nov. 9, 2024	Sat., March 22, 2025	
Huron of Western University	Sun., Nov. 17, 2024		
King's at Western University	Sat., Nov. 2, 2024	Sat., March 22, 2025	
Wilfrid Laurier (Milton)	Sat., Oct. 26, 2024		Sat., April 5, 2025
Wilfrid Laurier (Waterloo)	Sat., Nov. 9, 2024	Sat., March 8, 2025	
Wilfrid Laurier (Brantford)	Sat., Nov. 16, 2024	Sat. March 15, 2025	
University of Windsor	Sat., Oct. 26, 2024		
York University	Sat., Nov. 2, 2024		Sat., April 5, 2025

One challenge in the compilation of this table is that universities remove the event notifications after the event is over. This table has been constructed using a combination of dates provided by the Ontario University Application Centre and dates located through historical snapshots of each university's websites.

## 5.0 Financial Implications

All students who are eligible receive busing whether they attend a school with a modified school year calendar or regular school year calendar. The schedules and costs associated with busing are shared with the Durham Catholic District School Board. However, since the first week of the modified school year calendar does not align with the DCDSB, the DDSB absorbs the full cost of transportation.

Initially, schools with modified calendars had been expected to absorb the additional busing costs out of their budget allocation. However, given the increase in transportation costs, this became difficult and the decision was reversed three years ago with additional busing expenses being absorbed centrally.

Table 18: Transportation costs for the first five days of school for Modified Calendar Schools

	August 2023				August 2024			
	Durham-ways	First student	Stock	Total	Durham-ways	First student	Stock	Total
Brock H.S.	0	0	25,051	<b>25,051</b>	0	0	25,959	25,959
Henry St. H.S.	10,020	13,171	3,009	<b>26,200</b>	11,479	6,783	4,328	<b>22,590</b>
Maxwell Heights S.S..	13,379	0	0	<b>13,379</b>	8,008	1,553	0	<b>9,562</b>
TOTAL	23,399	13,272	28,060	<b><u>64,630</u></b>	19,487	8,337	30,287	<b><u>58,110</u></b>

## 6.0 Strategic Links

**Meaningful learning** Providing high-quality teaching and learning for every student and staff member.

- Centering students and matching educational experiences to their interests and goals to prepare them for a changing world.

### **Connected Communities**

- Engaging students, families, staff and community members as valued contributors to our growing community.
- Building trust and a shared purpose through listening, communication and action.
- Fostering opportunities to meet, learn from and inspire each other.

### **Well-Being**

- Creating safe, caring and respectful environments where people can thrive.
- Supporting the physical and mental health of students and staff.
- Honoring every individual's identity and inherent dignity.

### **Infrastructure Commitments**

- Transparent and equity-focused financial resourcing and accountability.
- Reliable home-to-school transportation to support equitable access to education.



## **7.0 Communication/Implementation Plan**

Pending approval of the staff recommendation to return all secondary schools to the standard/regular calendar, a communication plan will be developed to support implementation for the 2026 – 2027 school year.

## **8.0 Conclusion**

The modified school calendar requires additional funding, coordination and transportation efforts each year to ensure its ongoing implementation. The original goals of the modified calendar pilot program were to improve school climate and culture and improve attendance and behaviour as well as ease the transition from Grade 8 to 9 as it relates to communication with parents, an uninterrupted month of September, positive school climate, encouragement to participate in extracurricular activities and improved student engagement. The overall student academic and attitudinal impact shows that all three modified calendar schools fluctuate around the board results as well as the results of like schools. Secondary schools with the modified calendar show evidence of higher absenteeism, particularly for the week in August before other schools have started.

With regards to student attitudinal information, all three schools show a positive impact on the student population, however, it is not clear that this is a direct result of the 5-day break in November (November 4-8 in 2024-2025). Fostering connection to staff, self and classmates is a core element of school culture and reflects the ongoing work and dedication from school staff and how they impact student wellness in each of their buildings. The relationship between modified calendar and student survey results is not a clear causal relationship, but indicative of correlational impacts on the overall school culture.

While the respondents to surveys indicate a preference for the modified calendar, there is little evidence to support improved attendance, discipline, or student achievement that is causally linked to the modified year calendar. Data collected over time-related to the originally set goals of the secondary modified calendar schools is not demonstrative of marked improvements in student experience and outcomes that justify the continued operational planning and additional finances that are required to support the continuation of modified secondary calendar schools.

## **9.0 Recommended Action**

It is recommended that the Board of Trustees approve the staff recommendation to return the three secondary schools on modified calendars (Brock H.S. Henry Street H.S. and Maxwell Heights S.S.) to the regular school year calendar for the 2026 – 2027 school year.

**10.0 Appendices**

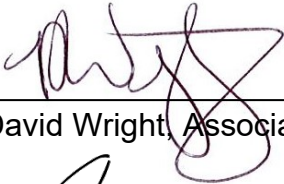
Appendix A - June 3, 2024 Schools Utilizing Modified School Year Calendar Board Report

Appendix B - April 22, 2025 Modified Secondary School Calendar Board Report

Report reviewed and submitted by



Camille Williams-Taylor, Director of Education and Secretary to the Board



David Wright, Associate Director of Corporate Services



Jim Markovski, Associate Director of Equitable Education

**DURHAM DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD  
ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT****REPORT TO:** Durham District School Board**DATE:** June 3, 2024**SUBJECT:** Schools Utilizing Modified School Year Calendar **PAGE:** 1 of 10**ORIGIN:** Camille Williams-Taylor, Director of Education and Secretary to the Board  
Jim Markovski, Associate Director, Equitable Education  
David Wright, Associate Director, Corporate Services**1.0 Purpose**

Questions/concerns have been brought forward from the community regarding the impact of a modified calendar on secondary school students. This report provides an overview of the current student achievement data, and the related benefits and drawbacks.

The purpose of this report is to provide the Board of Trustees with information regarding the five Durham District School Board (DDSB) schools utilizing a modified school year calendar.

The Durham District School Board recognizes Indigenous rights are distinct. In the exercise of those rights, Indigenous staff and students shall not be subjected to actions with the aim or effect of depriving these distinct rights.

The Durham District School Board is committed to providing learning and working environments that centre human rights and equity and are safe, welcoming, respectful, equitable, accessible, inclusive and free from all forms of discrimination, oppression, harassment and harm.

**2.0 Background**

Starting in the 1980s and 1990s, schools in North America began to experiment with different versions of school calendars to determine whether year-round schooling would improve student achievement. Early research results for modified school year calendars indicated that there were a number of potentially promising benefits, including but not limited to, improved student achievement. Studies and anecdotal reporting suggested a wide range of potential advantages. These included the following:

- i) Improved student achievement.
- ii) Improved student attendance.
- iii) Reduction in student discipline issues including suspensions.
- iv) Enhanced transitions from elementary to secondary school.
- v) Improved student engagement.
- vi) Increased extra-curricular participation.
- vii) Enhanced parental and community involvement.

The rationale for the positive changes indicated that the interval between Thanksgiving and the winter break was too long of a period for students to maintain focus without a break. The November Break was intended to provide time away for students during the fall season. Year-round schooling has the added advantage of reducing “learning loss” during a two-month summer vacation. Year-round schooling, however, is not the same as the early start/November Break modified school year calendar currently utilized at the three secondary schools under discussion, Brock H.S, Henry Street H.S. and Maxwell Heights S.S.. The two elementary schools, C.E. Broughton P.S. and Winchester P.S. which run for eleven months, including multiple breaks throughout that schedule, are closest to providing a year-round calendar.

The November Break was presented as an ideal time for senior students to visit college and university campuses prior to submitting post-secondary applications. Many universities and college campuses open their doors during November to welcome potential students. Similarly, many students would be able to utilize the November Break as an opportunity to complete Independent Study Units prior to the exam preparation period. The timing of this is particularly significant, as Grade 11 marks and Grade 12 early progress marks are referenced by post-secondary institutions when making admissions offers.

Off-season holiday travel during the November period became an important factor for many families. Parents who were not able to travel during the summer months took advantage of off-season travel. Families who may have withdrawn their children from school to travel during regular instructional time, suggested that they would restrict travel plans to the off-peak November Break.

### **DDSB History of Modified School Year Calendars**

In 1991, a presentation was made to the Board outlining the current research taking place on modified school calendars. The Board of Trustees unanimously moved that:

*Staff be directed to identify two modified school year pilot projects; and that staff initiate a process to implement both a multi-track and single-track modified school year pilot project; and that staff report to the board no later than November 30, 1991 on the planned process for the implementation of the pilot programs; and the position of the modified school year project leader be continued subject to annual review.*

Trustees commented that “it was necessary that people understand the academic reasons and rationale for adopting a modified school year and the benefits to the students”.

In January of 1992, the Board approved a description for the Modified School Year Advisory Committee and included this as an appendix to the Board Bylaws. The Board agreed to install air conditioning in the pilot school as schools would be open during the summer months. The Board also approved transportation of students who had opted out of a modified school year pilot project. Five schools were identified as potential sites for a

pilot project: Highbush PS, Coronation PS, Athabasca PS, R.A. Hutchison PS, and West Lynde PS. After an in-depth consultation process, each of the five school communities declined the opportunity to proceed with a pilot project.

In February 1993, the issue of a Modified School Year calendar was raised once more. Trustees voted in favour of the following motion:

*That the Durham Board of Education develop a single and multi-track calendar model for use in possible pilot schools and for Ministry of Education approval.*

Discussion took place considering the modified school year, multi-track strand as a possible solution to facility needs resulting from current enrolment and projected growth.

In December 1995, Trustees elected a Chairperson for the Modified School Year Advisory Committee. In addition, it was agreed that the new unnamed Anderson P.S. participate in the modified school year and that a modified school year calendar for this school be sent to the Ministry of Education for approval.

In January 1997, Trustees elected a new Chairperson for the Modified School Year Advisory Committee.

In January 1999, Trustees expressed the following:

*...what the board is doing now is taking initiative to accommodate the modified school year. If this is not done now, look at the additional cost to renovate in the future.*

The following motion was passed:

*That a committee be struck for each new school or renovated school to explore and investigate the option of a modified school year program with a report to the Board with timelines to allow appropriate planning; the representative committee would include local trustee(s), school councils, parents, staff and would be initiated by the superintendent for the area.*

In February 1999, C.E. Broughton P.S. was proposed as a pilot school for a modified school year calendar for the school year 1999-2000. Recently opened in 1996, the school had a regular school year boundary. When the school became involved in the pilot project for a modified school year, a second boundary was defined, with no transportation provided. This allowed Durham families to select C.E. Broughton P.S. as a destination school without incurring additional costs to the Board. C.E. Broughton P.S. continues to offer two school calendar options for parents. Declining enrolment in the modified calendar stream triggered a report to the Standing Committee meeting in November 2019

recommending the collapse of the modified school year at that school. Small class sizes have made it extremely difficult to staff the school utilizing our staffing formula and have necessitated the need for additional staffing.

In February 2000, Winchester P.S. was approved to implement a modified school year calendar beginning August 2000.

In February 2005, Brock H.S. was granted permission to initiate a pilot project for the 2005-2006 school year utilizing a modified school year calendar.

In September 2008, administrators from Brock H.S. and Henry Street H.S. requested that the modified school year calendar no longer be considered a pilot project and that it continue longer-term. Their presentation maintained, in part:

*The modified year improves school climate and culture and improves attendance and behaviour. The most significant benefit is the transition from Grade 8 to 9 as it relates to communication with parents, an uninterrupted month of September, positive school climate, encouragement to participate in extracurricular activities, and improved student engagement.*

Following this presentation, trustees recommended that the modified school year calendar be considered as a standard practice and that the item be referred to staff for consideration.

In 2011, Maxwell Heights S.S. was granted permission to adopt a modified school year calendar prior to the initial opening. Staff were polled during the hiring process and a committee was struck to determine community support.

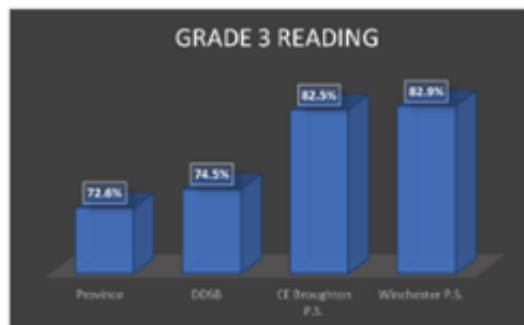
Submissions to the Ministry of Education for school calendars typically take place in February after consultation with employee groups, School Community Councils, and other stakeholder groups. To date, two elementary schools and three secondary schools continue to function utilizing a modified school calendar.

### 3.0 **Analysis**

#### **Student Achievement Data:**

EQAO data points provide easily accessible snapshots of student achievement. The following summaries capture recent EQAO data from the schools utilizing a modified school year calendar with comparable data points for Board and Provincial results.

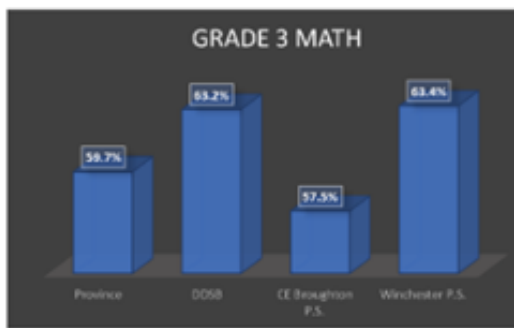
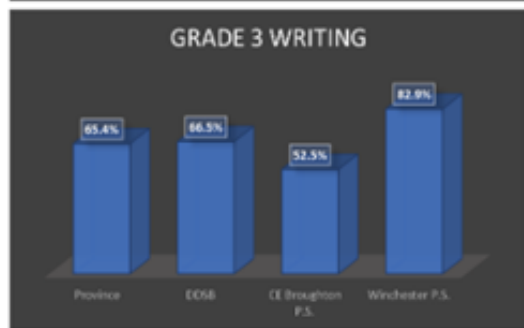
## Primary EQAO Results for Elementary Modified Schools 2022-2023



**Reading:** Both modified schools have a **higher** percentage of students at provincial standard than either the DDSB or the Province.

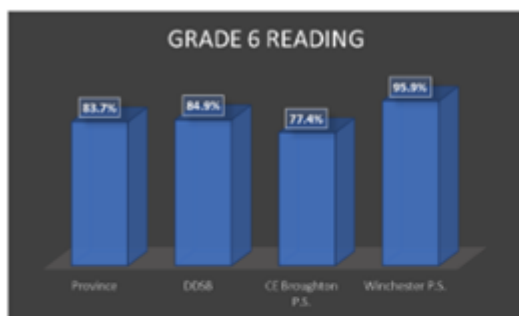
**Writing:** Winchester P.S. has a **higher** percentage of students and CE Broughton P.S. has a **lower** percentage of students at provincial standard than the DDSB or the Province.

**Math:** Winchester P.S. has an **equivalent** percentage of students as the DDSB and higher percentage of students than the Province at provincial standard. CE Broughton P.S. had a **lower** percentage of students at the provincial standard than the DDSB or the Province.



## Junior EQAO Results for Elementary Modified Schools

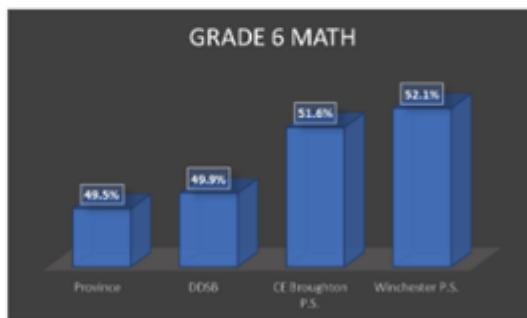
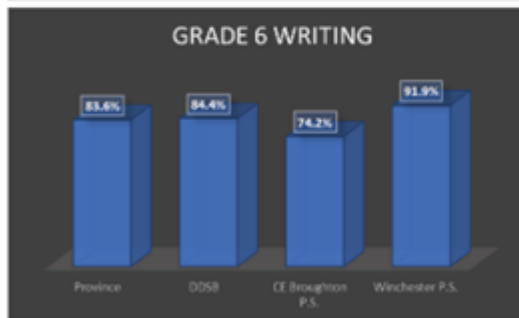
**2022-2023**



**Reading:** Winchester P.S. has a **higher** percentage of students and CE Broughton P.S. has a **lower** percentage of students at provincial standard than the DDSB or the province.

**Writing:** Winchester P.S. has a **higher** percentage of students and CE Broughton P.S. has a **lower** percentage of students at provincial standard than the DDSB or the province.

**Math:** Both modified schools have a **higher** percentage of students at provincial standard than either the DDSB or the province.

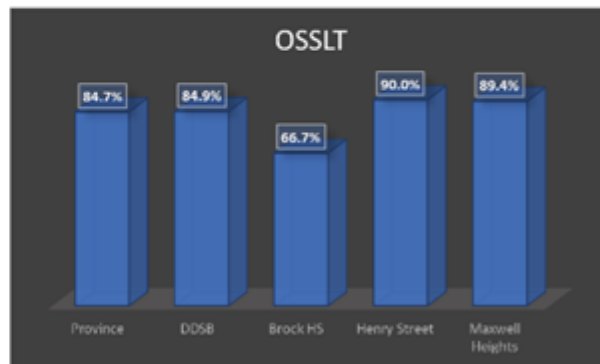
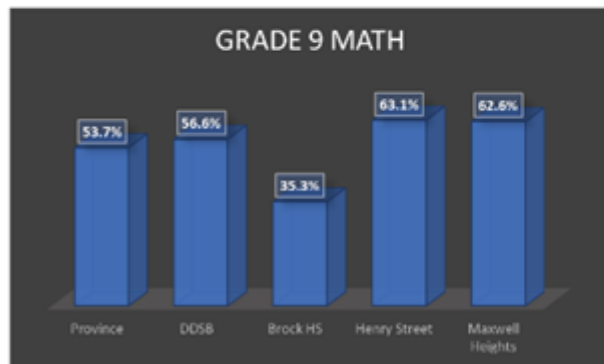




## Grade 9 EQAO Math and OSSLT for Modified Secondary Schools

2022-2023

On both the Grade 9 Math and Grade 10 OSSLT Assessments, Brock H.S. has a **lower** percentage of students and both Henry Street P.S. and Maxwell Heights P.S. have **higher** percentages of students at provincial standard than the Province and the DDSB.



