

AGENDA: 6:00 pm

1. Call to Order and Land Acknowledgement
2. O Canada
3. Meeting Roll Call
4. Approval of the Agenda
5. Declarations of Conflict of Interest
6. Confirmation of the Minutes: February 16 and 22, 2021 and March 4, 2021
7. Correspondence:
 - A. HWDSB Safe Schools Bullying Prevention and Intervention Review Panel re: letter to Minister of Education regarding bullying
 - B. Carol Gaudet re: Final Report of the External Investigation for HWDSB
 - C. Natasha Farooq on behalf of collective of concerned educators re: removal of Trustees following investigator's report
 - D. Amanda Charland, Amy Ballinger, Julie Whittaker, Sarah Greenwood, Stephanie Hiltz re: Final External Investigation report

Reports from Trustee Special Committees:

8. Human Resources – March 1, 2021
9. Governance – March 2, 2021
10. Program – March 3, 2021

Reports from Legislated Committees:

11. Special Education Advisory Committee – February 24, 2021

12. Appointment to Committees:

- A. Human Rights & Equity Committee – seeking 1 additional Trustee representative
- B. Program Committee – seeking up to 2 additional Trustee members
- C. Finance & Facilities Committee – appointment of Committee Chair

13. Report from Committee of the Whole (private) – March 15, 2021

14. Oral Reports from Liaison Committees:

- A. City/School Board Liaison Committee
- B. Hamilton-Wentworth Home & School Association
- C. Hamilton Foundation for Student Success (HWDSB Foundation)
- D. Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA)

15. Adjournment

Meeting times and locations are subject to change. Please refer to our website for the latest information.
<http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/trustees/meetings/>

Trustees: All participating electronically - Kathy Archer, Christine Bingham, Becky Buck, Dawn Danko, Penny Deathe, Cam Galindo, Alex Johnstone, Maria Felix Miller, Carole Paikin Miller, and Ray Mulholland.

Regrets were received from Trustee Paul Tut.

1. Call to Order

Dawn Danko, Chair of the Board, called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

2. Declarations of Conflict of Interest

None.

3. Resolution Into Committee of the Whole (Private Session)

RESOLUTION #21-36: Trustee Galindo, seconded by Trustee Bingham, moved: **That the Board move into Committee of the Whole (Private), as per the Education Act, Section 207.2 (b) the disclosure of intimate, personal or financial information in respect of a member of the Board or committee, an employee or prospective employee of the board or a pupil or his or her parent or guardian, this being done at 6:10 p.m.**
CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Meeting returned to public session at 8:10 pm.

Trustees Archer, Buck, Johnstone and Paikin Miller declared a Conflict of Interest during private session and disconnected from the meeting - they did not return to public session following private session.

Reports from:

4. Committee of the Whole –February 16, 2021

RESOLUTION #21-37: Trustee Galindo, seconded by Trustee Miller, moved: **That following the reconsideration motion, the board of trustees have adopted an alternate process to further explore potential code of conduct breaches from the investigation report.**

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

The meeting adjourned at 8:14 p.m.

Trustees: Christine Bingham (electronically), Becky Buck (electronically), Dawn Danko (electronically), Penny Deathe (electronically), Cam Galindo (electronically), Alex Johnstone (electronically), Maria Felix Miller (electronically) and Paul Tut(electronically). Student Trustee Ethan Hesler (electronically) and Fatima Zakar (electronically).

Regrets were received from Trustees Kathy Archer, Carole Paikin Miller, Ray Mulholland and Skylar Seggie.

1. Call to Order

Dawn Danko, Chair of the Board, called the meeting to order at 6:50 p.m.

