

RENFREW COUNTY DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD
MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING HELD ON MAY 23, 2023
at 4:22 PM

Chairperson S. Humphries in the Chair.

TRUSTEES Present: L. Boland; M. Guenette; D. Kaiser; B. Morris; J. Primeau; T. Novosedlik & A. Beggs (Student Trustees)

TRUSTEES Absent (With Regret): D. Dobson; K. Dougherty

STAFF: P. Buffone; J. Poirier; R. Cousineau; J. Smith; K. Riddell; M. Caplan Jamieson; S. McIntyre

STAFF Absent (With Regret): J. Barnes

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson S. Humphries called the meeting to order.

2. TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Trustee B. Morris read the Territorial Acknowledgement.

3. INVOCATION

The invocation was read by Trustee J. Primeau.

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOVED BY B. MORRIS seconded by L. Boland that the Renfrew County District School Board approves the agenda for today's meeting.

The motion was CARRIED

5. DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Chairperson S. Humphries asked for declarations of conflict. None were forthcoming.

6. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOVED M. GUENETTE seconded by B. Morris that the Renfrew County District School Board confirms the minutes of the Board Meeting on April 25, 2023.

The motion was CARRIED

7. PRESENTATION: PARENT INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE – PARENT AND GUARDIAN INPUT

Executive Officer of Public Affairs, M. Caplan Jamieson, introduced Danya Pastuszek, Co-Chair of the Parent Involvement Committee (PIC), along with committee member Morgan Sanderson. Recognizing the utmost importance of including the voices and input of the PIC, their meaningful work was highlighted. Ms. Pastuszek shared about the ongoing efforts of the committee in creating a nurturing community for our students, ensuring

they feel supported and connected. Fostering an enjoyable school environment is important for their ultimate success.

PIC conducted a comprehensive month-long Thoughtexchange survey. Over 1000 parents and guardians participated in the survey, with an additional 600 providing invaluable feedback multiple times. Ms. Pastuszek conveyed her delight at the significant attendance of PIC members during their last meeting in April. Their objective remains to gain greater participation from parents and guardians, establishing effective communication and support systems. In an expression of gratitude, Ms. Pastuszek extended her appreciation to the dedicated school and school board staff, Board of Trustees, as well as parents and guardians. Encouraging collaboration and inclusivity, she asked that the Board of Trustees, PIC, and Senior Staff seek input from parents/guardians, and students in the decision-making processes.

8. **COMMITTEE REPORTS TO THE BOARD**

Committee of the Whole Open Session Report – May 25, 2023

Vice-Chairperson L. Boland, Chairperson of Committee of the Whole, presented the Open Session Report of Committee of the Whole from today's meeting.

MOVED BY L. BOLAND seconded by J. Primeau that the Renfrew County District School Board adopts the Open Session Report of the Committee of the Whole meeting.

The motion was CARRIED

Committee of the Whole Closed Session Report – May 25, 2023

Vice-Chairperson L. Boland, Chairperson of Committee of the Whole, presented the Closed Session Report of Committee of the Whole from today's meeting.

MOVED BY L. BOLAND seconded by D. Kaiser that the Renfrew County District School Board receives the Closed Session Report of the Committee of the Whole meeting.

The motion was CARRIED

Finance & Resources Committee

Vice-Chairperson L. Boland, Acting Chairperson of the Finance & Resources Committee, presented the Open Session Report of the Finance and Resources Committee meeting held on May 9, 2023.

MOVED BY L. BOLAND, seconded by B. Morris that the Renfrew County District School Board receives the Open Session Report of the Finance and Resources Committee meeting held on May 9, 2023.

The motion was CARRIED

Special Education Advisory Committee

Trustee M. Guenette presented the Report of the Special Education Advisory Committee meeting held on May 17, 2023.

MOVED BY M. GUENETTE, seconded by B. Morris that the Renfrew County District School Board receives the Report of the Special Education Advisory Committee meeting held on May 17, 2023.

The motion was CARRIED

9. **UPDATES**

a) Director

Director of Education P. Buffone presented his Director's Report. See Appendix "A".