### Student Attendance Data:

Examining historical data, schools with a modified calendar had a higher percentage of students with more than 5 days absent. This trend is not as apparent in the 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 school years.

## Historical Attendance for Secondary Schools on a Modified School Calendar

In this historical summary, schools with a modified school calendar have a **higher percentage** of students with more than 5 days absent. This trend is not as apparent in the 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 school years.

\*Data was collected up to May 13th 2024

% Students With Greater Than 5 Days Absent										
20.5 classes absent (>5 days)	Reg Schools Only	Modified Schools Only	Maxwell Heights	Brock	Henry Street	Anderson	Sinclair	Port Perry	Eastdale	R.S. McLaughlin
2023-2024	78%	80%	72%	91%	80%	71%	80%	87%	79%	80%
2022-2023	85%	85%	82%	91%	86%	82%	84%	94%	85%	84%
2013-2014	82%	90%	91%	89%	89%	88%	88%	97%	92%	91%
2012-2013	81%	86%	85%	91%	84%	83%	82%	94%	87%	80%
2011-2012	88%	91%	90%	95%	91%	91%	90%	96%	93%	89%
2010-2011	89%	94%	94%	97%	91%	90%	92%	96%	95%	90%
2009-2010	89%	93%	93%	97%	91%	92%	90%	95%	95%	92%



## Historical Attendance for Elementary Schools on a Modified School Calendar

In this historical summary, schools with a modified school calendar have a **higher percentage** of students with more than 5 days absent.

\*Data was collected up to May 13th 2024

% Students With Greater Than 5 Days Absent				
School Year	Reg Schools Only	Modified Schools Only	C.E. Broughton P.S.	Winchester P.S.
2023-2024	78%	81%	78%	84%
2022-2023	87%	88%	85%	91%
2021-2022	84%	89%	85%	92%

Upon reviewing student absenteeism data, it was noted that there is a significant increase in student absenteeism during intervals of time when the modified school year calendar has begun in schools, but the regular school is not yet in session.

### Transportation Expenses:

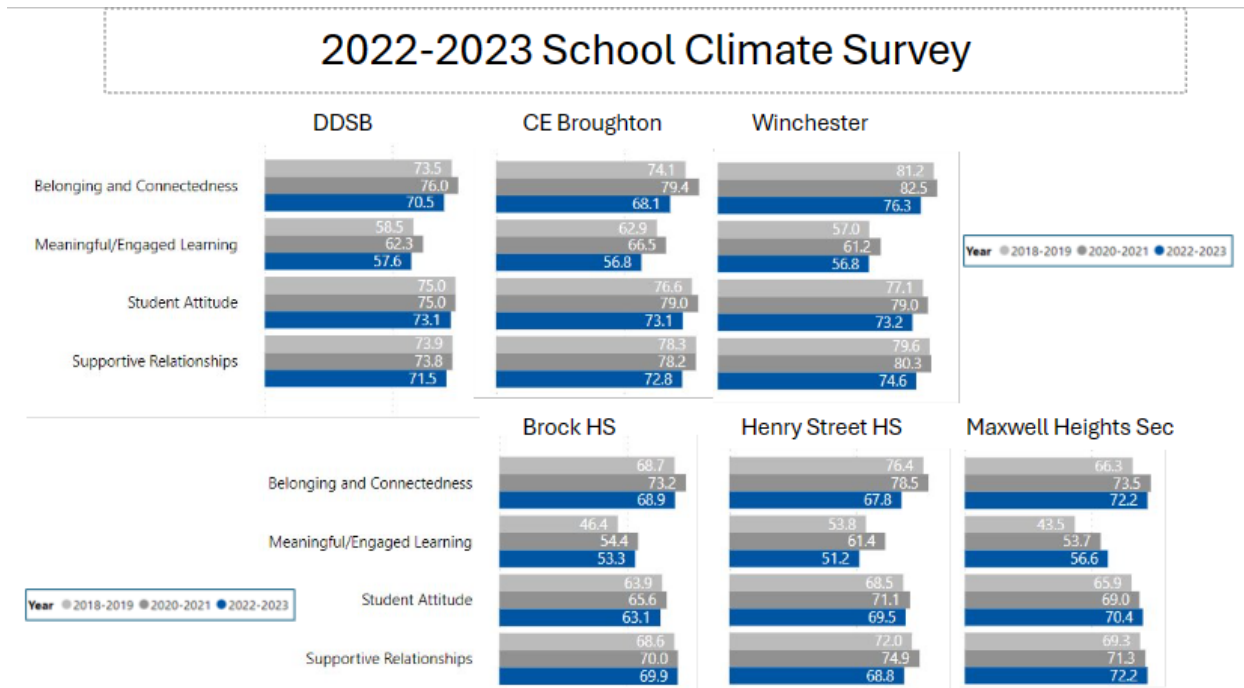
Additional transportation costs incurred for busing during the early-start period for schools with a modified school year calendar during the 2023-2024 school year was \$66,000.

### School Climate Surveys:

School climate surveys for the 2018-2019, 2020-2021, and 2022-2023 school years are captured in the charts below.

Of the two elementary schools, C.E. Broughton performed at or above the DDSB averages in all areas in the 2018-2019 and 2020-2022 years. In 2022-2023, scores for Belonging and Connectedness and Meaningful/Engaged Learning slipped below the DDSB average by 2.4% and 0.8% respectively. Winchester performed above the DDSB average in all categories with the exception of Meaningful/Engaged Learning.

At the secondary level, Brock H.S. results in all areas were consistently lower than the DDSB averages. The results at Henry Street H.S. demonstrate results lower than the DDSB average in nine out of the twelve benchmarks. Belonging and Connectedness for the 2018-2019 and 2020-2021 years exceeded the DDSB average by 2.9% and 2.5%. Supportive Relationships in 2020-2021 exceeded the DDSB average by 1.1%. Maxwell Heights S.S. averages were below the DDSB average in all categories with the exception of Belonging and Connectedness in 2022-2023, where they exceeded the DDSB figure by 1.7%.



There appears to be no correlational connection between the student achievement, climate or attendance data, with regard to the modified calendar structure.

### Student Summer Opportunities:

Some families with children attending Henry Street H.S., Brock H.S., and Maxwell Heights S.S. have questioned the value of the modified school year in those schools given the ways in which students are being disadvantaged for summer employment opportunities. With rising costs for post-secondary education, many families depend upon their students' ability to earn money during the summer months. A significant number of concerns have prompted the need for a comprehensive review of the modified school year.

### Recreational Activities:

As a result of the modified school calendar differing in dates from the regular school calendar, parents have expressed concerns about their children being negatively impacted when their children participate in clubs, athletics, or other recreational activities. For example, calendars may not align over the summer months or when district, regional and provincial tournaments take place.

### Student Resource Teams:

Schools utilizing the modified school calendar engage with students and families prior to the availability of student resource teams. Central staff teams providing mental health supports, inclusion planning, and transitions guidance are only available to schools during

the regular school calendar. Adjusting the work schedules for staff to accommodate students attending modified calendar schools is currently not an option.

### **Staffing Challenges:**

There is no impact to staffing in the secondary schools that have the modified school year calendar as the entire school operates on the modified calendar. There is an impact to staffing at the elementary schools with modified school year calendars as the program runs on a different calendar than the regular track. Additional clerical costs are required to support coverage of the head secretary when the modified calendar and the regular calendar are not in sync. Since the modified program is based upon parent/guardian selection, staffing may be impacted annually by enrolment numbers in the program. Over the last three years, the class sizes in the modified calendar are lower than the regular calendar and are significantly below board class size averages. Teacher assignments are challenging to manage across the two calendars and creative solutions, including additional staffing and/or occasional teacher coverages are required.

## **4.0 Financial Implications**

Schools with modified calendars were initially expected to absorb the additional busing costs out of their budget allocation. Given the increase in transportation costs, this became difficult and the decision was reversed three years ago with additional busing expenses being absorbed centrally.

As a result of instructional time taking place during one full week in August in the three secondary schools, and for the full month of August in the elementary schools, air conditioning is required to be running in those facilities. There is an additional expense to the District for the cost of this service.

The costs of staffing small class sizes at schools utilizing a modified school year calendar creates an additional expense to the system. Additional staffing is in place to ensure appropriate classroom organization in elementary and reasonable course selection pathways for secondary schools.

## **5.0 Conclusion and/or Recommendations**

The DDSB currently facilitates a modified school year calendar for two elementary schools and three secondary schools. The initial impetus for the modified school year calendar was driven by research indicating the potential for improved student achievement, enhanced student engagement, and improved attendance. Current data indicates that there are no statistically significant advantages to student achievement, attendance, or engagement in the five DDSB schools currently utilizing a modified school calendar.

Elementary families elect to have their children attend schools with a modified school calendar and they do this through a registration process. Secondary families in the Brock H.S., Henry St. H.S. and Maxwell Heights S.S. catchments, are not afforded the opportunity to select a calendar option when registering their students.

Because the initial establishment of a modified calendar for these schools was generated by board motion, a board motion will be required to adjust or remove the modified calendar structure for these schools. The path to this decision-making process begins with a motion for staff to conduct a review of the modified calendar structure and bring a report to inform the board's decision. As such, staff recommend initiating a review of the modified school year calendar at the three secondary schools for the 2024-2025 school year. The review will facilitate an opportunity to engage with families in these three school communities to determine their satisfaction with the modified school calendar and whether there is interest in continuing the structure into the 2025-2026 school year. In consideration of adhering to planning timelines, particularly for secondary schools, the matter should be contemplated by the January 2025 Board meeting.

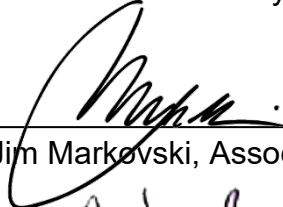
## 6.0 Appendices

Not applicable

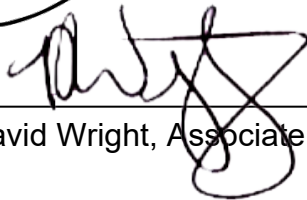
Report reviewed and submitted by:



Camille Williams-Taylor, Director of Education and Secretary of the Board



Jim Markovski, Associate Director, Equitable Education



David Wright, Associate Director, Corporate Services

## DURHAM DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

**REPORT TO:** Durham District School Board

**DATE:** April 22, 2025

**SUBJECT:** Modified Secondary School Calendar

**PAGE:** 1 of 12

**ORIGIN:** Camille Williams-Taylor, Director of Education and Secretary to the Board  
 Jim Markovski, Associate Director of Equitable Education  
 Chris Conley, Manager, Research and Strategic Analytics  
 Denise Nickerson, System Lead, Operations and Teaching  
 and Learning: Math Development Strategy K-12

The Durham District School Board recognizes Indigenous rights are distinct. In the exercise of those rights, Indigenous staff and students shall not be subjected to actions with the aim or effect of depriving these distinct rights.

The Durham District School Board is committed to providing learning and working environments that centre human rights and equity and are safe, welcoming, respectful, equitable, accessible, inclusive and free from all forms of discrimination, oppression, harassment and harm.

### 1.0 **Abstract**

This report provides a synopsis of the analysis, feedback, observations and considerations surfaced through operational impact following the recent review of secondary modified calendar schools. The staff make a recommendation for a return to the regular calendar for the three modified secondary schools effective the 2026-2027 school year.

### 2.0 **Purpose**

This report provides information to the Board of Trustees regarding feedback collected in response to the following June 2024 resolution of the Board:

THAT STAFF INITIATE A REVIEW OF THE MODIFIED SCHOOL YEAR CALENDAR AT THE THREE SECONDARY SCHOOLS: BROCK HIGH SCHOOL, MAXWELL HEIGHTS SECONDARY SCHOOL AND HENRY STREET HIGH SCHOOL. INPUT IS REQUIRED FROM THE COMMUNITY - STAFF, STUDENTS, AND PARENTS, AND A REPORT IS TO COME BACK TO THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES NO LATER THAN JANUARY 2025.

This report also seeks the Board of Trustees approval to move the three modified calendar secondary schools back to the regular calendar for the 2026-2027 school year.

### 3.0 **Background**

A survey was drafted to gather feedback from parents, families and caregivers, students, and staff, inviting them to indicate:

- The school students attend, or that staff work at (Brock High School, Maxwell Heights Secondary School, Henry Street High School).
- Which school calendar they preferred (“Modified Calendar – Starts in the third week of August with a week break in November”; “Regular Calendar – Starts on the first Tuesday of September.”).
- Why they prefer the calendar they selected.

Participants were invited to contact the Research and Strategic Analytics (RSA) department with any questions or concerns either by email or phone. The family/caregiver survey was available in eight languages (English, Urdu, Simplified Chinese, Arabic, Farsi, French, Tamil, Dari). The surveys are available for review in Appendix A.

The survey was distributed centrally through email and ran from September 23 to October 3, 2024 for parents, families and caregivers, and staff. The student survey was delayed in distribution due to technical issues and was distributed September 26 with the survey deadline extended to October 10, 2024. Although survey administration is generally avoided at the beginning of the school year, this window for administration was selected with the following considerations:

- Honoring the dates of significance that could impact participation.
- Providing students, staff and parents, families and caregivers with time to settle into the year and experience the modified calendar's early start.
- Providing sufficient time to analyze and summarize the open-ended feedback.
- Providing sufficient time to meet the reporting timelines.

Due to low response rates on the student survey, student focus groups were coordinated to provide additional opportunities for students to share more details about their experiences with the modified secondary school calendar. A total of four focus groups were scheduled to accommodate all students in each school who expressed interest and were available to participate between February 3 and February 5, 2025. Of the 45 students that expressed interest, a total of 41 students participated.

Each focus group was facilitated by the Superintendent of the school with members of the RSA team and the System Lead of Operations attending to take notes and provide additional support. No identities were documented as part of the notes. Students were welcomed to the space and invited to share their thoughts and experiences:

1. Do you prefer a regular school calendar or modified school calendar?
2. Please tell us more about your experiences and the reasons for your answer.

As an alternative to sharing in front of other students, opportunities were provided for students to share thoughts in written form, which were incorporated later into the focus group notes.

#### 4.0 **Analysis**

##### 4.1 **Attendance**

The following table illuminates the pattern of student attendance in the first week of school for the modified and regular calendar schools. On average, there are more cumulative days absent per student at schools with modified calendars than schools with the regular calendar.

*Table 1: 2024-2025 First Week of Absence by Secondary School Calendar*

		<b>Week 1 - Aug 22-28 (Modified), Sep 3-9 (Regular)</b>	
School Calendar	Enrollment	# of students with at least 1 absence	% of students with at least 1 absence
Brock H.S.	461	150	33%
Henry St. H.S.	1,265	355	28%
Maxwell Heights S.S.	1,927	527	27%
<b>Modified Calendar</b>	3,653	1,032	28%
<b>Regular Calendar</b>	23,062	5,191	23%

##### 4.2 **Feedback on Preference for Modified School Calendars and Regular School Calendars**

###### **Participation**

*Table 2: Participation by Group*

Survey	Number of Individuals Invited	Number that Participated	Percent that Participated
<b>Parents, Families, Caregivers</b>	4,908	795	16%
<b>Students</b>	3,505	214	6%
<b>Staff</b>	404	293	72.5%

#### 4.2.1 Feedback from Students

Of the 214 students that participated (6% of student enrollment), students indicated a preference across all three schools for the modified school calendar.

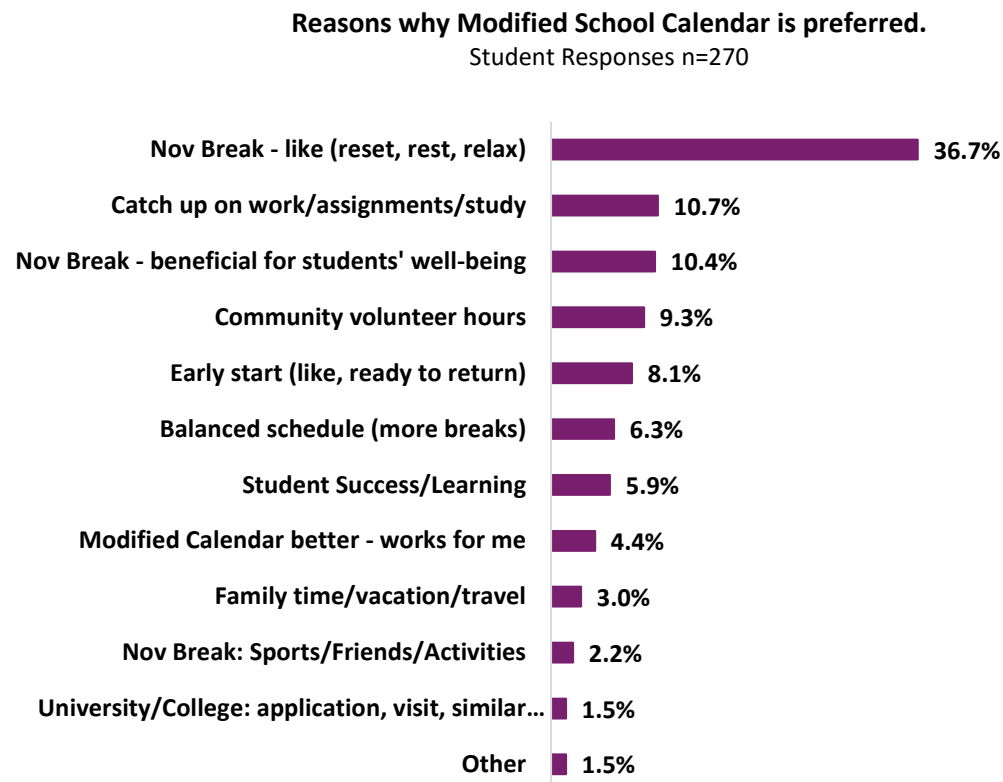
*Table 3: Percentage of Student Preference for Calendars*

Calendar Preference	Brock	Henry	Maxwell Heights	Overall
Modified Calendar	84.6%	81.2%	77.6%	<b>79.4%</b>
Regular Calendar	15.4%	18.8%	22.4%	<b>20.6%</b>

#### Modified Calendar Survey Feedback

A plurality (the largest group of responses, but not large enough to be the majority of responses) of student responses shared that the reasons they prefer the modified school calendar include that the November break is an opportunity to rest and reset, a time to catch-up on assignments and to study, all of which are beneficial for their well-being, and that it is an opportunity to complete community volunteer hours.