2. Profiling Excellence

Staff:

OPHEA Gold Healthy School Certification

There are three levels under the OPHEA Healthy School Certification and it is a six-step process to earn the gold certification status. This process highlights the importance of well being and can focus on one of six health concerns. It is about being healthy and staying healthy. The Staff receiving the Profiling Excellence Awards have taken the lead in each of their schools creating healthy spaces and schools within HWDSB. They engage a full school community in addition to staff and the broader community. Congratulations and gratitude were shared with the following recipients:

- Kim Mackenzie, Cootes Paradise
- Taylor Wright, Melissa Rizza, Kathy Jepson, Queen Mary
- Alison Mason, Millgrove
- Jasmine Gaskin, Glen Echo
- John Sheahan, Rachel Roper, W. H. Ballard
- Rosie Kott, Sir William Osler
- Breanne McColman, Earl Kitchener
- Kristin Kawamoto, Sir Wilfrid Laurier

3. Written Delegation: Beatrice Ekoko and community members regarding traffic calming and pedestrian safety on Wilson Street, at the Dr. J. E. Davey Elementary School

RESOLUTION #21-38: Trustee Bingham, seconded by Trustee Miller, moved: **That the correspondence regarding the traffic calming and pedestrian safety on Wilson St. for Dr. J. E. Davey Elementary as well as Hess St. Elementary be referred to the City/School Board Liaison Committee. That a letter be written to the City regarding the impact of the truck route on active, safe and sustainable school transportation.**

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Student Trustee Hesler and Zakar voted in favour

4. Approval of the Agenda:

RESOLUTION #21-39: Trustee Buck, seconded by Trustee Deathe, moved: **That the agenda be approved.**

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Student Trustee Hesler and Zakar voted in favour

5. Declarations of Conflict of Interest

Trustee Buck declared a conflict of interest for item #14.

6. Confirmation of the Minutes: February 2, 2021 and February 8, 2021

The minutes were confirmed.

7. Correspondence: re: External Investigator's report

- A. Hamilton-Wentworth Principals' Council
- B. HWDSB Managers' Leadership Group

Trustee Danko shared the following:

The issues we are facing are highly serious. I believe we need to proceed in a fair manner with honesty and integrity, recognizing we have broken away from our usual processes. As Trustees know, we received the Code of Conduct Investigation Report from the external investigator earlier this month, and we voted to adopt all 12 recommendations for our board. We will be moving forward and working on these key recommendations starting at our Special Governance committee meeting this week.

With respect to the process, we have heard frustration from members of our community to date. While the investigation examined allegations and provided detailed recommendations for the Board, it did not comment on potential code of conduct violations, which is something the Board agrees needs to be addressed.

That is why, as a Board, we have committed to an expedited process to investigate and review potential breaches of the code of conduct and explore sanctions. That process is currently underway and we will report back to the public as soon as possible.

RESOLUTION #21-40: Trustee Miller, seconded by Trustee Johnstone, moved: **That the correspondence be received and filed along with a written acknowledgement of the concerns of the Hamilton-Wentworth Principals' Council and HWDSB Managers' Leadership Group.**

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Student Trustee Hesler and Zakar voted in favour

Trustee Tut left the meeting.

Report from Trustee Special Committees:

8. Program Committee – February 1, 2021

RESOLUTION #21-41: Trustee Buck, seconded by Trustee Miller, moved: **That the Program Committee Report – February 1, 2021 be approved including:**

- Continue to offer, advertise and support the Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM) Programs listed in the Secondary Program Strategy;
- Continue to consider all SHSMs Tier 3 programs with specific boundaries based on program locations and school catchment areas;
- Continue the SHSM development process and open new SHSM programs when there is:
 - Student interest and engagement in the key subject area;
 - Internal school capacity (staff champions, adequate facilities, and course offerings for all pathways);
 - Labour Market Evidence (labour market data) that indicates an employment need in the sector;
 - No foreseeable impact on programs within the school or SHSM programs offered in other schools;
 - Existing partnerships for cooperative education placements, training, and certification programs.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Student Trustee Hesler and Zakar voted in favour

Reports from Legislated Committees:

9. Parent Involvement Committee – February 9, 2021

RESOLUTION #21-42: Trustee Deathe, seconded by Trustee Buck, moved: **That the Parent Involvement Committee Report – February 9, 2021 be received.**

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Student Trustee Hesler and Zakar voted in favour

10. Special Education Advisory Committee – January 27, 2021

RESOLUTION #21-43: Trustee Deathe, seconded by Trustee Johnstone, moved: **That the Special Education Advisory Committee Report – January 27, 2021 be received.**

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Student Trustee Hesler and Zakar voted in favour

Reports from Community Advisory Committees:

11. French as a Second Language Advisory Committee – January 27, 2021

RESOLUTION #21-44: Trustee Buck, seconded by Trustee Bingham, moved: **That the French as a Second Language Advisory Committee Report – January 27, 2021 be received.**

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Student Trustee Hesler and Zakar voted in favour

Trustees Buck declared a conflict of interest and left the meeting.