(b) Chair

Chairperson S. Humphries presented her Chair's Report. See Appendix "B"

(c) Student Trustees

Student Trustees T. Novosedlik and A. Beggs presented their Student Trustees' Report. See Appendix "C". In addition, Student Trustee Beggs announced that at last weekend's OSTA-AECO Annual General Meeting, she was elected to an executive position as the Advocacy Chair of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion for the upcoming school year.

(d) OPSBA

Chairperson S. Humphries presented an OPSBA Update. See Appendix "D".

10. **CORRESPONDENCE**

None to report.

11. **OTHER BUSINESS**

None to report.

12. **ADJOURNMENT**

MOVED BY L. Boland seconded by B. Morris that the Renfrew County District School Board meeting of May 23, 2023 be adjourned. Time: 5:25 PM

The motion was CARRIED

RENFREW COUNTY DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
OPEN SESSION REPORT
MAY 23, 2023**

TRUSTEES: L. Boland (Chair); S. Humphries; D. Dobson (departed early) B. Morris; M. Guenette;
(Present) D. Kaiser; J. Primeau; T. Novosedlik & A. Beggs (Student Trustees)

TRUSTEES: K. Dougherty
(Regrets)

STAFF: P. Buffone; J. Poirier; R. Cousineau; J. Smith; K. Riddell; M. Caplan Jamieson;
(Present) T. Hoffman; S. McIntyre; H. MacMillan

STAFF: J. Barnes
(Regrets)

The Committee of the Whole of the Renfrew County District School Board met on May 23, 2023 and discussed the following items in Open Session:

1. Audit Committee Meeting Closed Session Report – May 10, 2023;
2. Year-to-Date Financials 2022-2023;
3. Update regarding the work of the Leadership Development Committee;
4. School Excursion Requests: Opeongo HS & Arnprior District HS.

The following recommendations were made:

1. Audit Committee Meeting Closed Session Report – May 10, 2023

2022-2023 Regional Internal Audit Update

THAT the Renfrew County District School Board Audit Committee receives for information the May 10, 2023 RIAT Update.

Letter to the Ministry of Education

THAT the Renfrew County District School Board Audit Committee Chair send a letter to the Ministry of Education in support of reviewing the budgets for the Ontario Regional Internal Audit Teams.

2. School Excursion Requests: Opeongo HS & Arnprior District HS

THAT the Renfrew County District School Board approves, in principle, the Excursion Request from Opeongo High School and Arnprior District High School to travel to Paris and France from March 7-14, 2024.

I move that the Board adopts this report.

L. Boland
Chairperson

ADOPTED - May 23, 2023

RENFREW COUNTY DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
CLOSED SESSION REPORT
May 25, 2023**

TRUSTEES: L. Boland (Chair); S. Humphries; D. Dobson; B. Morris; M. Guenette; D. Kaiser;
(Present) J. Primeau

TRUSTEES: K. Dougherty; T. Novosedlik & A. Beggs (Student Trustees)
(Regrets)

STAFF: P. Buffone; J. Poirier; R. Cousineau; J. Smith; K. Riddell; M. Caplan Jamieson;
(Present) S. McIntyre; H. MacMillan

STAFF: J. Barnes
(Regrets)

The Committee of the Whole of the Renfrew County District School Board met on May 23, 2023 and discussed the following item in Closed Session:

1. Audit Committee Meeting Closed Session Report – May 10, 2023.

No recommendations were made.

I move that the Board receives this report.

L. Boland
Chairperson

ADOPTED - May 23, 2023



INSPIRE. EMPOWER. ACHIEVE.

FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Open Session: X

Closed Session: _____

REPORT TO BOARD

May 9, 2023

PRESENT:

Committee Members: L. Boland (Acting Chair), K. Dougherty, M. Guenette, S. Humphries, B. Morris (virtual), J. Primeau (virtual)

Administration: P. Buffone, J. Barnes, R. Cousineau, J. Poirier, K. Riddell (virtual), J. Smith, M. Caplan Jamieson, T. Hoffman, S. Gagne

Guests:

ABSENT: (With Regrets) D. Dobson, D. Kaiser, A. Beggs and T. Novosedlik (Student Trustees)

The Finance and Resources Committee met on Tuesday, May 9, 2023 to discuss the following item(s):

1. Renfrew County Council Meeting;
2. Draft Budget 2023-2024; and
3. Board Retirement Celebration.

No recommendations were made.

L. Boland
Acting Chairperson

ADOPTED - May 23, 2023



INSPIRE. EMPOWER. ACHIEVE.

SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Open Session: **x**

Closed Session:

REPORT TO BOARD

May 17, 2023

PRESENT: Committee Members: M. Guenette, B. Morris, D. Lacombe, S. Tait, N. Tabbert, A. MacKenzie, A. Derochers, C. Brash, L. Rigby, S. Smith, M. Wagner

ADMINISTRATION: A. McGregor, A. MacDougall-Popke, J. Smith, A. Hilts

GUESTS:

ABSENT: (With Regrets)

The Special Education Advisory Committee met in person and virtually on Wednesday May 17, 2023 and discussed the following:

1. Staff Updates
2. Report from the Board
3. Association Reports

No recommendations were made.

Amy MacKenzie,
Chairperson

ADOPTED - May 23, 2023



Board Meeting
Director's Update - Pino Buffone
23 May 2023

I would like to showcase a number of activities and events, initiatives and/or projects taking place across the system as they relate to the achievement, equity and well-being of our students, staff and school communities.

On Monday 15 May 2023, the school communities of Sherwood Public School and Madawaska Valley District High School met for an engaging and insightful information session related to the amalgamation of both sites into a JK-12 facility. The students, staff, and parents/guardians who took part offered very thoughtful perspectives on the endeavour. The ad hoc committee for the new name will be led by Superintendent Cousineau, and will begin in earnest next month, in June of 2023.

On Wednesday 17 May 2023, students at Valour JK-12 School participated in an inspiring assembly related to the rejection of all forms of discrimination, hate and violence based on gender and/or sexual orientation... in support of International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia.

As always, the District continues to follow the advice of the Chief Medical Officer of Health in the guideline for 2022-2023 Health and Safety Measures in Schools, including: optional masking for students, staff and visitors in schools, school board offices, and on student transportation (except in cases where staff are required to perform an Aerosol Generating Medical Procedure); endorsement of appropriate hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette in schools and workplaces; as well as, the continuation of funding for enhanced cleaning standards and ventilation and filtration improvements at all sites.

Transition Working Group - Secondary School Review - Spring 2023

As part of the Secondary School Review, the 'Transition Working Group' will meet once again on Monday, May 29th, 2023 (afternoon meeting). The working group will discuss progress made by each sub-committee, including: Program Pathways (creation of destream framework); Student Success Initiatives (resource guide for educators); Experiential Learning Opportunities (handbook for experiential learning); as well as Transitions to/from Secondary School (protocol of promising practices). In addition, the 'Other Considerations' noted in the recommendations approved by the Board of Trustees will also be addressed in preparation of a summary report for the Board Meeting in June 2023.



**Board Meeting
Chair's Update - Susan Humphries
23 May 2023**

The Ontario Public School Board Association (OPSBA) hosted two events at the end of April. The Education Labour Relations and Human Resources Symposium was targeted to school board HR professionals and trustees. Several RCDSB staff along with Superintendent Poirier and I attended and appreciated the variety of speakers/panels that were offered. The keynote speaker was Jason Lietzer from Enterprise Canada. He was an entertaining speaker focused on crisis response, issues management and strategic communications. Over 160 people attended this event, the first "in person" since 2019.

The second OPSBA event was the Board of Directors meeting which included reports by the two work teams, updates on various committees, a review of the budget and responses to announcements by the Minister of Education. Also, a reminder that the OPSBA AGM is coming up June 8-10 - all trustees are welcome to attend.