Figure 1 presents the full set of themes that emerged from the feedback.



*Figure 1: Percentage of Responses by Themed Student Feedback on their Preference for the Modified School Calendar*



Figure 1 Note: multiple themes can be applied to a comment; hence, results are represented as the number of responses and not the number of participants.

### Regular Calendar Survey Feedback

A plurality of student responses shared that the reasons they prefer the regular school calendar include that they want a full summer break, that the regular start is better, and that it aligns with family and friends' schedules. Figure 2 presents the full set of themes that emerged from the feedback.

*Figure 2: Percentage of Responses by Themed Student Feedback on their Preference for the Regular School Calendar*

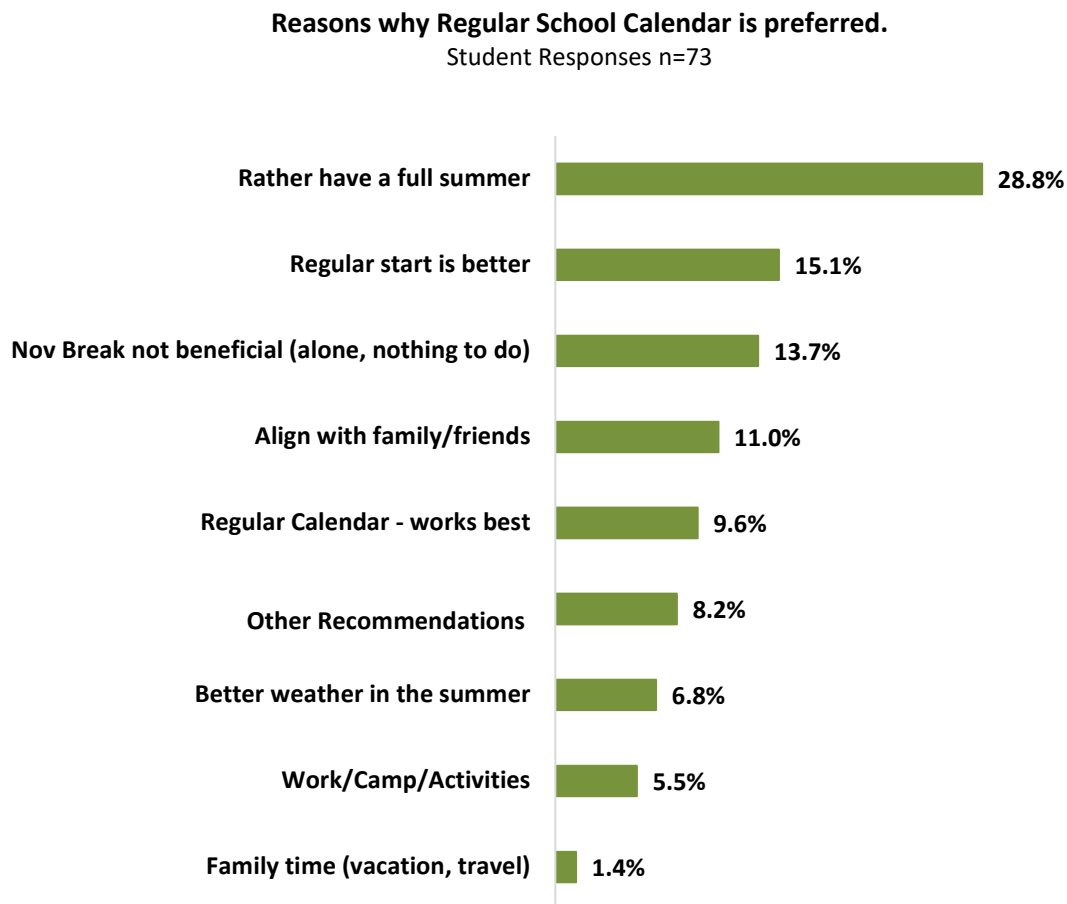


Figure 2 Note: multiple themes can be applied to a comment; hence, results are represented as the number of responses and not the number of participants.

## Focus Group Feedback

The feedback provided by students at the focus groups was consistent with the responses that were provided by students that participated on the survey. Students in the focus groups shared that they felt the modified school calendar provides:

- A break at a time (November) when they feel burnt out.
- An opportunity to accumulate volunteer hours.
- An opportunity to get extra hours at work during that week.
- An opportunity to make progress on incomplete projects.
- An opportunity to prepare for exams.
- An opportunity to travel.
- An opportunity to visit university and college campuses.
- These advantages reduce stress and is felt as a smoother transition.

Students also shared challenges that they experience with the modified school calendar which includes:

- A shock coming from an elementary school with a regular calendar.
- Difficulty getting back into the routine after the break.
- Difficulty connecting with friends that go to a school with a regular calendar. This can feel isolating.
- Not liking starting earlier in the year.
- Feeling that the November break disrupts the rhythm (academic rhythm, sleep schedule, etc.) rather than having a consistent rhythm through the semester.
- The first few days of school are just ice breakers, and nothing really happens.
- Home alone during the week.
- Need more information in Grade 8 about what the different calendar in secondary school will be like (the modified calendar in secondary is not a choice).
- Loss of money with less time to work in the summer.
- Schools do not have air conditioning, so returning early in the heat is more uncomfortable.
- Siblings in schools with different calendars are a burden on the family.

Upon reviewing the feedback across the three schools, it was noted that there are differences between the schools in the scheduled workload and teacher expectations of students. In one school, midterm assessments were scheduled before the November Break, whereas at another school, the midterm assessments were scheduled upon returning from November Break. Similarly, in one school, teachers would assign work to be completed over the November break and then submitted upon return, whereas at another school, teachers encouraged students to take the week as a break and rest and did not assign work.

#### 4.2.2 Survey Feedback from Parents, Families, and Caregivers

Of the 795 parents, families and caregivers that participated (16%), the majority of participants indicated a preference across all three schools for the modified school calendar. Although a majority of survey participants, the preference for the modified school calendar by parents, families and caregivers was much closer to 50% than either participating students (79.4% preference overall) or staff (93.2% preference overall).

*Table 4: Percentage of Parents, Families and Caregiver Preference for Calendars*

Calendar Preference	Brock	Henry	Maxwell Heights	Overall
Modified Calendar	58.8%	54.8%	57.7%	<b>56.9%</b>
Regular Calendar	41.2%	45.2%	42.3%	<b>43.1%</b>

#### Modified Calendar Feedback

A plurality of parents, families and caregivers' responses shared that the reasons they prefer the modified school calendar include that the calendar is balanced, that the break is good and beneficial for well-being, that the early start was beneficial, and that the modified calendar works for families.

*Figure 3 presents the full set of themes that emerged from the feedback.*

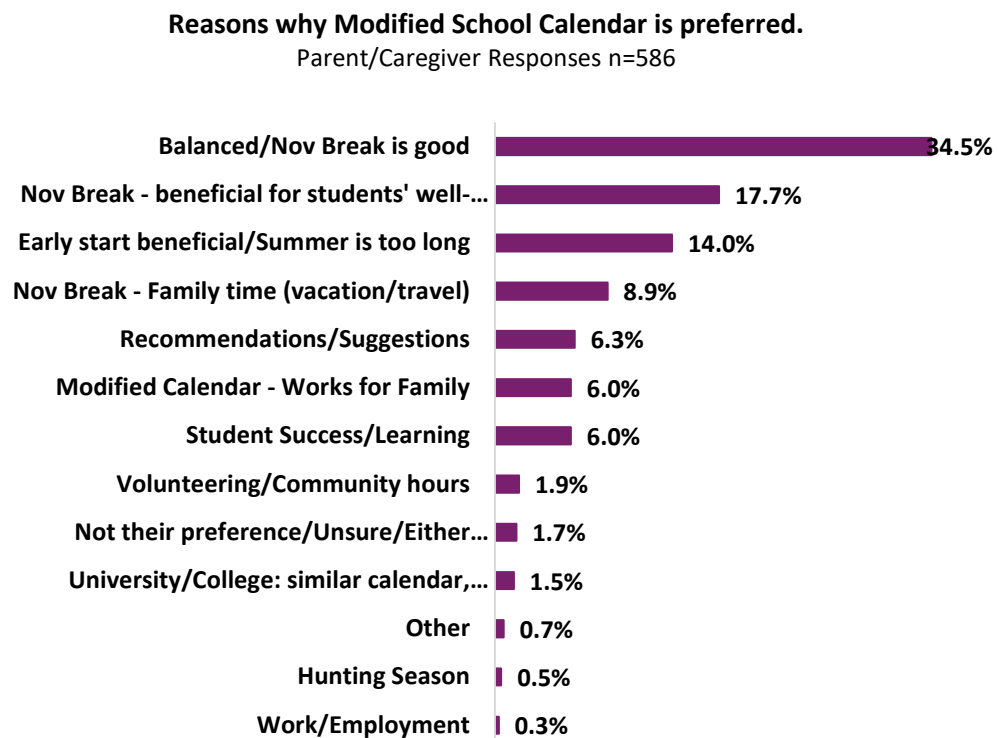


Figure 3 Note: multiple themes can be applied to a comment; hence, results are represented as the number of responses and not the number of participants.

### Regular Calendar Feedback

A plurality of parents, families and caregivers' responses shared that the reasons they prefer the regular school calendar include that it aligns with another child/children with a regular calendar, family time (holidays, vacation), that the modified calendar interferes with summer jobs/sports/activities, and that the summer is too short (the modified calendar makes it shorter). Figure 4 presents the full set of themes that emerged from the feedback.

*Figure 4: Percentage of Responses by Themed Parent/Caregiver Feedback on their Preference for the Regular School Calendar*

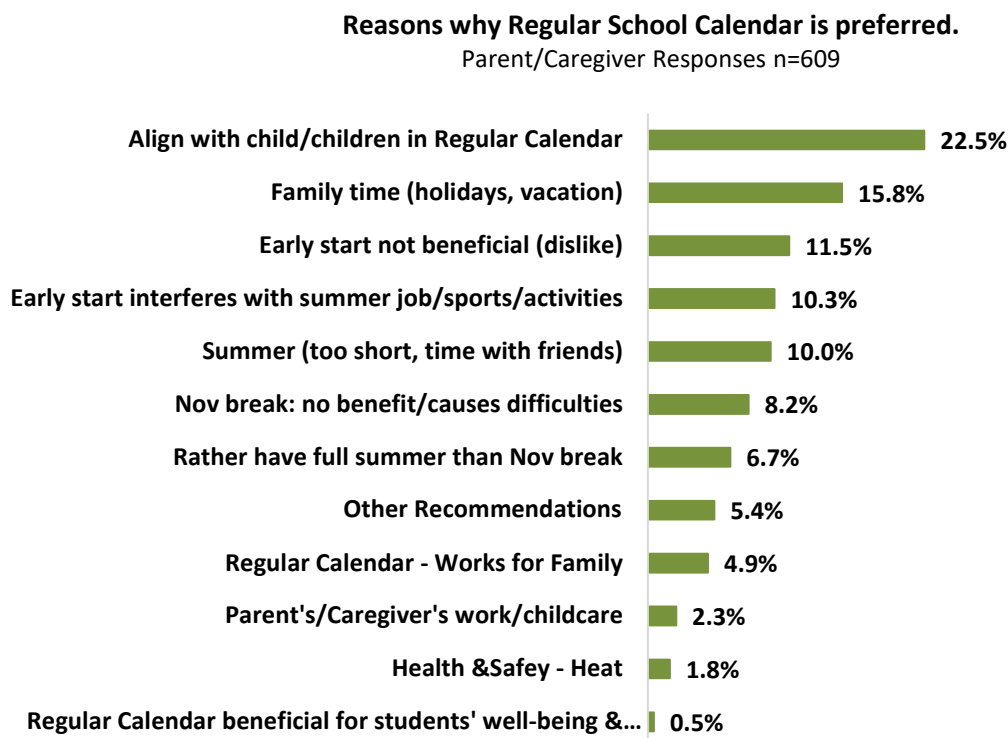


Figure 4 Note: multiple themes can be applied to a comment; hence, results are represented as the number of responses and not the number of participants.

Upon review of this feedback, Superintendents have noted that these issues are consistent with feedback they have received from students and parents, families and caregivers regarding their challenges with the modified school calendar.

### 4.2.3 Survey Feedback from Staff

Of the 293 staff that participated (72.5%), the majority of participants indicated a preference across all three schools for the modified school calendar.

*Table 5: Percentage of Staff Preference for Calendars*

Calendar Preference	Brock	Henry	Maxwell Heights	Overall
Modified Calendar	93.2%	89.2%	96.4%	<b>93.2%</b>
Regular Calendar	6.8%	10.8%	3.6%	<b>6.8%</b>

### Modified Calendar Feedback

A plurality of staff responses shared that the reasons they prefer the modified school calendar include the November break being a good point to refresh and reset, that it is beneficial for well-being, that the early start is beneficial, and it supports a balanced schedule. Figure 5 presents the full set of themes that emerged from the feedback.

*Figure 5: Percentage of Responses by Themed Staff Feedback on their Preference for the Modified School Calendar*

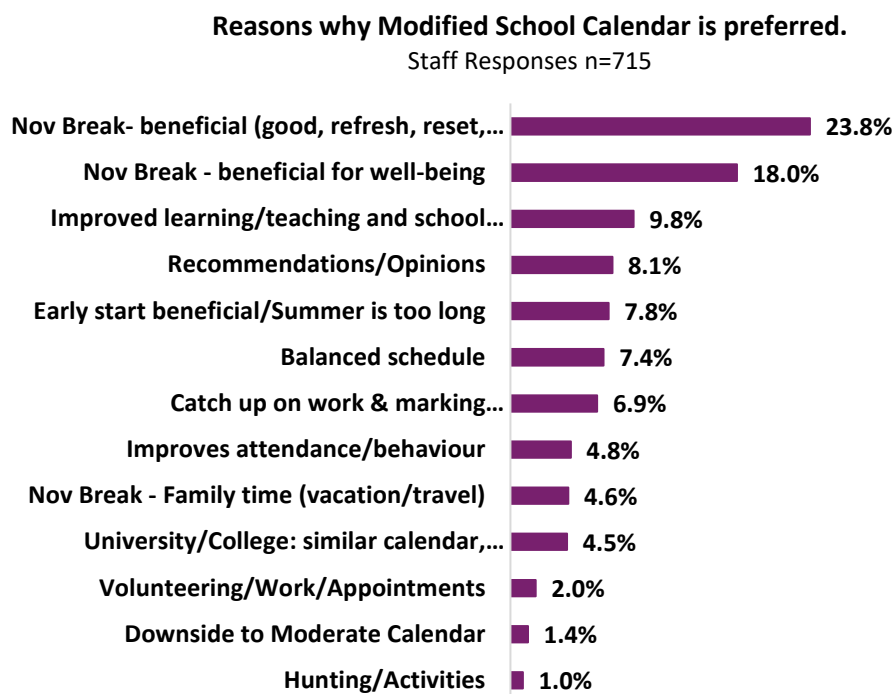


Figure 5 Note: multiple themes can be applied to a comment; hence, results are represented as the number of responses and not the number of participants.

### Regular Calendar Feedback

A plurality of staff responses shared that the reasons they prefer the regular school calendar include that they want a full summer break, that the schedule aligns with family, that the early start is not beneficial, and the modified calendar causes difficulties. Figure 6 presents the full set of themes that emerged from the feedback.

*Figure 6: Percentage of Responses by Themed Staff Feedback on their Preference for the Regular School Calendar*

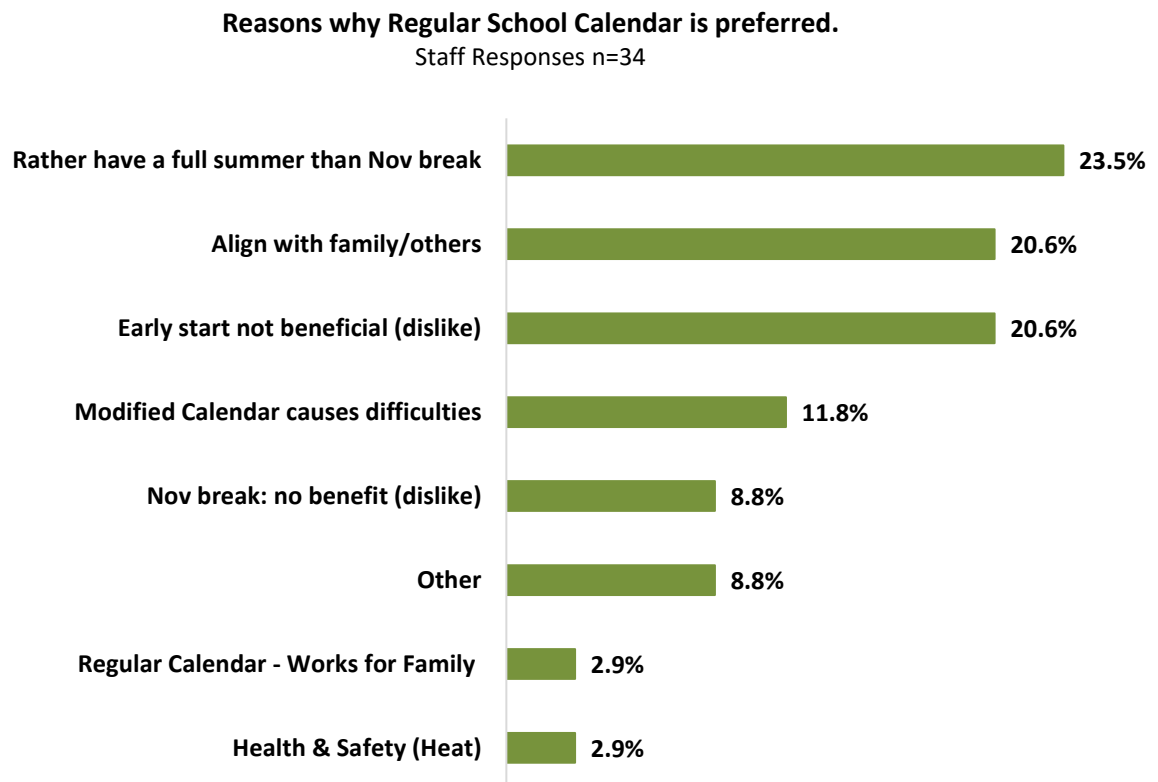


Figure 6 Note: multiple themes can be applied to a comment; hence, results are represented as the number of responses and not the number of participants.