12. Human Rights & Equity Advisory Committee – February 11, 2021

RESOLUTION #21-45: Trustee Miller, seconded by Trustee Bingham, moved: **That the Human Rights & Equity Advisory Committee Report – February 11, 2021 be received.**

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Student Trustee Hesler and Zakar voted in favour

Trustee Galindo assumed the role as Chair.

RESOLUTION #21-46: Trustee Danko, seconded by Trustee Miller, moved:

- **That the Board refer the concerns of the committee regarding conflict of interest to our Special Governance Committee and the Governance Review that is being adopted by motion of the Trustees and was recommended through the report.**
- **That we respond in writing to acknowledge receipt of the Human Rights & Equity statement that was received by the Board tonight.**

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Student Trustee Hesler and Zakar voted in favour

Trustee Danko resumed the role as Chair.

Trustee Buck rejoined the meeting.

Reports from Staff:

13. School Re-Opening COVID-19 Update #9

Staff presented the report along with a slide presentation to Trustees outlining the latest School Re-Opening Updates.

RESOLUTION #21-47: Trustee Bingham, seconded by Trustee Buck, moved: **That the School Re-Opening COVID-19 Update #9 report be received.**

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Student Trustee Hesler and Zakar voted in favour

14. Committee of the Whole (Private) – February 22, 2021

RESOLUTION #21-48: Trustee Galindo, seconded by Trustee Johnstone, moved: **That the report of the Committee of the Whole (private) – February 22, 2021 be approved including:**

- **That the tentative Collective Agreement between the Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario – Hamilton-Wentworth DECE Local and Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board for the term of September 1, 2019 to August 31, 2022 be approved and amended as per the School Boards Collective Bargaining Act.**

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Student Trustees Hesler and Zakar voted in favour

15. Oral Reports from Liaison Committees:

A. Student Trustee Report – Local Activities & Ontario Student Trustees Association (OSTA) Report

- Student Trustee elections are delayed due to Covid 19 and this will have an impact on the Elementary and Secondary Senate. Currently discussions are underway to formalize a comprehensive plan and additional channels to gather feedback are being considered.
- OSTA held a virtual conference February 18-21, 2021 and the Student Trustees are looking forward to implementing what was learned into Student Senate.

B. Director's Report

The Director, Manny Figueiredo shared that they are moving forward with the Safe Schools Review Panel recommendations. Effective April 1, 2021 there will be some changes within Executive Council:

- Superintendent Stephanian will be Superintendent of Special Assignment reporting to the Director's office. Her main responsibility will be to lead in the Safe School Review Panel recommendations as well as keeping Mental Health and Well-Being in her portfolio.
- Superintendent Denomme will be taking over the Equity and Well-Being portfolio.
- Superintendent Romano will be looking after Public Health.
- An acting Superintendent will be hired to back fill and support Superintendent Denomme's schools.
- Implementing an Equity Action Plan to put in a Human Rights complaint process. Yohana Otite commenced the role of Equity and Human Rights Officer today and will report directly to the Director's office. A Human Rights Investigator will also be hired.

C. Chair's Report

The Chair indicated that the Board Chairs meet with the Minister of Education on a regular basis. Due to the implementation of the new screening and isolation requirements they have requested a list of available resources for the many families who will be impacted by these changes including financial challenges. Trustees have also been participating in ongoing Professional Development including a training session on Islamophobia as well as a training session that was run by Osgoode through OPSBA. Trustees have spent up to 25 hours in training since the Fall.

The meeting adjourned at 9:23 p.m.

Trustees: All participating electronically - Kathy Archer, Christine Bingham, Becky Buck, Dawn Danko, Penny Deathe, Cam Galindo, Alex Johnstone, Maria Felix Miller, Ray Mulholland and Paul Tut. Student Trustee Ethan Hesler was also in attendance.