Later this week, the Eastern Region is hosting the OPSBA President (Cathy Abraham) and the Executive Director (Stephanie Donaldson). We are looking forward to spending some time at the Upper Canada District School Board as well as at ADHS in our own Board.

It was a pleasure to attend and support the first "working" meeting of our staff leads responsible for SHSMs, apprenticeship and cooperative education with our community partners at CNL. We are looking forward to hearing more about some new opportunities for our students to participate in experiential learning at CNL- hopefully being kick-started in the fall.

Although I know our Student Trustees will be speaking about their last meeting of the year, I cannot miss the opportunity to also highlight this event. It was "a day to remember" as our entire Student Senate spent the day in Ottawa visiting both the Senate and the House of Commons. The opportunity to engage with many Senators and MPs in an informal way reminded us that they are just people after all. They were all so interested in where we were from and especially pleased to interact with our student leaders. Several of the MPs and staff mentioned the career opportunities available and encouraged the students to consider these options. We were able to attend Question Period where the students were somewhat surprised by the "decorum" of the MPs. Many thanks to Meredith Caplan Jamieson for organizing this excellent opportunity - it was a wonderful way to finish off the year for our Student Senate.



Student Trustees' Report for Tuesday, May 23, 2023

Report Prepared By:

Taylor Novosedlik and Ava Beggs

During this year's Mental Health Week Taylor and I decided to create a video for our Senate's social media on the importance of wellbeing and taking care of our mental health. This video included tips on how to maintain good overall wellbeing, discussion on the stigma surrounding mental health, and lots more helpful information for viewers. The video was very well received by our social media following.

Taylor and I had the amazing opportunity of traveling to Parliament Hill with our Senate for our final meeting of the year. We were able to chat with our RCDSB Senate about all of the work we have been doing, and what went well this year. During this day we also met with all sorts of people who are employed there and gained endless knowledge. On behalf of all of the members of our senate, we are so grateful that Meredith was able to set this up for us. Taylor and I are so thankful for all of the board members who helped make this once in a lifetime experience a possibility!

From May 17th - 21st we had our Annual General Meeting.

Verbal report on this will be given



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Leading Education's Advocates

OPSBA Board of Directors Meeting – April 28 and 29, 2023

The Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA) [Board of Directors](#) held a meeting in Toronto on April 28 and 29, 2023.

On the evening of April 28, Board of Directors members received a presentation from Association of Municipalities of Ontario Executive Director Brian Rosborough.

Education policy and program matters that were discussed in public session at the meeting are summarized below:

Labour Relations

Updates were provided in private session on recent developments related to labour relations and collective bargaining.

Education Labour Relations and Human Resources Symposium

More than 160 Trustees, Directors of Education, Supervisory Officers, Human Resources and Labour Relations Practitioners came together in Toronto on April 27 and 28 to share, strategize and learn about next and best practices and explore practical solutions to the challenges faced by Ontario school boards. With keynote speaker Jason Lietaer of Enterprise Canada, and outstanding panelists and workshop speakers on a wide variety of relevant issues, OPSBA was excited to the host the first in-person Education Labour Relations and Human Resources Symposium since 2019.

Legislative Update

In May, there are 11 sitting days and a constituency week after the Victoria Day weekend. In June, there are five sitting days before the summer recess that begins after Thursday, June 8, 2023.

Parliamentary Assistant Matt Rae has moved to the Ministry of Housing and Municipal Affairs – his files have transferred to Parliamentary Assistant Patrice Barnes. NDP Leader Marit Stiles also announced a revised critic portfolio list. Chandra Pasma (MPP Ottawa West—Nepean) remains the Education Critic, and Teresa Armstrong (MPP London—Fanshawe) becomes the critic for Child Care.

The Ministry of Education also announced recent and upcoming senior staff retirements, which include: Deputy Minister Nancy Naylor (June 30), Assistant Deputy Minister Denise Dwyer (March 14), and Assistant Deputy Minister Denys Giguère (June 30).