## 5.0 Financial Implications

Schools with modified calendars were initially expected to absorb the additional busing costs out of their budget allocation. Given the increase in transportation costs over time, this became difficult, and the decision was reversed three years ago with additional busing expenses being absorbed centrally.

## 6.0 Strategic Links

### **Connected Communities**

- Engaging students, families, staff, and community members as valued contributors to our growing community
- Building trust and a shared purpose through listening, communication, and action
- Fostering opportunities to meet, learn from, and inspire each other

### **Well-Being**

- Creating safe, caring, and respectful environments where people can thrive
- Supporting the physical and mental health of students and staff
- Honouring every individual's identity and inherent dignity

## 7.0 Communication/Implementation Plan

Pending approval of the staff recommendation to return all secondary schools to the standard/regular calendar, a communication plan will be developed to support implementation for the 2026-2027 school year.

## 8.0 Conclusion

The modified school calendar requires additional funding, coordination, and transportation efforts each year to ensure its successful implementation. While feedback from surveys and focus groups indicates a general preference for the modified calendar, there are notable differences in expectations regarding how students should use the break in November. Focus group discussions highlighted varying perspectives, particularly around whether students should be expected to complete assignments or exam preparation during this break. These differing viewpoints reveal a significant gap in the understanding of the initial intended purpose of the modified calendar, which was to enhance student learning, provide necessary study breaks, and facilitate post-secondary visits.

Over the years, many families have raised concerns about the impact of the modified calendar, especially regarding its effect on summer employment and other opportunities, particularly for senior students. Themes that have been expressed by families are outlined below:

- Attendance concerns – some students on the modified calendar miss days during the first week due to summer commitments. On average, the absenteeism rate is 5% higher during the first week of school at secondary schools following a modified secondary calendar.
- No evidence of improved student achievement and outcomes. There is no current or historical evidence that confirms improved student achievement at secondary schools following a modified calendar. This was initially communicated when the modified secondary school calendar was implemented.
- Often conflicts with traditional summer jobs, internships, and extracurricular activities that are essential for students' personal and professional development.

- For senior students, complicates plans for potential preliminary post-secondary school visits, work experiences, and other priorities.
- families with children attending two different schools are often compromised by one schedule which operates using a regular calendar schedule while the second operates with a modified calendar.

Given the low participation rate in the survey, the ongoing concerns expressed by families, and the operational and financial impacts of the modified calendar, staff recommend aligning all secondary schools to a regular school year calendar starting in the 2026-2027 school year.

### **9.0 Recommended Action**

It is recommended that the Board of Trustees approve the staff recommendation to return the three secondary schools on modified calendars (Brock High School, Henry Street High School and Maxwell Heights Secondary School) to the regular school year calendar for the 2026-2027 school year.

### **10.0 Appendices**

Appendix A: Modified School Calendar Review – Surveys

Report reviewed and submitted by:

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Camille Williams-Taylor, Director of Education and Secretary of the Board



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Jim Markovski, Associate Director of Equitable Education



# Modified School Calendar Review - Parents/Caregivers

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1) Select the language would you like to complete this survey in:

- ☐ English
  - ☐ Arabic العربية
  - ☐ Dari دری
  - ☐ Farsi فارسی
  - ☐ French Français
  - ☐ Simplified Chinese 简体中文
  - ☐ Tamil தமிழ்
  - ☐ Urdu تامل
- 

## English

We are seeking information to determine our consideration for the development of 2025-26 School Calendar.

This data collection is in response to community feedback on the impact of the secondary modified school calendar.

### Modified Secondary Calendar

Begins in August before Labour Day and includes: Fall, Winter and March Breaks.  
To view the current DDSB Secondary [Modified Calendar 2024-25](#)

### Regular Secondary Calendar

Begins in September after Labour Day and includes: Winter and March Break.  
To view the current DDSB Secondary [Regular Calendar 2024-25](#)

The DDSB is committed to meeting its responsibilities under the Human Rights Code and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act. If you require accommodation under the Human Rights Code to take part in or complete this survey, please contact your child's school.

If you have any questions about this survey you can contact us at:

Email: [research@ddsbc.ca](mailto:research@ddsbc.ca)

Telephone (905) 666-6438

**2) Which school does your child/children attend?**

☐ Brock H.S.

☐ Henry Street H.S.

☐ Maxwell Heights S.S.

**3) What grade is your child/children in?**

☐ Grade 9

☐ Grade 10

☐ Grade 11

☐ Grade 12

**4) Which school calendar do you prefer?**

(This question is mandatory and requires an answer)\*

☐ Modified Calendar - Starts in third week of August with a week break in November.

☐ Regular Calendar - Starts on the first Tuesday of September.

**5) Why?**

(This question is mandatory and requires an answer)\*

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Please click the Done button to submit your answers.

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**Thank You!**

Your answers have been submitted.

# Modified School Calendar Review - Students

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We are seeking information to determine our consideration for the development of 2025-26 School Calendar. This data collection is in response to community feedback on the impact of the secondary modified school calendar.

## **Modified Secondary Calendar**

Begins in August before Labour Day and includes: Fall, Winter and March Breaks.

To view the current DDSB Secondary [Modified Calendar 2024-25](#)

## **Regular Secondary Calendar**

Begins in September after Labour Day and includes: Winter and March Break.

To view the current DDSB Secondary [Regular Calendar 2024-25](#)

The DDSB is committed to meeting its responsibilities under the Human Rights Code and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act. If you require accommodation under the Human Rights Code to take part in or complete this survey, please contact your school (e.g., guidance counsellor or teacher).

If you have any questions about this survey you can contact us at:

Email: [research@ddsb.ca](mailto:research@ddsb.ca)

Telephone (905) 666-6438

### **1) Which school do you attend?**

- ☐ Brock H.S.
- ☐ Henry Street H.S.
- ☐ Maxwell Heights S.S.

### **2) What grade are you in?**

- ☐ Grade 9
- ☐ Grade 10
- ☐ Grade 11
- ☐ Grade 12

### **3) Which school calendar do you prefer?\***

- ☐ Modified Calendar - Starts in third week of August with a week break in November.
- ☐ Regular Calendar - Starts on the first Tuesday of September.

4) Why?\*

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**Thank You!**

**Your answers have been submitted.**

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# Modified School Calendar Review - Staff

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We are seeking information to determine our consideration for the development of 2025-26 School Calendar. This data collection is in response to community feedback on the impact of the secondary modified school calendar.

## **Modified Secondary Calendar**

Begins before Labour Day and includes: Fall, Winter and March Break.

To view the current DDSB Secondary [Modified Calendar 2024-25](#)

## **Regular Secondary Calendar**

Begins after Labour Day and includes: Winter and March Break.

To view the current DDSB Secondary [Regular Calendar 2024-25](#)

The DDSB is committed to meeting its responsibilities under the Human Rights Code and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act. If you require accommodation under the Human Rights Code to take part in or complete this survey, please contact your supervisor, manager, or administrator.

If you have any questions about this survey, you can contact us at:

Email: [research@ddsb.ca](mailto:research@ddsb.ca)

Telephone (905) 666-6438

## **1) Which school do you work at?**

- ( ) Brock H.S.
- ( ) Henry Street H.S.
- ( ) Maxwell Heights S.S.

## **2) Which school calendar do you prefer?\***

- ( ) Modified Calendar - Starts in third week of August with a week break in November.
- ( ) Regular Calendar - Starts on the first Tuesday of September.

## **3) Why?\***

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Thank You!

Your answers have been submitted.

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## **DURHAM DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT**

**REPORT TO:** Durham District School Board

**DATE:** May 20, 2025

**SUBJECT:** Naming of the Unnamed Ajax Coughlan  
Public School

**PAGE:** 1 of 8

**ORIGIN:** Camille Williams-Taylor, Director of Education and Secretary to the Board  
Lauren Bliss, Superintendent of Education

The Durham District School Board recognizes Indigenous rights are distinct. In the exercise of those rights, Indigenous staff and students shall not be subjected to actions with the aim or effect of depriving these distinct rights.

The Durham District School Board is committed to providing learning and working environments that centre human rights and equity and are safe, welcoming, respectful, equitable, accessible, inclusive, and free from all forms of discrimination, oppression, harassment, and harm.

### **1.0 Abstract**

Durham District School Board's (DDSB) Naming of Schools Policy (Appendix A) and Procedure (Appendix B) outline the process to be undertaken when naming a new school prior to its opening. The Unnamed Ajax Coughlan Public School is anticipated to open in September 2025 and in accordance with the Naming of School Procedure, a Naming Committee, consisting of trustees, a representative of the Indigenous Education Advisory Circle, community members and students was struck, and the broader community was invited to submit proposed names through consultation. Following two rounds of consultation and four Committee meetings to review, discuss and shortlist submitted names, this report presents the top three name choices as determined by the Committee, with the preferred name being recommended for adoption. The top three name choices for the Unnamed Ajax Coughlan Public School are:

- Trillium Woods Public School
- Oscar Peterson Public School
- Duffin's Creek Public School

The recommended name for the new school is Trillium Woods Public School.

### **2.0 Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to provide the Board of Trustees with the process that was undertaken for selecting the name for the Unnamed Ajax Coughlan Public School in compliance with the School Naming Policy and Procedure; the report provides the Board with the top three name selections from the Naming Committee with the recommendation that the Board of Trustees approve the school name preference offered by the Committee.



## 2.0 **Background**

The Unnamed Ajax Coughlan Public School is located at 92 Hurst Drive, Ajax. The school will have a Ministry of Education capacity of 536 pupils and is scheduled to open in September of 2025.

As per the Naming of Schools Procedure:

“In accordance with the School Naming Policy, and as and when that Policy requires the establishment of a School Naming Committee, a School Naming Committee shall be struck to name a new or consolidated school, or to rename an existing school with the approval of the Board.”

A Naming Committee was struck, and the following members were invited to engage in four Committee meetings on March 27, April 10, April 24 and May 6, 2025. The names of the committee members are as follows:

- Donna Edwards – Trustee (Ajax)
- Kelly Miller – Trustee (Ajax)
- Michelle Sallan – SCC Member, Valley Farm Public School
- Cynthia Cole – SCC Member, Eagle Ridge Public School
- Stacey Paxton-Saunders – SCC Member, Valley View Public School
- Elijah B. – Student
- Zoya K. – Student
- Fatima R. - Student
- Apoorva T. – Student
- Quincy James – DDSB System Lead
- Dawn White – DDSB System Lead - Indigenous Education and Outdoor Environmental Education; and representative DDSB Indigenous Education Advisory Circle
- Brandon McPhail – Principal
- Lauren Bliss – Superintendent of Education

Criteria Guidelines as per Naming of Schools

Policy:

- The objective of this policy is to establish the process and parameters for the naming or renaming of schools that support the Board’s commitment and legal responsibilities to Indigenous rights, human rights, anti-oppression, anti-racism, anti-discrimination, and equitable and inclusive education and to inform Board Procedure to operationalize the Policy.
- The DDSB recognizes that Indigenous rights are inherent and distinct. Recommendations of possible names for schools will not be such as to infringe or otherwise offend the inherent rights of Indigenous Peoples and will support the rights of all students and employees to an environment that is free from discrimination.

- The name for a school shall align with the points above and include:
  - The name of a renowned individual of historical significance whose contribution to the local community, Canadian society or to the world is recognized and valued and would be seen by the community as representative of the values of the DDSB; or
  - The name of a geographic landmark associated with the location of the school including a street name and the name of the community including any historical name for the community or area; or
  - The name of a significant Canadian event.

The School Naming Committee invited community members to submit proposed names for the school in accordance with the Procedure (Appendix B):

- The School Naming Committee shall undertake a process to receive submissions from the broader school community.
- Only submissions that adhere to the guidelines in the Policy (Appendix A) will be considered. All submissions should include background information and context as may be appropriate to support the submission.

### 3.0 **Analysis**

#### 3.1 Submissions

Names were submitted through the community engagement step in the Procedure. Sixty-four names remained for consideration once duplicates were removed.

#### 3.2 Committee Decision Making Process

The top three choices for the proposed school name were selected using the following process:

- Meeting #1: Naming Committee reviewed the Naming of Schools Policy and Procedure and the Indigenous Education Policy (Appendix C). Each Naming Committee member received a package containing the submissions of school names for their review. Members were asked to review and research their preferred names to be discussed at the second meeting.
- Meeting #2: Members openly reviewed and discussed the submissions. The names were then reviewed for additional consideration raised by members, including naming after individuals and future concerns that may evolve, schools with similar names and any potential harm names may cause. The Committee then shortened the list to 12 names using the dotmocracy system (coloured dots indicating each member's selection). Following this round, members discussed naming selections and once again utilized a dotmocracy to identify their top choices. After a second round of selection, four names remained.

## **School Naming Committee's Shortlist of Names**

In alphabetical order with a brief description.

### **Cecil Allan Fraser Public School**

Naming the school “Cecil Allan Fraser Public School” would be a powerful way to honour the legacy of Cecil Allan Fraser. Cecil broke barriers as the first Black graduate of Queen’s University School of Law. While balancing a full-time job and his education, he excelled in his studies with discipline and determination. Cecil went on to have a distinguished career as a Senior Solicitor in the federal civil service, earning him respect in Ottawa’s legal community. Cecil made significant contributions to his community and to Canada and was awarded the Commemorative Medal for the 125th Anniversary of the Confederation of Canada. Today, a Queen’s University bursary supporting Black law students bears his name in honor of his legacy. A public school named in his honour would strengthen local connections to Black heritage in Canada and contribute meaningfully to the ongoing work of equity, anti-oppression, and social justice, making it a deeply inspiring choice.

This proposed name aligns with Section 5.6(a) of the Naming of Schools Policy, which states that the name shall include:

The name of a renowned individual of historical significance whose contribution to the local community, Canadian society or to the world is recognized and valued and would be seen by the community as representative of the values of the DDSB.

### **Duffin’s Creek Public School**

Naming the school Duffin’s Creek Public School would support a deep connection to the local community of Ajax and the beauty of the Duffin’s Creek area. Duffin’s Creek is a waterway that runs through the Ajax community and connects communities across Durham Region and York Region, including Pickering, Ajax, Markham, Whitchurch-Stouffville, and Uxbridge. It is one of the healthiest streams in the Greater Toronto Area. In 1770, a settlement initially known as ‘Duffin’s Creek’ was developed along the stream, in what is now called Ajax. The name reinforces the values of community, collaboration, and shared responsibility for education, making the school a proud symbol of the neighbourhood it serves.

This proposed name aligns with Section 5.6(b) of the Naming of Schools Policy, which states that the name shall include:

The name of a geographic landmark associated with the location of the school including a street name and the name of the community including any historical name for the community or area.

### **Oscar Peterson Public School**

Naming the school Oscar Peterson Public School honours and celebrates Oscar Peterson, a legendary Canadian jazz pianist, composer, and educator, known for being one of the greatest jazz musicians of all time. Born in Montreal in 1925, he has recorded over 200 albums, which led to multiple Grammy wins. His achievements also included being awarded the Order of Canada, the Order of Ontario, as well as other international accolades - proving that Peterson's influence reached beyond Canada. His powerful legacy lives on through his timeless music and his talents are sure to continue inspiring future generations of musicians. A school in his name would promote cultural and artistic excellence and inspire students to pursue artistic and academic achievement. As a Black Canadian who broke barriers, his story promotes resilience, equity and inclusion and serves as an inspiring example of perseverance, hard work and the pursuit of one's dreams.

This proposed name aligns with Section 5.6(a) of the Naming of Schools Policy, which states that the name shall include:

The name of a renowned individual of historical significance whose contribution to the local community, Canadian society or to the world is recognized and valued and would be seen by the community as representative of the values of the DDSB.

### **Trillium Woods Public School**

The white Trillium is the official floral emblem of Ontario, and a native species to the Ajax area. The flower serves as a symbol of perseverance, resilience and growth. The name Trillium Woods highlights the potential for land-based education that draws on the surrounding environment as a living classroom. Wooded areas around the school can serve as natural sites for inquiry, exploration, and outdoor learning across the curriculum, from science and environmental stewardship to art, storytelling, and well-being. This reinforces the DDSB's commitment to experiential, hands-on learning and supports students in developing a meaningful relationship with the land. Naming the school Trillium Woods respectfully provides opportunity to deepen student learning around Indigenous knowledge systems. The term "Woods" evokes a sense of calm, and community. It inspires a culture of environmental stewardship. The name Trillium Woods will serve as a daily reminder of the beauty and teachings of the natural world and our shared obligation to care for it and for each other.

This proposed name aligns with Section 5.6(b) of the Naming of Schools Policy, which states that the name shall include:

The name of a geographic landmark associated with the location of the school including a street name and the name of the community including any historical name for the community or area.

The second round of Community Consultation took place based on the top four names selected by the Naming Committee.

1. Duffin's Creek Public School
2. Trillium Woods Public School
3. Oscar Peterson Public School
4. Cecil Allan Fraser Public School

Meeting #3 - On April 24, 2025, the Naming Committee met for its third meeting to review results of the community consultation and engaged in two additional dotmocracies to determine the Committee's preferred name of Trillium Woods Public School. A thoughtful discussion about the impact and significance of each name was conducted.

Meeting #4 – On May 6, 2025 the Committee met for a fourth meeting to confirm understanding of the names that were brought forward at the previous meeting and to engage in an additional two-tiered vote to confirm the preferred name of Trillium Woods Public School.

The results, listed below in descending order of preference according to voting results from the Committee, are as follows:

1. Trillium Woods Public School
2. Oscar Peterson Public School
3. Duffin's Creek Public School

### 3.3 Committee Decision

The following name was selected as the recommended choice by the Naming Committee members: Trillium Woods Public School.