Regrets were received from Trustee Carole Paikin Miller and Student Trustees Fatima Zakar and Skylar Seggie.

1. Call to Order

Dawn Danko, Chair of the Board, called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m.

2. Declarations of Conflict of Interest

None received.

3. Correspondence

RESOLUTION #21-49: Trustee Galindo, seconded by Trustee Tut, moved: **That the correspondence from Equity Network Dundas, Pakistan Business Association of Hamilton and A. R. be received and filed.**

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

4. Resolution Into Committee of the Whole (Private Session)

RESOLUTION #21-50: Trustee Archer, seconded by Trustee Bingham, moved: **That the Board move into Committee of the Whole (Private), as per the Education Act, Section 207.2 (b) the disclosure of intimate, personal or financial information in respect of a member of the Board or committee, an employee or prospective employee of the board or a pupil or his or her parent or guardian, this being done at 5:40 p.m.**

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Meeting returned to public session at 11:20 pm.

Trustees Archer, Buck, Johnstone declared a Conflict of Interest during private session but remained in the meeting as observers. They did not participate nor attempt to influence the dialogue as witnessed by our Board solicitor.

Reports from:

5. Committee of the Whole – February 16, 2021

RESOLUTION #21-51: Trustee Galindo, seconded by Trustee Bingham, moved: **That the report of the Committee of the Whole (private) – March 4, 2021 be received noting that Trustees have considered proposed breaches of the Trustee Code of Conduct. Trustees have determined recommendations for breaches of the code of conduct, and recommendations for subsequent sanctions, to be brought before the Board in public session.**

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

The following statement was read by the Director of Education:

On August 1st, we became sadly aware that former student trustee Ahona Mehdi, had a terrible experience as a student trustee and made serious allegations regarding trustees, but did not name them. As the Director I have great regret that I was unaware and wasn't able to observe for how she was feeling and for that I have apologized to Ahona and her family.

On August 3rd, Ahona Mehdi, supported by community members, had a press conference in front of HWDSB Ed Centre to share her experiences

The Board of Trustees, at that time acted and asked that I be delegated the responsibility to hire a 3rd party investigator, and as the secretary of the Board, avoid any potential conflict of interests.

On August 17, a third-party investigator, Arleen Huggins, from Koskie Minsky, was retained to conduct an investigation, pursuant to the Trustee Code of Conduct, related to complaints raised by one of our former Student Trustees.

As a Board and as Secretary of the Board, we felt it was vitally important to choose an investigator who had experience with school boards, who had no conflict of interest with any members of the Board, and who had a strong anti-racism and anti-oppression lens.

Given the severity of the concerns raised, the Board determined it was important to proceed with an investigation with or without a formal Code of Conduct complaint and the investigator proceeded with a full and thorough review.

I want to provide some clarification this evening as a statement in my name was put out yesterday that did have some inaccuracies regarding the third-party investigator Arleen Huggins. We did not consult with the third-party investigator regarding this statement. I want to clarify on record this evening the inaccuracies and apologize to Arleen.

When I was delegated a third-party investigator, the expectation was clear that we were hoping to pursue a trustee code of conduct as per our policy. I did learn as Secretary of the Board that the formal complaint by the Student Trustee was not filed for whatever reason and we respected that decision but we continued to move forward with the third-party investigator.

We moved forward with the third-party investigator and developed a protocol to conduct this investigation as everyone thought that it was critical to get to the findings.

The third-party investigator fulfilled the requirements in their mandate and they also provided us with 12 recommendations that the Board has adopted to support Board governance, improvement and equity focus as the draft were already provided at the Governance Committee earlier this week.

The third-party investigator provided as per the protocol which is in the anonymized report in the public in the appendix she provided the nature of the complaints, the summary of information, provided the factual findings and conclusions.

Ultimately as the Board has accepted and as we know that the Education Act clearly identifies that the Code of Conduct breaches and sanctions to be determined is clearly the responsibility of the Board of Trustees.