The Better Schools and Student Outcomes Act

A robust discussion on [this legislation](#), which was introduced on April 17, 2023 by Minister of Education Stephen Lecce, occurred. The bill proposes changes to the *Early Childhood Educators Act, 2007*, the *Education Act*, and the *Ontario College of Teachers Act, 1996*. It also suggests minor wording changes in the French version to the preamble of *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001*. The bill will most likely move quickly through the legislative process and OPSBA staff will monitor for any referral to Committee. OPSBA will be taking the necessary time to review each proposed change and addition and [released an initial statement](#) shortly after the legislation was announced.

With respect to the *Education Act*, some of the proposed amendments include:

- “setting provincial education priorities on student achievement” and requiring school boards to create multi-year plans to meet those priorities. Parents will need to be consulted on the development of their local school board’s plan twice per year and receive progress reports;
- requiring school board trustees and senior officials to undergo provincially mandated training to make sure they have the “skills and competencies” to deliver on the government’s priorities;
- standardizing performance assessments for directors of education;
- establishing a new “impartial integrity commissioner-led process” for Code of Conduct complaints about school board trustees;
- creating a new, faster process for declaring school board land as surplus; and
- working with municipalities to help implement the province’s subsidized childcare agreement with the federal government.

The bill was also [posted](#) for commentary on the Ontario's Regulatory Registry with a feedback deadline of May 16, 2023. OPSBA has an extensive consultation plan to respond to these proposed changes that involves senior staff, the Policy Development and Education Program Work Groups, Executive Council, as well as key stakeholders. It will also refer to any relevant past commentary made by the Association.

Full Legislative Updates, including information on other Bills, are available on the [OPSBA Connects blog](#). All OPSBA submissions to the government are available [on the OPSBA website](#).

Annual General Meeting

The Association is celebrating 35 years at this year’s AGM, happening June 8 to 10 at Blue Mountain Resort in Collingwood, Ont. Priorities and directions for the coming year will be determined. The AGM will also feature keynote speakers such as Karl Subban and Njeri Damali Sojourner-Campbell, professional development sessions and fun opportunities for trustees to network and connect. [Registration is now open!](#)

AGM Elections

The nomination deadline for OPSBA’s elected positions is May 9 at 4:30 p.m. For more, see the links below:

- [Online nomination form](#)
- [Roles and Responsibilities Guide](#)
- [Candidates’ Election Guide](#)

Education Funding

A summary of important B and SB memos that have been released since the last Board of Directors meeting in February was provided. B & SB memoranda for 2022-23 and prior years can be accessed on the [ministry website](#).

2023-24 Education Funding

The provincial government released the 2023-24 Grants for Student Needs (GSN) on April 17. Per-pupil funding is rising at a rate much lower than inflation. [In a statement](#), President Cathy Abraham said, “Just like for families and businesses, all costs in school board budgets are going up due to inflation. If we don’t see a corresponding increase in funding, there will be an impact on students.” GSN funding is projected to be \$27.1 billion, while the average provincial per-pupil base funding is projected to be \$13,125 in 2023–24 (base funding excludes one-time funding and funding for debt service costs). There is a further \$516.2 million in Priorities and Partnership Funding (PPF), of which a portion will go to school boards and a portion will go to other education partners.

[OPSBA's Initial Review of the 2023-24 GSN](#)

Ontario Budget

Finance Minister Peter Bethlenfalvy delivered the 2023-24 Ontario Budget: Building a Strong Ontario on March 23. Compared to spending plans presented in the Fall Economic Statement, education spending was down \$47 million over the past year. [OPSBA's Budget overview](#) is available on the website.

Indigenous Education / Indigenous Trustees' Council (ITC)

The ITC has not met since the last Board of Directors meeting, but will be meeting virtually the week of May 15. The Council has welcomed a new [staff liaison, Alicia Cameron](#), who began her role on April 17.

Black Trustees Caucus (BTC)

The BTC is preparing to finalize a Terms of Reference and welcomed a new [staff liaison, Michelle Rodney Bartalos](#), on April 14.

Government Relations, Public Affairs, and Communications

An overview of recent media activity and OPSBA's past, current and future advocacy and awareness planning was provided. To see the Association's appearances in the media, visit [OPSBA in the Media](#).