## 4.0 **Financial Implications**

N/A

## 5.0 **Strategic Links**

The selection of Trillium Woods Public School is deeply aligned with the Durham District School Board (DDSB) Multi-Year Strategic Plan. This decision meaningfully reflects and supports the Board's commitments in the following strategic priority areas:

- **Meaningful Learning:** The name Trillium Woods Public School honours a unique connection to learning as the plant symbolizes growth, resilience, perseverance and the beauty of individual development. The white trillium is Ontario's official flower, but it also holds significance for many Indigenous Peoples. Naming the school Trillium Woods respectfully acknowledges this cultural significance while creating space to deepen student learning around Indigenous perspectives, seasonal cycles, and relationships to plants, land, and water. The natural environment provides a rich

context for applying Universal Design for Learning principles, offering multiple means of engagement, representation, and expression. Learning in and through the land allows for differentiated approaches that meet the diverse strengths and needs of all learners. Naming the school Trillium Woods signals a commitment to inclusive education where nature is not just a backdrop, but a co-teacher and source of wisdom.

- **Well-Being:** The Trillium, with its strong connection to the land, is a symbol of resilience and perseverance and acknowledges the importance of creating safe and supportive environment for students. The name emphasizes the importance of land connections and aims to enhance student well-being through engagement with the natural surroundings. The term “Woods” evokes a sense of peace, calm, and community. It inspires a culture of environmental responsibility, interconnectedness, and belonging, qualities that are essential in shaping safe and welcoming learning environments.
- **Connected Communities:** The vision for the new school is to serve as a community hub, fostering growth and learning for students and their families. The Trillium represents the importance of the connection to the land and the vision of the school as being a gathering place for the new school community. The roots of the flower are symbolic of a place where students and families can grow together and where they are nurtured. The Trillium flower fosters a connection between students, nature, and learning. The name was selected through a transparent and inclusive consultation process with students, families, Indigenous partners, and community members. The name Trillium Woods will serve as a daily reminder of the beauty and teachings of the natural world and our shared obligation to care for it and each other.

This alignment ensures that system-wide priorities are at the forefront and reflected in school-level practices, advancing DDSB’s ongoing work in Indigenous Rights, Humans Rights and Anti-Oppression across all schools and departments.

## **6.0 Communication/Implementation Plan**

Pending approval of the name for the Unnamed Ajax Coughlan Public School, Communications staff will support with the following:

- Messaging to staff
- Messaging to families
- News release (sent to media, posted to DDSB website and social media)
- Internal and external branding support (website, etc.)

A website for the new school will be created and contact information for the school will be added to the DDSB Website.

**7.0 Recommended Action**

It is recommended that the Board of Trustees select the recommended name as determined by the Naming Committee, Trillium Woods Public School, as the official name of the new Unnamed Ajax Coughlan Public School in Ajax, Ontario.

**8.0 Appendices**

Appendix A: Naming of Schools Policy

Appendix B: Naming of Schools Procedure

Appendix C: Indigenous Education Policy

Report reviewed and submitted by:



Camille Williams-Taylor, Director of Education and Secretary to the Board



Lauren Bliss, Superintendent of Education

### Naming of Schools

#### 1.0 Rationale

- 1.1 The naming of a school and the consideration of a potential school re-naming are important for the school community. A policy for school naming ensures community involvement and a transparent, equitable, accessible and reasonable process.
- 1.2 Durham District School Board (DDSB) believes that school names should promote a safe, equitable, welcoming, respectful and inclusive environment for teaching and learning. DDSB respects the diverse identities, strengths, experiences and perspectives of our communities and values their contribution to school naming.

#### 2.0 Policy Objective

- 2.1 The objective of this policy is to establish the process and parameters for the naming or re-naming of schools that supports the Board's commitment and legal responsibilities to Indigenous rights, human rights, anti-oppression, anti-racism, anti-discrimination, and equitable and inclusive education and to inform Board Procedure to operationalize this Policy.
- 2.2 Durham District School Board recognizes that Indigenous rights are inherent and distinct. Recommendations of possible names for schools will not be such as to infringe or otherwise offend the inherent rights of Indigenous Peoples and will support the rights of all student and employees to an environment that is free from discrimination.

#### 3.0 Definitions

In this policy,

- 3.1 Board refers to the Board of Trustees for Durham District School Board.
- 3.2 District refers to the corporate entity of Durham District School Board.
- 3.3 Staff refers to any individual who is employed by DDSB.

#### 4.0 Responsibilities

- 4.1 Trustees: For the purposes of this policy, Trustees are responsible for setting the strategic direction of the Board and developing and maintaining policies. They are also responsible for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of policies developed by the Board in supporting the Multi-Year Strategic Plan.
- 4.2 Director of Education: For the purposes of this policy, the operations of the District are the responsibility of the Director of Education (and designates) and include measures to operationalize and ensure compliance with Board Policy by adapting and implementing appropriate Procedures and by providing professional learning and training to staff to support implementation. A focus on enhancing understanding of Indigenous rights, human rights, anti-oppression, anti-racism and anti-discrimination, and addressing discriminatory assumptions, stereotypes, biases, barriers, experiences and outcomes is required.



## 5.0 Policy

- 5.1 To name a new or consolidated school, a School Naming Committee shall be established to provide a short-list of recommendations to the Board based on the naming conventions set forth in sections 5.6 and 5.7 of this Policy and consistent with the terms of any procedure adopted under this Policy.
- 5.2 The School Naming Committee shall reflect the diverse communities DDSB serves and be comprised of the area Trustees (no fewer than two Trustees), a Student Trustee, and the Family of Schools Superintendent, together with those representatives from the community and the school's staff and students as may be selected in accordance with the procedure adopted under this Policy.
- 5.3 If a written request is received to rename an existing school, the Director will review the request, and if satisfied that it is, or is likely to be a concern that engages one or more of the renaming criteria stipulated in section 5.4 of this Policy, then the Director shall deliver a report to the Board. The rationale for a name change, the composition of the School Naming Committee and a financial analysis of the associated costs will be included in the report to Trustees.

If, based on the report provided by the Director of Education, the Board is satisfied that any of the criteria of section 5.4 are engaged such that the name of the school is to be changed, a School Naming Committee shall be struck. The School Naming Committee will provide a short list of recommendations to the Board based on the naming conventions set forth in sections 5.6 and 5.7 of this Policy and consistent with the terms of any procedure adopted under this Policy.

If the Director is not satisfied that the request is, or is likely to be a concern that engages one or more of the renaming criteria stipulated in section 5.4 of the Policy, then the Director shall maintain a record of such requests and shall deliver a summary report at the end of the year of all such names.

- 5.4 A school shall be eligible to be renamed under this policy if:
- a) the current name does not align with the Board's commitment or legal responsibilities to Indigenous rights, human rights, anti-oppression, anti-racism, anti-discrimination and equitable and inclusive education; or
  - b) the current name constitutes a significant departure from generally recognized standards of public behaviour which is seen to undermine the credibility, integrity or relevance of the Board's contemporary values; or
  - c) the current name was appropriated from a culture or community without the necessary engagement and consultation with representatives from the community; or
  - d) the Board, in conjunction with the school community, has developed a new identity for the school.
- 5.5 The Board will accept the recommendation of the School Naming Committee and choose a name on the shortlist of names recommended. If required, the Board can refer the matter back to the School Naming Committee for recommendations of additional proposed names.
- 5.6 The name for a school shall align with 2.1 and 2.2 of this Policy and include:
- a) the name of a renowned individual of historical significance whose contribution to the local community, Canadian society or to the world is recognized and valued and would be seen by the community as representative of the values of the DDSB; or

- b) the name of a geographic landmark associated with the location of the school including a street name and the name of the community including any historical name for the community or area; or
- c) the name of a significant Canadian event

5.7 In no case, shall any school be named after a corporation, a sitting politician, a current employee of the Board, a member of the Board, or a member of the immediate family of the foregoing.

## 6.0 Evaluation

6.1 This Policy is subject to review and revision as may be deemed appropriate by the Board, but it shall be brought to the Board for review at least every five years.

## 7.0 Reference Documents

- Naming of School Procedure

### **Appendix:**

Appendix A: Naming of Schools Flowchart

### **Effective Date:**

1985-06-10

### **Reviewed and Amended:**

2003-09-03

2003-11-17

2006-08-02

2013-05-22

2013-11-20

2021-04-19

2024-05-21

# PROCEDURE

## Business – School Operations

### Naming of Schools

#### 1.0 Rationale

- 1.1 The naming of a school and the consideration of a potential school re-naming are important for the school community. A policy for school naming ensures community involvement and a transparent, equitable, accessible, and reasonable process.
- 1.2 Durham District School Board (DDSB) believes that school names should promote a safe, equitable, welcoming, respectful and inclusive environment for teaching and learning. DDSB respects the diverse needs and identities of our communities and values their contribution to school naming.

#### 2.0 Objective

- 2.1 The objective of this procedure is to operationalize the Policy on Naming of Schools by outlining the process for naming new schools or the renaming of existing schools that supports the Board's commitment and legal responsibilities to indigenous rights, human rights, anti-oppression, anti-racism, anti-discrimination, and equitable and inclusive education and to authorize the creation of a Board Procedure to operationalize this Policy.

#### 3.0 Definitions

In this Procedure,

- 3.1 Board refers to the Board of Trustees for DDSB.
- 3.2 District refers to the corporate entity of the Durham District School Board.
- 3.3 Staff refers to any individual who is employed by the DDSB.
- 3.4 Administration refers to any individual or group constituted under the Education Act and in a position of authority by the DDSB to implement, administer, or manage policies and procedures of the Ontario Ministry of Education and the DDSB.
- 3.5 School Community refers to students, staff, and stakeholders specifically affiliated with an individual school.

## 4.0 Responsibilities

- 4.1 Director of Education: For the purposes of this procedure, the Director of Education will monitor the progress of the School Naming Committee and ensure that representation and timelines are met.
- 4.2 Superintendent of Education: For the purposes of this procedure, the Superintendent of Education will ensure a successful School Naming Committee is formed and follows the procedural steps for school naming with an emphasis on school-community engagement.
- 4.3 Principal: For the purposes of this procedure, the Principal will be an active member of the School Naming Committee and will serve as a conduit to ensure the school community is well informed of all developments.

## 5.0 Guidelines and Considerations

- 5.1 The District is committed to providing services and workplaces that are safe, welcoming, respectful, inclusive, equitable and accessible, and that are free from discrimination and harassment under the Ontario Human Rights Code.
- 5.2 Durham District School Board recognizes that Indigenous rights are inherent and distinct. Recommendations of possible names for schools will not be such as to infringe or otherwise offend the inherent rights of Indigenous Peoples and will support the rights of all student and employees to an environment that is free from discrimination.

## 6.0 Procedures

- 6.1 In accordance with the School naming Policy, and as and when that Policy requires the establishment of a School Naming Committee, a School Naming Committee shall be struck to name a new or consolidated school, or to rename an existing school with the approval of the Board.
- 6.2 The School Naming Committee shall first and foremost reflect the diverse communities that DDSB serves and be composed of:
  - (a) The area trustees. Where there is only one area trustee or one or more area trustee is not able to participate, other trustees will be added so that there are no fewer than two;
  - (b) The Superintendent of Education/Area, and appropriate supporting Officer;
  - (c) The Principal designate;
  - (d) Two School Community Council representative(s) or one School Community Council member representing each of the amalgamating communities;
  - (e) Two Student Council representative(s) representing school or schools or one Student Council representative from the schools that are being consolidated;
  - (f) Two school community members invited by the Superintendent of Education/Area in consultation with the Trustees;
  - (g) A member of the Indigenous Advisory Circle;
  - (h) Where a member has a conflict of interest i.e. descendent or an immediate family member of a name put forward, that person shall not be a member of the committee.
- 6.3 No two members of the committee shall be members of the same immediate family.
- 6.4 All members of the committee are voting members.
- 6.5 The Family of Schools Superintendent will Chair the Committee and will be a non-voting member.

## 6.6 Role of the Naming Committee

The School Naming Committee shall undertake a process to receive submissions from the broader school community.

The School Naming Committee will review and consider submissions made to it and narrow them for a second round of consultation with the school community.

In circumstances where renaming a school is being considered, the committee will consider all voices and perspectives, including the community(ies) that raised the concern.

Only submissions that adhere to the guidelines in section 5.6 and 5.7 of the Policy as highlighted below will be considered. All submissions should include background information and context as may be appropriate to support the submission.

The Family of Schools Superintendent will bring forward a report to Board with the top three choices from the School Naming Committee to the Board of Trustees with a rationale for all three choices. The report should indicate the top choice of the School Naming Committee for the Board of Trustees' consideration. The Family of Schools Superintendent will ensure that a rigorous vetting process has taken place, to ensure all choices put forward for consideration reflect the values of the district.

- 6.7 Once the Board of Trustees selects the name or new name for the school, all materials produced with that name will include the Durham District School Board logo.

## 7.0 Reference Documents

### 7.1 Policies

- Naming of Schools

#### Appendix:

None

#### Effective Date

1987-03-23

#### Amended/Reviewed

1998-10-05

2003-04-22

2003-09-03

2003-11-17

2006-08-02

2010-03-22

2013-05-22

2013-11-21

2018-10-15

2021-04-19

## Indigenous Education

Aanii, boozhoo, gakina gweya dinawaymaagmnidoowak. Miigwechwendam gaye e-gakina bimaadizijik, miigwech eshkawgimikwe aki'ing, miigwech giizis, miinwaa dibik giizis, miigwech noodin, giizhigoong, miinwaa ji-animikiikag, miigwech nibi waaboo, miigwech anungoohns, ogii-miizhiyaang wesiinyag, beneshiiyag, amoodejik, miinwaa nbiishing aa-yaa-jig, Miigwech biidaabung, Nimkii anupowaagun, nimkii bineshii, minwaa waasnoodo. Miigwech gizhemanidoo. Miigwech, Miigwech, Miigwech, Miigwech. Nahaaw, aambe goshkoozin! Gidaa-naakiimewe, ne'iikaanagaanaa.

(Beedahbin Peltier- Wikwemikong First Nation)

I see you, how things have come together here in this place, inclusively to everyone, and all of your relations - past, present and future. The influencers of energy and spirit, the ancestors foresaw the potential of today. We are grateful for our families, grateful for Mother Earth, and the land, grateful for the sun and the wind, the air, sky, and the thunders that come; the water and abilities of water and the stars. Thank you for bringing together the animals, birds, animals that crawl, and animals in the water. We thank the keepers of the four directions. Thank you to the universal energy, from the smallest particles to our Milky Way. Our perpetual commitment to reciprocity. Ok, let's go and ignite our fires/hearts! We will uphold our responsibilities to self, community, and creation for all of our relations and the ones to come.

### 1.0 Rationale

- 1.1 The Durham District School Board adopts this policy in recognition that Indigenous Peoples have the right to the dignity and diversity of their cultures, traditions, histories and aspirations, which shall be appropriately reflected in education and public information.
- 1.2 The Durham District School Board adopts the following as a foundational statement of our commitment to Indigenous peoples: "shall take effective measures, in consultation and cooperation with the Indigenous peoples concerned, to combat prejudice and eliminate discrimination and to promote tolerance, understanding and good relations among Indigenous peoples and all other segments of society." (United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), Article 15)

### 2.0 Objective

- 2.1 This policy is informed by UNDRIP and is informed by and compliant with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Ontario Human Rights Code, the Ontario Education Act, the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, the Anti-Racism Directorate's Data Standards and the DDSB's Guidelines and Procedures for the Accommodation of Creed in Schools: An Inclusive Approach.
- 2.2 The District recognizes that the education system has its foundation in Eurocentric thinking, assimilation practices and genocidal laws that have historically marginalized Indigenous peoples and continue to disproportionately and negatively affect Indigenous students.
- 2.3 The District acknowledges that learning about Indigenous knowledge systems, worldviews, truths, histories and contributions benefits all students in all schools and must be present in all curriculum areas.

- 2.4 The District recognizes all stakeholders have shared roles and responsibilities for supporting and not infringing Indigenous rights.
- 2.5 This policy is adopted to support Indigenous rights within the context of the statements and commitments made in the preceding paragraphs.

### 3.0 Definitions

In this policy,

- 3.1 **Board:** The Board of Trustees for the DDSB.
- 3.2 **District:** the corporate entity of the Durham District School Board.
- 3.3 **Staff:** any individual who is employed by the DDSB.
- 3.4 **Indigenous Peoples:** Indigenous has become the more widely accepted general term to refer to First Nations, Métis and Inuit people.
- 3.5 **Colonialism:** Colonialism is a practice of domination, which involves the subjugation of one people to another. Settler colonialism — such as in the case of Canada — is the unique process where the colonizing population does not leave the territory, asserts ongoing sovereignty to the land, actively seeks to assimilate the Indigenous populations and extinguish their laws, cultures, traditions and ties to the land.
- 3.6 **Anti-Colonial:** intentional and critical analysis of structures, processes and decision making to identify, challenge and address or change (and not perpetuate) the legacies and ongoing harmful impacts of colonialism.
- 3.7 **Cultural Appropriation-**is the adoption of an element or elements of one culture or identity, knowingly or unknowingly, by members of another culture or identity without engaging or consulting with the community, which can often result in diminishing or trivializing significant cultural or spiritual meaningful practices/traditions, and can be discriminatory and racist. For Indigenous peoples in Canada, cultural appropriation is rooted in colonization and ongoing oppression.
- 3.8 **Giikendaaswin-** is an Anishinaabe word to describe Anishinaabe worldview; knowledge, information, and the synthesis of personal teachings that everything is connected.
- 3.9 **Indigenous Rights:** derive from Indigenous peoples political, economic and social structures and from their cultures, spiritual traditions, histories and philosophies, especially their rights to their lands, territories and resources.
- 3.10 **Indigenous Education Advisory Circle:** an advisory committee of various stakeholders from Indigenous educators and administrators to Indigenous community members, parents and students that collaborate and advise the Board on Indigenous education initiatives and programs throughout the DDSB.

### 4.0 Policy

#### *Ancestral Lands*

- 4.1 The District recognizes that it is situated on the ancestral and treaty land of Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation and the Chippewas of Georgina Island, two Anishinaabek Ojibwe Nations. The Durham District School Board acknowledges that many Indigenous Nations have

long-standing 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 land treaty lands that we teach, learn and live. These Nations hold legal and specific rights in their respective territories. This area has been and continues to be home for Indigenous peoples and non-Indigenous peoples.

The District is committed to fostering and maintaining healthy reciprocal relationships with urban First Nations, Métis and Inuit community members, Métis Nation of Ontario, Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation, Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation and the Anishinabek Education System.