A reconsideration motion occurred on February 8th to consider the potential breach of the code of conduct and sanctions and approval of this motion expedited an alternative process to determine potential code of conduct breaches and sanctions.

Today the collective Board of Trustees now are going to determine whether there are individual breaches and sanctions to vote on during this evening process the individual Trustees who have breaches and sanctions are reminded that they cannot make any comments and vote on any recommendations regarding themselves.

The Board and as Secretary of the Board we recognize this process has not moved as quickly as the community would like and for that we apologize however it was important to pursue a full and thorough investigation using the code of conduct expectations within the Education Act.

RESOLUTION #21-52: Trustee Bingham, seconded by Trustee Miller, moved: That the meeting be extended by 30 minutes, until 12:00 am.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

6. Reconsideration follow-up related to sanctions

Trustees met tonight to discuss the code of conduct complaints as a result of the third party investigation report.

RESOLUTION #21-53: Trustee Bingham, seconded by Trustee Deathe moved: That for those complaints raised against Trustees Archer and Buck, the Board of Trustees found that there was no breaches of the Trustee Code of Conduct and no sanctions were required.

The motion **CARRIED** on the following division of votes:

For (5): Trustees Bingham, Danko, Deathe, Mulholland and Tut

Opposed (2): Trustees Miller and Galindo

Student Trustee Hesler was opposed.

RESOLUTION #21-54: Trustee Bingham, seconded by Trustee Deathe moved: That for complaints raised against Trustee Johnstone, the Board of Trustees found that there were 2 technical breaches made that were inadvertent and made in error of judgement, but in good faith and do not require sanctions.

The motion **CARRIED** on the following division of votes:

For (4): Trustees Bingham, Danko, Deathe and Mulholland

Opposed (3): Trustees Miller, Galindo and Tut.

Student Trustee Hesler was opposed.

RESOLUTION #21-55: Trustee Deathe, seconded by Trustee Bingham, moved: That the Board finds that in regards to allegations made where Trustee Johnstone failed to stop alleged racist comments made during the June 22, 2020 Board meeting, the Board recommends that this is a breach of the code of conduct, specifically to:

Maintaining the integrity and dignity of office

2. Trustees, as elected officials of the Board, must uphold the dignity of the office and conduct themselves in a professional manner, especially when attending Board events, or while on Board property and shall at all times act with decorum and be respectful of other Trustees, staff, students and the public.

- additional responsibilities of Chair of the Board

Civil behaviour

7. No Trustee shall engage in conduct during meetings of the Board or committees of the Board, and at all other times that would discredit or compromise the integrity of the Board.

- meeting management and comments addressed at a meeting

AND That the Board also finds that that in regards to allegations made where Trustee Johnstone prevented a motion from being tabled at the June 22, 2020 Board meeting, the Board recommends that this is a breach of the code of conduct, specifically to:

Maintaining the integrity and dignity of office

2. Trustees, as elected officials of the Board, must uphold the dignity of the office and conduct themselves in a professional manner, especially when attending Board events, or while on Board property and shall at all times act with decorum and be respectful of other Trustees, staff, students and the public.

Upholding decisions

16. Trustees shall comply with the Board's policies, procedures, bylaws, and the Board's procedural bylaws.
- the right of a student trustee to bring forward a notice of motion

Further, based on the above breaches, the following sanctions are recommended:

- A. Issue a formal letter of Censure of the trustee as an official reprimand
- B. Requesting a formal apology
- C. Requiring the trustee to do additional training on equity, governance and anti-racism training
- D. Barring the trustee from holding any position of Chair on any committees until Initial Board in December 2021.

The motion **CARRIED** on the following division of votes:

For (4): Trustees Bingham, Danko, Deathe, and Mulholland

Opposed (3): Trustees Miller, Galindo and Tut
Student Trustee Hesler was opposed.

RESOLUTION #21-56: Trustee Galindo, seconded by Trustee Miller, moved: That the meeting be extended by 30 minutes, until 12:30 am.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Trustee Mulholland left the meeting.