Take Your MPP to School Day

The objective of this week-long initiative, taking place May 23 to 26, is to raise the awareness among MPPs of the role of trustees and build upon the relationships with MPPs following OPSBA's Advocacy Day in November 2022. It's also an opportunity to showcase the amazing students, staff, and programs happening in local schools, as well as the local realities of education in your communities. A “Save the Date” flyer was shared with MPPs and sent to both their Queen's Park and local constituency offices. Senior staff have been working with political staff to promote internally among the party and OPSBA will publicize centrally as well.

Pupil Accommodation Reviews

In June 2017, nearly six years ago, the Government of Ontario (then a Liberal government) announced a moratorium on Pupil Accommodation Reviews – the community engagement process used by school boards when considering consolidating or closing a school. Since that time, our member boards have been unable to consolidate or close schools, which has led to many challenges. OPSBA [released a statement](#) in late February calling for the Ministry of Education to complete its review of the Pupil Accommodation Review Guidelines, release revised guidelines, and lift the moratorium.

Program Policy

Beyond Knowledge Discussion Paper

OPSBA convened an Ontario Education Partner Discussion Table in spring 2021 to create space for collaborative dialogue as school boards and schools navigated the waves and impacts of COVID-19. The group, which represents Ontario's Kindergarten to post-secondary education partners, was brought together to share evidence, insights and hopes drawn out of the pandemic experience. The focus of the Table's meetings from December 2022 through spring 2023 was on creating a shared vision for the future of Ontario schools, which has resulted in the creation of a new discussion paper entitled *Beyond knowledge: Preparing students for an uncertain future*. A key recommendation is to engage the provincial government in the next phase of these discussions. This paper will be available soon on the OPSBA website, but was not published as of this report's publication date.

French as a Second Language (FSL)

OPSBA is leading the research and promotion of workable solutions to the issue of attracting and retaining sufficient numbers of FSL teachers. As of February 28, 2023, the Ministry of Education contract to continue to mobilize research findings and workable solutions in the areas of FSL teacher recruitment, hiring, professional support and retention is finished. All deliverables have been completed. It is hoped that the ministry will continue to engage OPSBA in this work to ensure that all school boards have the opportunity to be supported in implementing these promising practices.

A [new website was launched](#) in late April, which features a number of resources to assist school boards and school administrators with FSL programming.

AMO Partnership

OPSBA is engaging with the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) in support of their Healthy Democracy Project, which will promote the value and importance of municipal governments in Ontario and Canada's political system. This includes the importance of diversity of leadership and perspective. The Healthy Democracy Project will build on AMO's We All Win Campaign to attract more diverse candidates to municipal office. It will promote greater civic engagement, greater awareness of the role of municipal government, more respect for the people engaged in democratic processes, and encourage greater participation in local democracy and voter turnout.

Project with Wilfrid Laurier University

Similar to past years, OPSBA staff will engage in a research partnership with the Master of Applied Politics program at Wilfrid Laurier University. Three students will work with senior OPSBA staff on a research project. This spring/summer project will be centred around local governance and the roles and responsibilities of public school board trustees. The students will be helping to gather 2022-2026 trustee data and information, and updating Local Government Week resources.

AODA Review Submission

OPSBA received a request to submit feedback for the fourth independent legislative review of the *Accessibility of Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)*. A [dedicated website](#) provides information about the review, including a consultation plan and ways to provide feedback. OPSBA [provided a response](#) on April 19, following consultation with the OPSBA Policy Development and Education Program Work Groups and more than 20 school board accessibility staff leads.

Canadian School Boards Association (CSBA)

[CSBA Congress](#) and the National Trustees Gathering on Indigenous Education is being held from July 3 to 5, 2023, in Banff, Alberta. Registration is now open.

For more information on any of the above reports, please contact OPSBA at inquiry@opsba.org or your school board's OPSBA [Board of Director member](#). The next OPSBA Board of Directors meeting will take place on June 8, at the OPSBA Annual General Meeting at Blue Mountain.