#### *Distinct Rights and Consultation*

- 4.2 The District recognizes that Indigenous rights are distinct.
- 4.3 These distinct Indigenous rights are recognized in numerous international covenants and conventions and also in pre- and post-confederation treaties.
- 4.4 The District also recognizes that Indigenous Peoples are distinct from equity-seeking groups in that they are self-determining Nations with inherent rights, laws, and institutions. In the exercise of their rights, they should be free from racism and discrimination of any kind.
- 4.5 Indigenous staff and students shall not be subject to actions with the aim or effect of depriving them of their distinct rights. The District is committed to providing services, workplaces and learning environments that center Indigenous rights, human rights and equity and that are welcoming, respectful, safe, inclusive, equitable and free from oppression, discrimination, racism, harassment and harm.
- 4.6 The District is committed to upholding Indigenous and Inherent Rights in a manner that prioritizes ethical conduct and healthy relationships with Indigenous community members. In this regard, the District is committed to meaningful consultation and engagement with Indigenous peoples in accord with the expectations of local Indigenous community members on matters related to Indigenous education policy and procedure development, amendment and/or implementation and on curriculum and programs or other policy or systemic issues impacting Indigenous peoples or their rights as confirmed in this Policy. Local Indigenous community members could include Indigenous parents or parent councils, Indigenous policy consultants, Indigenous employees, Indigenous lawyers, Indigenous human rights specialists, Indigenous Elders, Indigenous activists, and Indigenous scholars.
- 4.7 The District will ensure that Indigenous community voice is present in board governance, strategic direction and priorities and policy setting.

#### *School Climate and Curriculum*

- 4.8 Indigenous Peoples have the right to the dignity that comes with acknowledgement of the diversity of nations, laws, cultures, traditions, histories and aspirations and this shall be appropriately reflected in curriculum, programs and public information.
- 4.9 There is a shared responsibility between the District and local Indigenous community members to promote and protect the rights of Indigenous students, families and staff and to ensure the maintenance of a respectful, safe and positive school climate and the actions that support *Giikendaaswin*.



- 4.10 Indigenous students have the right to an education free from racism and discrimination of any kind and to learning experiences that align with and promote Giikendaaswin.
- 4.11 Indigenous (First Nations, Métis, and Inuit) education delivered within the DDSB is to comply with legislative requirements, the terms of this policy and shall support the District's commitment to Indigenous rights, human rights, anti-oppression, anti-Indigenous racism and non-discrimination.
- 4.12 Discrimination and harassment such as, but not limited to, cultural appropriation, harmful narratives, stereotypes and racial slurs are unacceptable and are incompatible with District values and expectations.
- 4.13 The District shall value and present Indigenous expertise and knowledge systems as equal to, and on par with, Eurocentric knowledges, in accordance with terms of any procedure adopted under this Policy.

#### *Anti-Colonialism*

- 4.14 The District is committed to understanding the ongoing legacies of colonialism which continue to negatively impact the social, legal, economic, cultural and political lives of Indigenous Peoples and their lands, including Indigenous peoples' right to education without discrimination.
- 4.15 The District recognizes that uninterrupted existing structures replicate or perpetuate colonial and discriminatory structures, processes and decision making and negatively affect Indigenous rights and, therefore, that the District must begin to engage in anti-colonial actions to address these structures. In this regard, the District adopts UNDRIP as a guiding document to inform the creation of District policies, and procedures. The District is committed to acting upon, reconciling and being accountable to Indigenous Peoples in addressing the impacts of colonialism.

#### *Self-Identification*

- 4.16 In response to the Ministry of Education's Ontario First Nation, Metis and Inuit Education Policy Framework (2007), the DDSB shall provide students 18 years or older and all parents/guardians of Indigenous students the opportunity to voluntary, confidential self-identification of First Nation, Métis and Inuit ancestry.
- 4.17 The District shall establish and maintain a strictly voluntary process to collect, aggregate, and report confidential Indigenous self-identification data in accord with applicable privacy legislation and best industry practices to maintain privacy and confidentiality.
- 4.18 Any such data shall only be used to identify and remove barriers experienced by Indigenous students and families, inform anti-colonial practices and improve Indigenous education programs within the District. The District shall respectfully utilize relevant voluntary, confidential self-identification data to develop, implement, and evaluate responsive programming that increases Indigenous student engagement, well-being, and achievement of Indigenous students within the District.

#### *Implementation*

- 4.19 Implementation of this policy will be an ongoing commitment of the Director and delegates and the Board, within the scope of their respective responsibilities, that will involve amongst other things:
  - Examining existing colonial structures and supporting anti-colonial efforts;
  - Monitoring and assessing organizational compliance with this policy;

- Putting in place appropriate and sustainable organizational structures, resources and expertise to support the successful implementation of this policy and related procedures;
- Revising or removing policies, procedures and practices that conflict with this policy and adopting and implementing new policies, procedures and practices that proactively promote and support Indigenous and inherent Rights and anti-discrimination; and
- Engaging in ongoing learning and training in understanding the rights of Indigenous Peoples and the deep impacts of colonialism and how it continues today.

## 5.0 Evaluation

- 5.1 This policy is to be reviewed and updated as required but at a minimum | of five years | <sup>[NM1]</sup> or as may be requested by the local First Nations (Mississaugas of Scugog Island and Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation) or the Indigenous Advisory Circle.

## 6.0 Reference Documents

### 6.1 Policies

- [Equity and Inclusion](#)
- [Consultative Process](#)
- [Voluntary, Confidential First Nation, Métis and Inuit Student Self-Identification Policy](#)

### 6.2 Procedures

- [Equity and Inclusion](#)
- [Positive School Climate](#)
- [Land Acknowledgement](#)
- [Opening and Closing Exercises](#)
- [Voluntary, Confidential First Nation, Métis and Inuit Student Self-Identification Policy](#)
- [Learning Resource Materials Selection](#)

### 6.3 Other Documents

- Anishinabek Education System
- Anishinabek Education System Master Agreement
- Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms
- Charter of the United Nations
- The Ontario Education Act
- Constitution Act
- Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action
- Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act
- Ontario First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework
- Ontario First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework: Implementation Plan
- Ontario Human Rights Commission: Policy on preventing discrimination based on creed
- Building Bridges to Success for First Nation, Métis and Inuit Students – Developing Policies for Voluntary, Confidential Aboriginal Student Self-Identification: Successful Practices for Ontario School Boards
- Strengthening Our Learning Journey. Third Progress Report on the Implementation of the Ontario First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework
- Durham District School Board's Guidelines and Procedures for the Accommodation Creed in Schools: An Inclusive Approach
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child (UNCRC) Constitution Act
- Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (CCRF) (section 15, 35)

- Ontario Human Rights Code
- United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)
- United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)
- Pre and post-confederation treaties as so entered into

**Appendix:**

None

**Effective Date**

2021-09-21

**Amended/Reviewed**

YYYY-MM-DD



**Approved Minutes – Governance and Policy Committee Meeting  
Wednesday, February 26, 2025, 6:00 p.m., Hybrid**

**1. Call to Order**

Trustee Kelly Miller, Committee Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

Members Present: Michelle Arseneault (virtual), Emma Cunningham (virtual), Donna Edwards, Mark Jacula, Stephen Linton (virtual, joined 6:18 p.m.), Deb Oldfield, Student Trustees Kayla Hoare (virtual), Nitishan Poopalasundaram (virtual), Shampavi Vijayakumar (virtual, joined 7:00 p.m.)

Regrets: Trustees Tracy Brown, Carolyn Morton, Shailene Panylo, Christine Thatcher

Staff Present: Director of Education Camille Williams-Taylor, Associate Director Jim Markovski, Associate Director David Wright (virtual), General Counsel Patrick Cotter, Senior Manager Dervla Kelly

Recording Secretary: Gillian Venning

**2. Land Acknowledgment**

Trustee Kelly Miller gave the Land Acknowledgement: the Durham District School Board acknowledges that many Indigenous Nations have longstanding relationships, both historic and modern, with home to many Indigenous peoples from across Turtle Island (North America). 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. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**4. Approval of Agenda**

MOVED by Trustee Mark Jacula

THAT THE AGENDA BE APPROVED.

CARRIED

## 5. Minutes

### **(a) Draft minutes of the Governance and Policy Committee meeting of January 29, 2025**

MOVED by Trustee Donna Edwards

THAT THE DRAFT MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 29, 2025 GOVERNANCE AND POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING BE APPROVED.

CARRIED

## 6. Recommended Actions

### **(a) Revised Board Member Code of Conduct**

General Counsel Patrick Cotter provided an overview of the report, which proposes a minor amendment to Section 7 of the Board Member Code of Conduct to ensure its alignment with the recently adopted amendments to the Complaints Protocol.

There were no trustee questions.

MOVED by Trustee Donna Edwards

THAT THE GOVERNANCE AND POLICY COMMITTEE APPROVE THE REVISED BOARD MEMBER CODE OF CONDUCT INCLUDED AS APPENDIX A, AND THAT THE MATTER PROCEED TO THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES AT ITS NEXT MEETING FOR CONSIDERATION.

CARRIED

### **(b) Revised Bylaws – Trustee Attendance Requirements**

General Counsel Patrick Cotter provided an overview of the report, which proposes amendments to Section 5.7 of the Bylaws (Attendance at Meetings). The revisions are being made in response to amendments to the Education Act and its Regulations regarding requirements for in person and electronic trustee attendance at regular Board and regular Committee of the Whole meetings, referred to in the revised Bylaws as Mandatory Meetings. It was noted that while a separate Policy on Trustee Attendance Requirements was initially contemplated, staff are recommending that, in light of the extensive terms already in the Bylaws governing meeting attendance and electronic meeting requirements, all such terms ought to be included in a single document (whether the Bylaws or a separate policy).

Discussion took place and Trustee questions were answered. Through discussion, additional amendments to the proposed revisions were noted that will help to ensure consistency and bring further clarity in relation to section 5.7.2. This will help ensure consistency with the other provisions in the Bylaws and the Board's practices – including as to “rising and reporting.” General Counsel Cotter will incorporate the further amendments as suggested by members and will prepare a revised versions of Section 5.7 of the Bylaws to present at the next meeting of the Committee.

**(c) Motion – Request for Report on Bullying**

Committee Chair Kelly Miller handed the Chair to Vice Chair Mark Jacula.

Trustee Kelly Miller provided an overview and rationale for bringing forward the motion, noting the desire to improve responsiveness and prevention of incidents of bullying and their impacts on the DDSB community.

Discussion took place and Trustee questions were answered.

MOVED by Trustee Kelly Miller

THAT STAFF PREPARE AN INFORMATION REPORT TO THE COMMITTEE ON ANY AND ALL DDSB POLICIES, PROCEDURES, DIRECTIVES, GUIDELINE AND PRACTICES RELATED TO BULLYING AS WELL AS THE DDSB'S COMPLIANCE WITH LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS REGARDING BULLYING IN SCHOOLS SO THAT THE COMMITTEE MAY ASSESS AND DETERMINE:

1. IF THERE ARE ANY POLICY GAPS; AND/OR
2. IF THERE MAY BE ANY POLICY IMPROVEMENTS THAT COULD BE MADE AS TO TRANSPARENCY, REPORTING AND RESPONSIVENESS TO IMPACTED STUDENTS AND FAMILIES.

CARRIED

As part of the discussion around this motion, the Director committed to bringing forward an initial report to set out a proposal and plan for development of the report.

Trustee Miller resumed the role of Chair of the Committee.

**7. Information Items**

**(a) Trustee Expense Policy**

General Counsel Patrick Cotter provided an overview of the report, which provides the current Trustee Expense Policy in response to a recent trustee request for discussion around annual trustee discretionary funding allocations, particularly as it relates to use of funds for self-selected professional learning opportunities.

Discussion took place and trustee questions were answered.

MOVED by Trustee Donna Edwards

THAT STAFF PREPARE A REPORT ON SOURCES OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUNDING AND THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK, AS WELL AS A JURISDICTIONAL SCAN OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT POLICIES AND EXPENSES OR FUNDING FOR THAT PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT.

CARRIED

## **(b) Committees Rising and Reporting**

General Counsel Patrick Cotter requested to defer this report to provide staff the opportunity to consider revisions to ensure alignment with further amendments to the Bylaws around attendance requirements. There were no trustee questions. Seeing no objection from the Committee, it was confirmed that this report will be revised and brought back to the Committee at its next meeting.

## **(c) Bylaws – Cycle and Scheduling of Board and Standing Committee Meetings**

General Counsel Patrick Cotter provided an overview of the report, which outlines the current terms of the Bylaws regarding the annual cycle and schedule of Board and Standing Committee meetings in response to a recent request from a trustee to consider the possibility of moving the first Standing Committee meeting in September so that it does not fall on the first day of school.

Discussion took place and trustee questions were answered.

MOVED by Trustee Emma Cunningham

THAT THE AMENDMENTS TO SECTION 4.2.4 OF THE BYLAWS AS OUTLINED IN THE REPORT BE APPROVED.

CARRIED

Further discussion took place. It was confirmed that a motion requesting that the September 3, 2025 Standing Committee be moved to a day other than the first day of school will be presented by Trustee Emma Cunningham at the next Regular Board meeting taking place on March 17, 2025.

## **(d) Bylaws – Report on Abstention**

General Counsel Patrick Cotter provided an overview of the report, which outlines the terms of the Bylaws applicable to members abstaining from a vote as well as the subsequent impact of reducing the number of “in favour” votes required to pass a motion.

Discussion took place and trustee questions were answered.

**8. Adjournment**

MOVED by Trustee Mark Jacula

THAT THE MEETING ADJOURN.

CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at approximately 7:21 p.m.



**REPORT OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
**Thursday April 3, 2025, 6:30 P.M.**

**ROLL CALL:**

Eva Kyriakides, Association for Bright Children (ABC) SEAC Chair  
 Charmain Brown, OPVIC Ontario Parents of Visually Impaired Children  
 sensaRAneb Burrell, Autism Ontario – Durham Region Chapter  
 Tara Culley, Durham Down Syndrome Association  
 Seana Haley, Grandview Family Advisory Committee  
 Allyson Eamer, Easter Seals Ontario  
 Rowin Jarvis, Learning Disabilities Association of Durham Region  
 Elizabeth Daniel, Member at Large  
 Jennifer McLaughlin, Sawubona Africentric Circle of Support  
 Jessica Wells, Member at Large

Trustees: Donna Edwards Kelly Miller Michelle Arseneault

Staff: System Lead: Michelle Crawford-Eade & Conor Jinkinson

Recording Secretary: Lisa Wry

**1. Call to Order:**

SEAC Chair Eva Kyriakides called the meeting to order at 6:34 p.m.

**2. Land Acknowledgement:**

SEAC Chair Eva Kyriakides advised that 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, live, and learn.

This statement was co-created in partnership with the Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation and the Chippewas of Georgina Island.

**3. DDSB Human Rights & Equity Statement**

The Durham District School Board recognizes Indigenous rights are distinct. In the exercise of those rights, Indigenous staff and students shall not be subject to action with the aim or effect of depriving these distinct rights.

The Durham District School Board is committed to providing learning and working environments that centre human rights and equity and are safe, welcoming, respectful, equitable, accessible, inclusive, and free from all forms of discrimination, oppression, harassment, and harm.

4. **Welcome Guests:** Tracy Running, Secondary Representative, Kim Argier, Elementary Representative.

**Regrets:** sensaRAneb Burrell, Rowin Jarvis, Superintendent Andrea McAuley.

**Absent:** None

5. **Approval of Agenda:**

That the agenda for April 3, 2025, be approved:

MOVED BY: Trustee Michelle Arseneault

SECONDED BY: Tara Culley

CARRIED

6. **Approval of the Minutes:**

That the minutes from March 20, 2025, be approved.

MOVED BY: Trustee Michelle Arseneault

SECONDED BY: Elizabeth Daniel

CARRIED

7. **Staff Reports:**

[ISS Impact Update 2024-2025 Issue 7 – Teachers of the Deaf Hard of Hearing](#)

The DDSB employs nine educators supporting Deaf and Hard of Hearing students, nine ASL/English Interpreters, nine Deaf Blind Intervenors, and one Language Acquisition Support Worker (LASW). Together, this team offers services to over 250 students through school district Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services. A referral to Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services is made through the school's Special Education Resource Teacher (SERT) when parent(s)/guardian(s) provide an audiogram from their audiologist.

Impact Update quotes from students, educators, and families where shared.

"Kids Like Me" events were highlighted.

8. **Board:** Trustee Donna Edwards shared with SEAC members that the Board of Trustees has not had any further meetings since the March 20, 2025 SEAC meeting. Trustee Kelly Miller shared a motion put forward at the February board meeting to review the Board policy around bullying, which can be found on page 11 of the [March 17, 2025-Board Meeting Agenda](#)

9. **Presentation & Discussion:**

DRAFT – Deputation to Education Finance

- Core Education Funding for 2025-2026 has not yet been released, no draft budget to review.
- Deputation is opportunity for sharing SEAC priorities and concerns with Education Finance.
- A draft deputation presentation was shared with members for input.

- Feedback was to include: 1) Growth region with concerns of outdated census data being used by the Ministry for funding, 2) Highlight systemic ableism, 3) Transportation funding and 4) Sought maintaining of special education class placement options for families.

SEAC Section of the Draft 2025-2026 DDSB Inclusive Student Services Special Education Plan presented for feedback.

- Any brochure updates can be sent to Lisa Wry

#### 10. **Draft 2025-2026 SEAC Meeting Dates**

- September 4, 2025
- October 2, 2025, is a conflict with a date of significance-choice of either September 25 or October 16
- November 6, 2025
- December 4, 2025
- January 8, 2026
- February 5, 2026
- March 5, 2026 (March Break 13-20)
- April 9, 2026 (April 3 is Good Friday so move to second week)
- May 7, 2026
- June 4, 2026

A vote was taken to decide the date of the second SEAC meeting of the 2025-2026 school year which resulted in the decision that October 16, 2025, be the date of the second meeting.

#### 11. **Business Arising from the Minutes**

None

#### 12. **Association Reports & Committee Reports**

Easter Seals hosted a conference for youth in preparation for post secondary education. In May, Easter Seals is celebrating red shirt day during accessibility week.