RESOLUTION #21-57: Trustee Galindo, seconded by Trustee Miller, moved: That in regards to allegations where Trustee Paikin Miller made anti-Muslim remarks to other trustees, the Board recommends that this is a breach of the code of conduct, specifically to:

Maintaining the integrity and dignity of office

2. Trustees, as elected officials of the Board, must uphold the dignity of the office and conduct themselves in a professional manner, especially when attending Board events, or while on Board property and shall at all times act with decorum and be respectful of other Trustees, staff, students and the public.

Upholding decisions

16. Trustees shall comply with the Board's policies, procedures, bylaws, and the Board's procedural bylaws – specifically in complying with Board Policies (including Equity and Inclusion Policy).

AND in regards to the allegation that Trustee Paikin Miller displayed a poor attitude during Human Rights and Equity Advisory Committee meetings, the Board recommends that this is a breach of the code of conduct, specifically:

Maintaining the integrity and dignity of office

2. Trustees, as elected officials of the Board, must uphold the dignity of the office and conduct themselves in a professional manner, especially when attending Board events, or while on Board property and shall at all times act with decorum and be respectful of other Trustees, staff, students and the public.

Civil behaviour

7. No Trustee shall engage in conduct during meetings of the Board or committees of the Board, and at all other times that would discredit or compromise the integrity of the Board

AND in regards to the allegation that Trustee Paikin Miller made comments to the effect that all lives matter, the board recommends that this is a breach of the code of conduct, specifically:

Maintaining the integrity and dignity of office

2. Trustees, as elected officials of the Board, must uphold the dignity of the office and conduct themselves in a professional manner, especially when attending Board events, or while on Board property and shall at all times act with decorum and be respectful of other Trustees, staff, students and the public.

Civil behaviour

7. No Trustee shall engage in conduct during meetings of the Board or committees of the Board, and at all other times that would discredit or compromise the integrity of the Board.

Further, based on the above breaches, the following sanctions are recommended:

- A. Issue a formal letter of Censure of the trustee as an official reprimand
- B. Requesting a formal apology
- C. Requiring the trustee to do additional training on equity, governance and anti-racism training
- D. Barring the trustee from sitting on all committees of the board until the Initial Board December 2021 as long as the required training is completed.
- E. The Board recommends that the trustee resigns so that the Board can uphold the integrity and dignity of the office.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

RESOLUTION #21-58: Trustee Galindo, seconded by Trustee Deathe, moved: That the Officer of Trustee Services request consent for each of the respondents to have their statements be made public and part of the meeting minutes for this Special Board.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

**UPDATE: the responses are attached as an Appendix to the minutes from those who provided consent to release them.*

The following statement was read by Trustee Johnstone:

I am truly sorry for how my actions contributed to the systemic barriers highlighted in the report and, specifically, I apologize to Ahona for the negative experience she had as a Student Trustee.

As Chair, my best thinking at the time guided my actions and decision-making. I thought it was my role to apply the rules equally to everyone; however, equitable application of the rules should be paramount.

I believe we must hold ourselves accountable. It is one of the main reasons I did not seek re-election as Chair. It is also why I stepped down as Chair and committee member of OPSBA-OSTA Liaison Committee, a provincial committee I fought to have established four years ago to ensure youth representation in our provincial trustee organization. While I have taken steps to hold myself to account, and while I am continuing equity training, I willingly accept the Board's sanctions and as part of that, I am stepping down as Chair of Finance & Facilities effective immediately.

I believe, when concerns come to our attention, we must act immediately to remedy them. This is why I reached out to the Anti-Racism Directorate to support the Board after our last Board meeting in June. It is why I arranged anti-racism, anti-oppression training for trustees; and, it is why I began receiving support from the Kojo Institute, an award-winning full-service diversity, inclusion and equity consultancy firm who help me examine my unconscious biases and to build an equity informed approach. Over the remaining five months of my term as Chair, I quietly engaged with this work.

Finally, I have learned that it is not enough to assume the status quo is working. We always need to question the status quo of our processes, procedures and culture so that we proactively work towards inclusion. Equity does not come naturally. It requires proactive work. We all carry bias – often unconsciously – that informs our thinking and every day actions. It is for this reason that I recognize that equity work cannot be done alone. I am deeply committed to doing what I can to improve both the Board and myself by keeping experts and our community partners close.

The meeting adjourned at 12:12 a.m.

MEMORANDUM

27 February 2021

From: Kathy Archer, Trustee, Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board

To: Dawn Danko, Chair, Board of Trustees, Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board

cc: Heather Miller, Secretary to the Board of Trustees

REGARDING E-MAIL/LETTER DATED FEBRUARY 17TH TO K. ARCHER RE CODE OF CONDUCT

I am writing in response to your invitation to respond to your above-referenced email and attached letter.

The Board quite correctly had a third-party investigation conducted following allegations made in August 2020 by Ms. Ahona Medhi, a student Board member at the time, concerning racist comments allegedly made by me at a pre-board meeting dinner roughly eleven months earlier, in September 2019. The third-party report found Ms Medhi's allegations to be unsubstantiated due to insufficient evidence to support. I can only add that I rarely attend these pre-board dinners, and categorically state that I did not attend the dinner in question, nor at any time did I describe any person by the use of the "N-word."

I stand behind the comments that I made at the June 22nd meeting in the matter of determining whether

or not the police program should continue. I did not make the other comments with respect to "Black voices" at that meeting that were attributed to me by Ms Madhi as referred to in the report. My comments in no way sought to "question or devalue marginalized groups" as stated in the investigative report.

To the contrary, I strongly support the report's reference to "the concept of equity," which effectively seeks and supports a diversity of perspectives in the interest of meeting the HWDSB mission to "empower students to learn and grow to their full potential in a diverse world." If my comments of June 22nd that "all students matter and all voices need to be heard" were perceived by some to be offensive or racist, that was in no way my intention, and I'm sorry if I somehow created that impression.

The soon to be conducted HWDSB Student Census, entitled "We all Count" perhaps best encapsulates my views of inclusivity in general and as a HWDSB Trustee in particular.

Kathy Archer, Trustee

To my fellow trustees,

Thank you for allowing me to speak to the allegation made against me by the former Student Trustee.

Like many of you, I was concerned to learn of the experiences that Ms. Mehdi communicated through a series of Tweets on August 1, 2020. In the limited interactions Ms. Mehdi and I shared during the 2019/20 school year, I felt that she and I had gotten along well and had no reason to suspect that she was upset by my votes or comments from our September 30, 2019, or June 22, 2020 interactions.

When I used the term “Twitter Trolls” on the night of June 22, 2020 it was in no way referencing any of the individuals who were expressing concern at the meeting. The term was used to refer to unknown individuals who were creating a hateful discourse about me online. These tweets originated from anonymous and offensive accounts. In no way did my comment refer to those presenting serious concerns that I valued and respected, including the issues of racism that were being raised. I did not intend for my remarks to silence these claims in any way.

In the two weeks before the June 22 meeting, all Trustees received many emails and phone calls, and some of us had been receiving Tweets. In my 18 months as a Trustee (to that point in time), I had never experienced personal messaging on Twitter to the degree that was happening during that timeframe. My interactions on Twitter went from nearly nothing to what felt like a deluge overnight. In some instances, my “handle” was tagged, others it was just my name spelled out (which yields different results when searched). I remember feeling harassed and bullied by some of the comments that had been made over the course of several days and even during the meeting that night.

This was not the only thing I was coping with at the time. Between my day job, overseeing remote learning for my three children, questions and concerns coming in from other parents about remote learning, and personal health issues, June was an exceptionally difficult month. I mention this only to help you understand the tremendous amount of stress I was experiencing personally and professionally during this time. All people would likely agree that the additional stress of the pandemic was taking an exceptional toll.

In the third-party report, you will see language that states I had spoken the term “Twitter trolls” at community activists. This is completely false and this language was imposed by the investigator. I did not admit to saying Twitter trolls at or in reference to community activists.

What I had shared with the investigator was that many who were sharing their opinion on Twitter did so in a matter-of-fact way and were not disparaging. I was not in any way upset with how they shared their opinions. However, there were also others to whom I felt were personally harassing me.

On June 22, as I concluded my time for comments/questions I felt that I had not articulated a particular point as well as I was trying to and realized at that moment that what I had just said was about to be ripped apart by an anonymous group on Twitter who had been harassing me. In the moment of that realization, I said in frustration “let the Twitter trolls have it.”