#### 13. **Correspondence**

None at this time.

#### 14. **Community Concerns**

SEAC Chair Eva Kyriakides shared that there has been a community concern about changes to the Gifted program and placement.

A discussion took place where concerns about possible changes were raised.

Concerns about funding not coming from Special Education. Limits are not placed on students in the French Immersion program. Previous, orientations were not hosted in the same way that last years were hosted which seemed more like a selling the program. Demographics were sighted as a concern. Issues around anxiety, and that many gifted students have anxiety, that is a gifted trait. 20%\* of all students with a gifted diagnosis have additional diagnosis. Concerns for student social settings.

*\*Note: DDSB data is not congruent with this statement.*

Educators need to be able to adjust their programming working with Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles.

As the representative for the Association for Bright Children, Eva Kyriakides feels she needs to advocate for this program.

The Gifted Program will not be hosting an orientation, there will be a program tour like other special education placements, with the Principal and the school SERT.

System Lead Michell Crawford-Eade offered to bring further information forward at a next SEAC meeting.

What are we asking for as a committee?

- Concerns that there has not been consultation,
- Random selection is not looking at individual needs.
- Social network provided by the gifted program, not just about enrichment.
- Fear negative impacts if we pull this back for kids.
- Why now, what has changed and what is the goal of these changes?
- Why wasn't the SEAC consulted before this change happened?

Additional Community Concern from Trustee Donna Edwards

- Inquiry around Transition Planning for students particularly when coming from another Board or community partner.
- How is it ensured that a fulsome transition is being done and who is responsible?
  - All Administrators were trained on our updated procedure in Fall 2024 – steps are clearly outlined for transition supports and connection. A clear process has been established for administrators.

## **15. Celebrations & Successes**

Trustee Donna Edwards is proud of her daughter for advocating for people with disabilities during the provincial election asking candidates what they are going to do to support people with disabilities.

## **16. Next S.E.A.C Meeting**

May 1, 2025

## **17. Adjournment**

That the meeting now adjourns at 8:30 p.m.

Adjournment called by SEAC Chair Eva Kyriakides

MOVED BY: Tara Culley      SECONDED BY: Trustee Michelle Arseneault

CARRIED

Report respectfully submitted by: Eva Kyriakides SEAC Chair

*Table 1-Action Items*

ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBILITY	COMPLETION
DDSB Student Statistics for Deputation	Lisa Wry	Andrea McAuley sent Tara Culley on April 8, 2025
SEAC 2025-2026 Dates for inclusion in Board/District Calendar	Lisa Wry	April 10, 2025
Accessibility Week	All SEAC Members	Wear red, for a photo, during May 1, 2025 SEAC meeting
Further Information re Gifted Placement Planning for 2025-2026	Michelle Crawford-Eade	For May 1, 2025 SEAC

# Inclusive Student Services

## Impact Update

2024-2025 • Issue 7

## Deaf and Hard of Hearing Student Services

### Students Who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Hearing loss can affect one or both ears and can range from mild to profound levels. All hearing loss can impact a student's academic, social-emotional, and communication development. Hearing loss is determined by a clinical audiologist and documented on an audiogram during a hearing test.

Students who are D/deaf or hard of hearing require specific programming and/or support in the classroom. Students may:

- Exhibit a need for amplification,
- Have hearing loss which affects acquisition of language and academic accommodations,
- Have delayed speech and language development, and/or
- Require alternative form of communication.



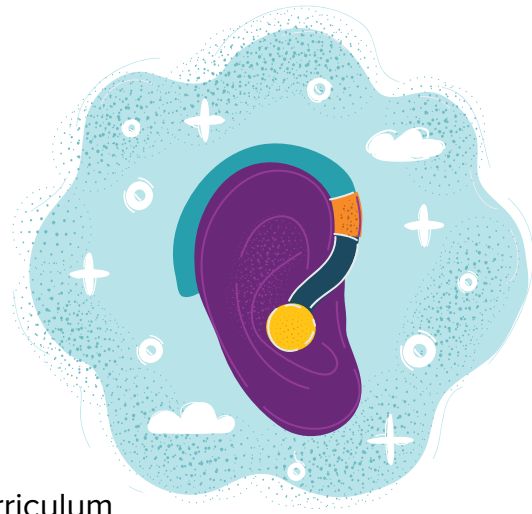
### Teachers of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (TODHH)—Who We Are

The DDSB employs nine educators supporting Deaf and Hard of Hearing students, nine ASL/English Interpreters, nine Deaf Blind Intervenors, and one Language Acquisition Support Worker (LASW). Together, this team offers services to over 250 students through school district Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services.

A referral to Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services is made through the school's Special Education Resource Teacher (SERT) when parent(s)/guardian(s) provide an audiogram from their audiologist.

***“Having a TODHH has made a huge difference in my life. Ever since I was little, I’ve had amazing teachers who made sure I had everything I needed to learn and feel confident. They’ve shown me that my hearing loss doesn’t define what I can do, and because of them, I know I can succeed.”***

*—Grade 10 student*



## What We Do

Students who are D/deaf and Hard of Hearing are diverse, encompassing a wide range of abilities, learning styles, and communication abilities. TODHH provide services to students to support language development, social, emotional and/or communication access. TODHH provide opportunities for specialized instruction in areas unique to deafness and reduced hearing from the expanded core curriculum (academic areas of reading, math, and writing), communication and language development, auditory and listening skill development, use of technology, self-determination and self-advocacy, social skills, deaf awareness, and transition (post secondary readiness, employment training, independent skills).

***“...With the assistance of the Hearing Resource Teacher, I am able to support my students in a more personalized and effective way, ensuring they can fully access the curriculum. The availability of the Hearing Resource Teacher has been invaluable.”***

***—Educator***

## Educational Audiologist

TODHH work alongside an Educational Audiologist, who reviews and evaluates the auditory and listening needs of Deaf and hard of hearing students. Together with the TODHH, the Educational Audiologist promotes communication access to support student participation and engagement.

## Families as Partners

High levels of family involvement contribute to positive results for children with hearing loss. Parents/caregivers have the right to be informed and engaged participants in their child’s educational program. TODHH support families in planning, decision-making, and transitions around accessibility in their child’s classroom and educational programming for their child through the Individual Education Plan (IEP).

***“The personalized support helped him gain confidence, access learning in a way that worked best for him and develop essential communication skills... This not only enhanced his academic progress but also empowered him to engage more fully with his peers, teachers, and the broader community.”***

***—Parent/Caregiver***

## Kids and Teens Like Me Days

TODHH are proud to promote specialized activities for students with hearing loss from Kindergarten to Grade 12 in our Kids and Teens Like Me Days. Activities promote socialization with other students who have hearing loss to make new friends, increase social skills, and enjoy educational opportunities that are fully accessible. Many of our students are the only ones with hearing loss in their school and these district events help students learn that there are others like them who share similar experiences.

## Students Who are Deaf Blind

Deafblindness is a unique and separate identification from deafness or blindness. An individual with the combined losses of hearing and vision requires specialized services including adapted communication methods. An Intervenor facilitates the interactions of a person who is deafblind with other people and the environment. They provide access to information, through auditory, visual, or tactile. Intervenor act as a sighted guide, teach appropriate communication methods (sign language, braille, object cues and communication boards), and assist with communication systems. Intervenor adapt the classroom teachers' programming to meet the needs of the student they support.



***“The support provided by the Deaf and Hard of Hearing teacher has had a tremendous impact on both my children’s educational experience in the DDSB. Individualized programming helps my children thrive by addressing their unique communication needs, while in-servicing classroom teaching staff foster a more inclusive environment. Additionally, the focus on peer education promotes understanding and the emphasis on self-advocacy empowers my children to confidently use their equipment independently.”***

*-Parent/Caregiver*



For more information about the DDSB Inclusive Student Services Impact Update, please visit [DDSB Inclusive Student Services](#).





## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Trustees

**Memo: No. 2425:76**

**From:** Camille Williams-Taylor, Director of Education and Secretary to the Board  
David Wright, Associate Director of Corporate Services and Treasurer of the Board

**Date:** May 14, 2025

**RE: Trustee Expense Policy**

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### **Purpose**

The purpose of this memo is to provide the Board of Trustees with additional information regarding Trustee professional development and associated budget.

### **Background**

At the February 26, 2025 Governance and Policy Committee meeting, Trustees asked for information on sources of professional development, professional development funding and the professional development framework, as well as a jurisdictional scan of professional development policies and expenses or funding for that professional development. [This report](#) was presented to the Committee on April 30, 2025.

At the April 30<sup>th</sup> Governance and Policy Committee meeting, further information was requested on what is included in the school board administration budget line, how many Trustees go to OPSBA events, and what sources of funding are used to support Trustees attending OPSBA events annually.

### **Analysis**

Expenses related to the administration and governance of the school board are included in the administration and governance budget line, which is funded through the School Board Administration Fund (SBAF) grant as part of the broader Core Education Funding provided by the Ministry of Education. Per the Ministry, SBAF-eligible expenses include: operating the education centre and central facilities, honoraria and expense reimbursement for Trustees, central staff and related expenditures including salaries and benefits for superintendents, finance department, human resources, and information technology. This information is detailed on page 15 of the [2024-2025 Budget Book](#) and was referenced in the April 30 report to the Governance and Policy Committee.

The number of Trustees that attend OPSBA events varies by year. Since the current trustee term began, 10 Trustees have attended OPSBA conferences a combined 24 times. Funds

to support Trustee participation in OPSBA events are received from the Ministry of Education in the School Board Administration Fund, and budgeted for in the administration and governance expense line.

Additionally, staff are required annually to report publicly on trustee expenditures for the prior year, both discretionary and non-discretionary. This report was most recently presented to the Board on February 18, 2025 and is included as Appendix C.

**Financial Implications**

Trustee expenses are limited by the parameters established in the Trustee Expense Policy and Procedure (Appendices A and B).

**Appendices**

Appendix A: Trustee Expense Policy

Appendix B: Trustee Expense Procedure

Appendix C: 2023-2024 Trustee Expense Report, presented at the February 18, 2025  
Regular Board meeting

Should you have any questions regarding this memo, please contact Associate Director David Wright at [david.wright@ddsb.ca](mailto:david.wright@ddsb.ca).

# POLICY

## BUSINESS

### Trustee Expense Policy

#### 1.0 Rationale

As elected officials, school board Trustees are guardians of the public trust. The establishment of a Trustee expense policy promotes financial integrity, accountability and transparency all of which improves public confidence in Ontario's public education system.

#### 2.0 Objective

The objective of this policy is to establish the parameters for reimbursement of eligible expenses incurred by Trustees in the course of their duties.

#### 3.0 Definitions

In this Policy,

- 3.1 Board refers to the Board of Trustees for Durham District School Board.
- 3.2 District refers to the corporate entity of Durham District School Board.
- 3.3 Staff refers to any individual who is employed by Durham District School Board.

#### 4.0 Responsibilities

- 4.1 Trustees: Trustees are responsible for setting the strategic direction of the Board and developing and maintaining policies. They are also responsible for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of policies developed by the Board in supporting the Multi-Year Strategic Plan.
- 4.2 Director of Education: The operations of the District are the responsibility of the Director of Education (and designates) and include measures to operationalize and ensure compliance with Board policies by adopting and implementing appropriate procedures and by providing professional learning and training to staff to support implementation. A focus on enhancing understanding of Indigenous rights, human rights, anti-oppression, anti-racism and anti-discrimination, and addressing discriminatory assumptions, stereotypes, biases, barriers, experiences and outcomes is required.

#### 5.0 Policy

- 5.1 On an annual basis, Trustees shall establish and approve an appropriate budget for Trustee expenses as part of the established budget process for the District.
- 5.2 For the duration of a Trustee's term in office, their expenses shall be posted publicly on

the Durham District School Board website on a quarterly basis, based on approved expense claims.

5.3 Reimbursable expenses are those that are directly related to Board business and may be claimed for reimbursement in accordance with the Procedure adopted under this Policy, as may be amended from time to time. The Procedure shall align with procedures for District staff, with appropriate modification to apply to Trustees. All claims for reimbursement of expenses must be submitted within three weeks of the fiscal year end to be eligible for reimbursement.

5.4 The following rules apply to define expenses related to Board business:

5.4.1 Community Expenses

- i. Donations to political or community activities or charitable/fundraising events are not eligible for reimbursement;
- ii. Attendance at community activities or other similar events as a representative of the Board are eligible for reimbursement when approved in advance by the Board;

5.4.2 Gifts

- i. Gifts are generally not provided by individual Trustees. With prior approval by resolution of the Board, Trustees may be reimbursed for gifts of appreciation that are of nominal value;

5.4.3 Communications, Technology, Office

- i. A cell phone shall be provided to any Trustee that requests it. Costs associated with the provided cell phone, replacement, and refresh cycle will be subject to the same terms as for District staff;
- ii. For those Trustees that do not request that a cell phone be provided by the District, the monthly cost of a cell phone shall be eligible for reimbursement, up to \$100 per month, excluding taxes. Cell phone costs incurred for Board business above \$100 per month are eligible for reimbursement as a discretionary expense (under clause 5.4.5 below);
- iii. If appropriate cellular coverage is not available at the Trustee's primary residence, the cost of one dedicated telephone line to the primary residence (including call answering and call display services) for the purpose of Board business is eligible for reimbursement;
- iv. Long distance calls related to Board business are eligible for reimbursement. The cost of personal long distance and fax calls are not eligible;
- v. The cost of a high-speed internet connection to the Trustee's primary residence is eligible for reimbursement;
- vi. To facilitate communication with the Board, its schools and the community through access to the Board's network and e-mail system and the Internet, a board-standard laptop computer and related computer equipment/supplies (printer, paper, replacement printer cartridges, and

Office suite of software) shall be provided by the District to each Trustee for use during their term. Personal purchases of such items are not eligible for reimbursement;

- vii. At the end of the Trustees' term, all District issued equipment shall be returned, or may be purchased by the Trustee for fair value;
- viii. Other supplies related to the role of Trustee (i.e. business cards, office supplies) shall be provided by the District on the same terms as for District staff. Personal purchases of such items are not eligible for reimbursement;

#### 5.4.4 Conferences and Workshops

- i. Trustees are entitled to claim reimbursement for reasonable expenses incurred in attending Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA) events, including the Annual General meeting, the Provincial Education Symposium, the Labour Relations Symposium, the Mental Health Symposium, and Regional Meetings;
- ii. Student Trustees are entitled to claim reimbursement for reasonable expenses incurred in attending four annual Ontario Student Trustees' Association – l'Association des Eleves conseillers et conseillieres de l'Ontario (OSTA-AECO) conferences;

#### 5.4.5 Discretionary

A Trustee is entitled to reimbursement of up to a total of \$1,000 per year for:

- i. Expenses incurred for attendance at Professional Development sessions or Conferences, provided the attendance has been pre-approved by resolution of the Board in public session; and;
- ii. Childcare expenses incurred in order to attend Board or committee meetings; and
- iii. Cellphone expenses as stipulated in clause 5.4.3 ii. above.

- 5.5 Approved Trustee expenses shall be paid in accordance with regular practices for District staff and the Procedure adopted under this Policy. A Trustee has the right to submit a request for reimbursement of any disallowed expense directly to the Board for re-consideration and potential approval under this Policy at any public meeting of the Board.

## 6.0 Evaluation

- 6.1 This Policy is subject to review and revision as may be deemed appropriate by the Board, but it shall be brought to the Board for review at least every four years.

## 7.0 Reference Documents

- 7.1 Trustee Procedure
- 7.2 Education Act 191.2

**8.0 Appendices:**

None

**Effective Date**

2005-04-19

**Amended/Reviewed**

2006-08-08

2009-11-16

2013-01-25

2017-11-29

2021-05-17



# PROCEDURE

## CORPORATE SERVICES

### Trustee Expense

#### 1.0 Objective

- 1.1 The objective of this Procedure is to support the processing and payment of eligible expenses incurred by Trustees in accordance with the Trustee Expense Policy.
- 1.2 This Procedure is to be interpreted and applied in accordance with the District's commitment to the Ontario Human Rights Code in providing services and workplaces that are safe, welcoming, respectful, inclusive, equitable and accessible, and that are free from discrimination and harassment under applicable legislation.

#### 2.0 Definitions

In this procedure,

- 2.1 Board refers to the Board of Trustees for Durham District School Board.
- 2.2 District refers to the corporate entity of the Durham District School Board
- 2.3 Staff refers to any individual who is employed by the Durham District School Board.

#### 3.0 Responsibilities

- 3.1 The Chair of the Board and the Vice-Chair of the Board: For the purpose of this Procedure, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Board are responsible for approving all Trustee expense claims and for forwarding approved claims to the Associate Director, Corporate Services.
- 3.2 Associate Director, Corporate Services: For the purposes of this Procedure, the Associate Director, Corporate Services shall ensure expense claims submitted for reimbursement are evaluated and processed in accordance with this Procedure and the Trustee Expense Policy. Additionally, the Associate Director, Corporate Services along with the Superintendent of Human Resources are responsible for approving the expense claims of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Board.

#### 4.0 Procedure

- 4.1 Trustees shall be reimbursed for eligible expenses incurred in the course of their duties and as stipulated in the Trustee Expense Policy and this Procedure. Expense claims shall be submitted for reimbursement using the Trustee Expense Form (Appendix A). Expense claims should be submitted on a monthly basis to facilitate quarterly reporting.
- 4.2 Detailed receipts/statements shall be submitted with any expense claim, with the exception of mileage. Credit card slips by themselves are insufficient to support an expense claim. Items of a personal nature such as sundries, traffic and parking violations, late payment fees, etc., or related to the attendance of a family member or friend at an event are not eligible for reimbursement.

#### 4.3 Travel, Accommodation and Hospitality

- i. Personal vehicle travel shall be reimbursed at a rate per kilometer. The rate will be set at the lower of the two rates established by the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) each year. Toll charges will not be reimbursed;
- ii. Travel by air or rail should be booked at lowest available (economy) rates and expenses incurred in accordance with the Policy for such travel are eligible for reimbursement;
- iii. Travel for Board business including attendance at Board meetings, Committee meetings, school visits or District functions is eligible for reimbursement;
- iv. Student Trustees may submit reimbursement request forms for all reasonable out-of-pocket expenditures including travel and meals for OSTA-AECO Executive meetings if a student Trustees is elected an OSTA-AECO Executive member;
- v. Travel for other Board business is eligible for reimbursement when it is in accordance with the Policy on workshops/conferences or when authorized in advance by Board resolution;
- vi. Destinations and reasons for mileage expense claims or other travel expenses incurred in accordance with the Policy and with this Procedure must be specified on the prescribed claim form (Appendix A). Reimbursement for vehicle travel may be made from either the Education Centre or a Trustee's primary residence. Residence information must be kept up to date with the Board office;
- vii. Alcohol expenses shall not be reimbursed;
- viii. Accommodation expenses incurred in accordance with the Policy are eligible for reimbursement at the standard room rate; any and all upgrades are not eligible for reimbursement;
- ix. Charges incurred for personal telephone calls while at a hotel, room or bar service, movies, etc. will not be eligible for reimbursement;
- x. Eligible meal expenses will be reimbursed in accordance with the Purchasing Procedure.

#### 5.0 Reference Documents

- 5.1 Trustee Expense Policy
- 5.2 Purchasing Procedure
- 5.3 Ministry of Education Trustee Expense Guideline

#### **Appendix:**

Appendix A: Trustee Expense Statement



**Effective Date**

2009-11-16

**Amended**

2010-04-19

2011-03-25

2013-01-25

2016-11-21

2017-11-29

2021-05-17

2022-03-21

**DURHAM DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD  
ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT****REPORT TO:** Durham District School Board**DATE:** February 18, 2025**SUBJECT:** Trustee Expenses 2023-2024**PAGE:** 1 of 4

**ORIGIN:** Camille Williams-Taylor, Director of Education and Secretary to the Board  
David Wright, Associate Director of Corporate Services and Treasurer of the Board  
Jennifer Machin, Senior Manager of Finance

The Durham District School Board recognizes Indigenous rights are distinct. In the exercise of those rights, Indigenous staff and students shall not be subjected to actions with the aim or effect of depriving these distinct rights.

The Durham District School Board is committed to providing learning and working environments that centre human rights and equity and are safe, welcoming, respectful, equitable, accessible, inclusive and free from all forms of discrimination, oppression, harassment and harm.

**1.0 Abstract**

Pursuant to the Education Act, school boards may establish a policy to reimburse trustees for all or part of their out-of-pocket expenses reasonably incurred in connection with carrying out the responsibilities of a board member.

This report outlines the trustee expenses for the period of November 15, 2023 to November 14, 2024 and is provided for information.

**2.0 Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to provide the Board of Trustees with information regarding the annual reporting of trustees expenses, in accordance with Durham District School Board's (DDSB) Trustee Expense Policy and Procedure.

**3.0 Background**

DDSB's Trustee Expenses Policy is attached as Appendix A. Section 5.0 states:

“5.1 On an annual basis, Trustees shall establish and approve an appropriate budget for Trustee expenses as part of the established budget process for the District.

5.2 For the duration of a Trustee's term in office, their expenses shall be posted publicly on the Durham District School Board website on a quarterly basis, based on approved expense claims.

5.3 Reimbursable expenses are those that are directly related to Board business and may be claimed for reimbursement in accordance with the Procedure adopted under this Policy, as may be amended from time to time. The Procedure shall align with procedures for District staff, with appropriate modification to apply to Trustees. All claims for reimbursement of expenses must be submitted within three weeks of the fiscal year end to be eligible for reimbursement.”.

#### 4.0 **Analysis**

The following chart provides the individual Trustee expense analysis for the Board of Trustees for the period of November 15, 2023 to November 14, 2024.

**Expenses While Fulfilling the Role of DDSB Trustee  
For the Period November 15, 2023 to November 14, 2024**

<b>Trustee</b>	<b>Office Expense</b>	<b>Professional Development</b>	<b>Transportation &amp; Mileage</b>	<b>Total</b>
Michelle Arseneault	266	1,916	259	2,440
Tracy Brown	234	2,438	650	3,321
Emma Cunningham	928	-	56	984
Donna Edwards	1,051	3,544	1,763	6,358
Mark Jacula	118	-	-	118
Stephen Linton	234	1,328	532	2,094
Kelly Miller	517	4,290	633	5,440
Carolyn Morton	1,484	1,583	2,574	5,642
Deb Oldfield	234	-	-	234
Shailene Panylo	234	333	571	1,138
Linda Stone	929	-	6	935
Christine Thatcher	1,992	3,127	1,127	6,246
Jill Thompson	234	-	-	234
	<b>8,453</b>	<b>18,559</b>	<b>8,171</b>	<b>35,182</b>

The following chart provides the discretionary budget spending for the Board of Trustees for the period of November 15, 2023 to November 14, 2024, as defined in the Trustee Expense Policy, Section 5.4.5

Discretionary Budget Balances			
For the Period November 15, 2023 to November 14, 2024			
Trustee	Discretionary Allowance	Current Year Expenses	Closing Balance
Michelle Arseneault	1,000	-	1,000
Tracy Brown	1,000	904	96
Emma Cunningham	1,000	-	1,000
Donna Edwards	1,000	-	1,000
Mark Jacula	1,000	-	1,000
Stephen Linton	1,000	904	96
Kelly Miller	1,000	863	137
Carolyn Morton	1,000	-	1,000
Deb Oldfield	1,000	-	1,000
Shailene Panylo	1,000	904	96
Linda Stone	1,000	-	1,000
Christine Thatcher	1,000	-	1,000
Jill Thompson	1,000	-	1,000
	<b>13,000</b>	<b>3,576</b>	<b>8,425</b>

## 5.0 Financial Implications

Funding for trustees expenses is provided by the Ministry of Education through the Trustees and Parent Engagement Allocation included in the School Board Administration Fund (SBAF) of the Core Education Funding, page 16 of the [2024-2025 Budget Book](#).

## 6.0 Strategic Links

Trustees, as publicly elected officials, play an important role in representing constituents across the District. This connection with the community strengthens engagement and helps to build trust and relationships.

## 7.0 Communication/Implementation Plan

Individual Trustee expenses are posted quarterly on [DDSB's website](#).

## 8.0 Conclusion

This report is provided to the Board of Trustees for information.

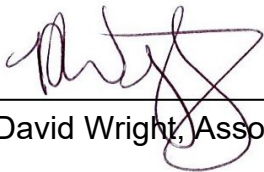
**9.0 Appendices**

## Appendix A – Trustee Expense Policy

Report reviewed and submitted by:



Camille Williams-Taylor, Director of Education and Secretary to the Board



David Wright, Associate Director of Corporate Services and Treasurer of the Board

# POLICY

## BUSINESS

### Trustee Expense Policy

#### 1.0 Rationale

As elected officials, school board Trustees are guardians of the public trust. The establishment of a Trustee expense policy promotes financial integrity, accountability and transparency all of which improves public confidence in Ontario's public education system.

#### 2.0 Objective

The objective of this policy is to establish the parameters for reimbursement of eligible expenses incurred by Trustees in the course of their duties.

#### 3.0 Definitions

In this Policy,

- 3.1 Board refers to the Board of Trustees for Durham District School Board.
- 3.2 District refers to the corporate entity of Durham District School Board.
- 3.3 Staff refers to any individual who is employed by Durham District School Board.

#### 4.0 Responsibilities

- 4.1 Trustees: Trustees are responsible for setting the strategic direction of the Board and developing and maintaining policies. They are also responsible for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of policies developed by the Board in supporting the Multi-Year Strategic Plan.
- 4.2 Director of Education: The operations of the District are the responsibility of the Director of Education (and designates) and include measures to operationalize and ensure compliance with Board policies by adopting and implementing appropriate procedures and by providing professional learning and training to staff to support implementation. A focus on enhancing understanding of Indigenous rights, human rights, anti-oppression, anti-racism and anti-discrimination, and addressing discriminatory assumptions, stereotypes, biases, barriers, experiences and outcomes is required.

#### 5.0 Policy

- 5.1 On an annual basis, Trustees shall establish and approve an appropriate budget for Trustee expenses as part of the established budget process for the District.
- 5.2 For the duration of a Trustee's term in office, their expenses shall be posted publicly on

the Durham District School Board website on a quarterly basis, based on approved expense claims.

5.3 Reimbursable expenses are those that are directly related to Board business and may be claimed for reimbursement in accordance with the Procedure adopted under this Policy, as may be amended from time to time. The Procedure shall align with procedures for District staff, with appropriate modification to apply to Trustees. All claims for reimbursement of expenses must be submitted within three weeks of the fiscal year end to be eligible for reimbursement.

5.4 The following rules apply to define expenses related to Board business:

5.4.1 Community Expenses

- i. Donations to political or community activities or charitable/fundraising events are not eligible for reimbursement;
- ii. Attendance at community activities or other similar events as a representative of the Board are eligible for reimbursement when approved in advance by the Board;

5.4.2 Gifts

- i. Gifts are generally not provided by individual Trustees. With prior approval by resolution of the Board, Trustees may be reimbursed for gifts of appreciation that are of nominal value;

5.4.3 Communications, Technology, Office

- i. A cell phone shall be provided to any Trustee that requests it. Costs associated with the provided cell phone, replacement, and refresh cycle will be subject to the same terms as for District staff;
- ii. For those Trustees that do not request that a cell phone be provided by the District, the monthly cost of a cell phone shall be eligible for reimbursement, up to \$100 per month, excluding taxes. Cell phone costs incurred for Board business above \$100 per month are eligible for reimbursement as a discretionary expense (under clause 5.4.5 below);
- iii. If appropriate cellular coverage is not available at the Trustee's primary residence, the cost of one dedicated telephone line to the primary residence (including call answering and call display services) for the purpose of Board business is eligible for reimbursement;
- iv. Long distance calls related to Board business are eligible for reimbursement. The cost of personal long distance and fax calls are not eligible;
- v. The cost of a high-speed internet connection to the Trustee's primary residence is eligible for reimbursement;
- vi. To facilitate communication with the Board, its schools and the community through access to the Board's network and e-mail system and the Internet, a board-standard laptop computer and related computer equipment/supplies (printer, paper, replacement printer cartridges, and

Office suite of software) shall be provided by the District to each Trustee for use during their term. Personal purchases of such items are not eligible for reimbursement;

- vii. At the end of the Trustees' term, all District issued equipment shall be returned, or may be purchased by the Trustee for fair value;
- viii. Other supplies related to the role of Trustee (i.e. business cards, office supplies) shall be provided by the District on the same terms as for District staff. Personal purchases of such items are not eligible for reimbursement;

#### 5.4.4 Conferences and Workshops

- i. Trustees are entitled to claim reimbursement for reasonable expenses incurred in attending Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA) events, including the Annual General meeting, the Provincial Education Symposium, the Labour Relations Symposium, the Mental Health Symposium, and Regional Meetings;
- ii. Student Trustees are entitled to claim reimbursement for reasonable expenses incurred in attending four annual Ontario Student Trustees' Association – l'Association des Eleves conseillers et conseillieres de l'Ontario (OSTA-AECO) conferences;

#### 5.4.5 Discretionary

A Trustee is entitled to reimbursement of up to a total of \$1,000 per year for:

- i. Expenses incurred for attendance at Professional Development sessions or Conferences, provided the attendance has been pre-approved by resolution of the Board in public session; and;
- ii. Childcare expenses incurred in order to attend Board or committee meetings; and
- iii. Cellphone expenses as stipulated in clause 5.4.3 ii. above.

- 5.5 Approved Trustee expenses shall be paid in accordance with regular practices for District staff and the Procedure adopted under this Policy. A Trustee has the right to submit a request for reimbursement of any disallowed expense directly to the Board for re-consideration and potential approval under this Policy at any public meeting of the Board.

## 6.0 Evaluation

- 6.1 This Policy is subject to review and revision as may be deemed appropriate by the Board, but it shall be brought to the Board for review at least every four years.

## 7.0 Reference Documents

- 7.1 Trustee Procedure
- 7.2 Education Act 191.2



**8.0 Appendices:**

None

**Effective Date**

2005-04-19

**Amended/Reviewed**

2006-08-08

2009-11-16

2013-01-25

2017-11-29

2021-05-17

## MEMORANDUM



**To:** Trustees

**Memo: No. 2425:77**

**From:** Camille Williams-Taylor, Director of Education and Secretary to the Board  
Andrea McAuley, Superintendent of Equitable Education,  
Inclusive Student Services

**Date:** May 16, 2025

**RE:** **Special Education Class – Gifted 2025-2026**

This memo provides Trustees with an overview of the Elementary Special Education Class (Gifted) 2025-2026 that has been shared with parents/caregivers and/or students, staff and administrators during the Gifted screening process 2024-2025.

### **Special Education Placement Program 2025-2026 Planning**

Reference: [DDSB Inclusive Student Services Special Education Plan](#)

The Durham District School Board (DDSB) provides a range of differentiated placements, programs, interventions and individualized accommodations to maximize participation, integration and independence, enable meaningful access to education, and support student success.

The DDSB's ongoing commitment is to provide the structures, supports and resources to foster student growth and development in programs which promote integration and independence as defined based on their interests, strengths and needs. We acknowledge that our current practices related to the Special Education Placement (Gifted) are inconsistent with our principles and commitments regarding inclusion.

As research in special education continues to evolve, the DDSB, aligned with other school boards, is reviewing how best to support students with exceptionalities. The District's approach to Special Education placement is guided by the principle that, wherever possible, students' learning and well-being needs are best met in regular classroom environments within home communities. This is consistent with the Education Act and the [Ontario Human Rights Commission \(OHRC\) Policy on Accessible Education for Students with Disabilities](#).

### **Supporting Elementary Learners Who Are Intellectually Gifted**

Before considering a special education class placement, the DDSB prioritizes placing students in Regular Class placements with appropriate special education services, in line with the Education Act - Regulation 181/98 and the [Ontario Human Rights Commission \(OHRC\) Policy on Accessible Education for Students with Disabilities](#).

Accommodations for students who have been identified with the exceptionality of giftedness are outlined in their Individual Education Plan (IEP). These plans are created with input

from the student and their parents or caregivers. Accommodations may include opportunities to connect with other learners who also have been identified with the exceptionality of giftedness, and participate in academic competitions.

### **Process for Special Education Placement – Gifted Elementary 2025-2026**

**Elementary Grades:** The DDSB offers Special Education Class Placements (gifted) at host schools throughout the District. Placement in these classes is determined through an annual random selection process among eligible students. Students already in these placements have the option of continuity.

**Placement Options:** Both Regular Class placement and Special Education Class Placement (gifted) are available for students identified as intellectually gifted through the assessment process. Formal identification as a student with a special education exceptionality(ies) entitles the student to accommodations to support programming to their potential. As with all identification of exceptionality, differentiated placement is an option, not an assumption.

For the 2025-2026 school year, staff operationalized the implementation of the random selection process, which has been embedded within the communications related to Gifted screening for several years. This is not a change currently to the Special Education Class Placement (gifted). This is a step on our pathway to correcting the incongruence and anomaly, which has over-streamed students who have been identified with the exceptionality of giftedness into placement programs removing them from their home school communities. Concurrently, staff are examining programming supports which create a community of connection and which are not dependent on physical location.

### **Process**

Students and caregivers of eligible students received a Preference Form (based upon Fall/Winter 2024-2025 CCAT or WISC for identification of intellectually gifted) to indicate their preference: Regular Class Placement or Special Education Class Placement (gifted).

For those interested in the Special Education Class Placement (gifted), a random selection process was facilitated for 2025-2026. As a regional class placement, notifications were sent to students and their parents or caregivers after the selection process, indicating whether the student will be placed in a Regular Class or a Special Education Class Placement (gifted). For several years, the possibility of a random selection has been previously communicated to families within the fall information related to the [Elementary Special Education Class Placement \(gifted\)](#). *Please see link for template letters dating back to 2016 which reference the possibility of randomized selection for placement and which were communicated to families.*

If a student is not initially placed in a Special Education Class Placement (gifted), a random selection will be conducted for each available opening based on the student's address and host schools until the beginning of the second term of the school year. If space becomes available, the DDSB will contact the student and parent or caregiver regarding the update and change in placement.

**Timelines for 2025-2026 School Year:**

<b>Communications</b>	<b>Date</b>
<a href="#">Information shared with families about the Gifted Screening Process</a>	Week of October 4, 2024
Individualized communication with families re CCAT/WISC	Week of December 9, 2024
WISC Outcome letters individualized to families	February 2025
Students Meeting Criteria for Exceptionality: Gifted – Program and Process Information. Request for inclusion in placement consideration.	Week of March 17 ,2025
Email to Parents/Caregivers - Outcome of Random Selection Process	April 14, 2025
Decisions of Parents/Caregivers re: Offers of Placement	Due by May 9, 2025
School Visits	April 22-29, 2025
IPRCs	By June 1, 2025

For more information or with questions, please contact Superintendent of Inclusive Student Services [Andrea McAuley](#).

# May

114

Asian and South Asian Heritage Month

Jewish Heritage Month

Speech, Language and Hearing Month

National Principal's Day  
Cinco De Mayo

1  
5

National Day of Awareness for Missing and  
Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and  
2SLGBTQIA+ Peoples (MMIWG2SLGBTQIA+)

5

Yom HaShoah - Holocaust Memorial Day (Judaism)

5 - 6

Children's Mental Health Week

5 - 9

Vesak

12

Tamil Genocide Education Week

12- 18

Support Staff Appreciation Day

16

International Day Against

17

Homophobia, Transphobia, Biphobia

Victoria Day

20

National Accessibility Week

26 - 6/1

Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh(Bahai)

27 - 28

Red Shirt Day (Accessibility)

29

# June

115

Indigenous Histories Month

Pride Month

Shavuot (Judaism)	1 - 3
Day of Hajj (Islam)	4 - 9
Eid-al-Adha (Islam)	6 - 10
Pentecost (Christianity)	8
Juneteenth	16
Martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev (Sikh)	16
Autistic Pride Day	18
Alban Hefin (Druid)	21/22
Litha (Druid)	20
National Indigenous People's Day	21
Islamic New Year (Islam)	25 - 26
Gahambar Maidyoshem (Zoroastrianism)	29 - 7/3

# July

116

Canada Day	1
Ashura (Islam)	5 - 6
Birthday of Emperor Haile Selassie I (Rastafarian)	23

# August

117

Emancipation Day	1
Civic Day	4
International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples	9
Raksha Bandhan (Hindu)	9