“Twitter troll” is a common phrase used to describe a person who posts offensive, divisive or argumentative remarks on Twitter. It is not a racist phrase. I did not speak it at community activists but

was referring only to those on Twitter who were using the social platform to post offensive, divisive and argumentative remarks about me personally. There is an important distinction to be recognized between those who were “trolling” Trustees conversation that evening and those who were advocating for their community on this social media platform.

I look forward to continuing the work outlined in the recommendations of the third-party investigator. I look forward to continuing the good work of making HWDSB schools a place where every student feels they belong and are respected. I look forward to the process of healing amongst trustees so that we can get back to a place of functioning as a unified Board.

Respectfully submitted by,

Becky Buck

OPENING

I am truly sorry for how my actions contributed to the systemic barriers highlighted in the report and, specifically, I apologize to Ahona for the negative experience she had as a Student Trustee.

As Chair, my best thinking at the time guided my actions and decision-making. I thought it was my role to apply the rules equally to everyone; however, equitable application of the rules should be paramount.

When concerns come to our attention, we must act immediately to remedy them. This is why I reached out to the Anti-Racism Directorate to support the Board. It is why I arranged anti-racism, anti-oppression training for trustees; and, it is why I began receiving support from the Kojo Institute, an award-winning full-service diversity, inclusion and equity consultancy firm who help me examine my unconscious biases and to build an equity informed approach.

I understand that it is not enough to assume the status quo is working. We always need to question it so that we proactively work towards inclusion. I also recognize that equity does not come without work. We all carry bias. Equity work cannot be done alone. I am deeply committed to doing what I can to improve both the Board and myself by keeping experts and our community partners close.

We must hold ourselves accountable. It is one of the main reasons I did not seek re-election as Chair. It is also why I stepped down as Chair and committee member of OPSBA-OSTA Liaison Committee, a provincial committee I fought to have established four years ago to ensure youth representation in our provincial trustee organization. While I have taken steps to hold myself to account, and while I am continuing equity training, I want the Board to know that I willingly accept sanctions that are within the purview of my fellow trustees to impose.

Alex Johnstone

- 1) Johnstone failed to apply a rule on sharing personal experiences consistently by requesting that the Complainant provide her questions and comments to her in advance of the Board meeting on October 28, 2019, which had the effect of silencing the Complainant.

1a) RESPONSE – Requesting questions & comments:

The intent of my conversations with both Student Trustees was to offer support ahead of a very serious and highly sensitive board meeting concerning the tragic death of a student whose family attended the meeting that night. This is consistent with the Trustee Governance Bylaws, which state that the role of the Student Trustee Mentor is to coach and guide Student Trustees in their general activities related to the school board. I received emails from both Student Trustees, both of whom asked for my feedback. The Complainant did not send me her questions or comments, though. I provided feedback in a phone conversation. The other Student Trustee sent me his comments in an email. As confirmed in the report, one Student Trustee experienced this as silencing while the other Student Trustee experienced this as a supportive conversation.

I am sorry that the Complainant experienced this as silencing. It was not my intent. Upon reflection, I can appreciate how the power dynamics between the Chair and the Student Trustees could make an offer to provide feedback feel like a requirement. The feedback was made in good faith, so I do not believe it is a Code of Conduct violation. Nonetheless, I accept the findings of the report and I fully support the recommendations.

Emails:

From: Ahona Mehdi <smehdi2796@hwdsb.on.ca>
Sent: Sunday, October 27, 2019 3:25:48 PM
To: Alex Johnstone [Trustee] <ajjohnst@hwdsb.on.ca>
Subject: October 28th Board Meeting

Hi Alex,

I hope you're doing well. I've been thinking a lot about tomorrow's meeting this weekend, and I wanted to send you the outline of what I would like to bring forward (like we discussed on Friday). This is an issue that I truly am passionate about and I really do appreciate everything you're doing to bring student voice to the forefront in this issue. That being said, please be brutally honest with me if you find that anything I'm looking to say seems unnecessary or ineffective (and I can alter it.)

Thank you so much,

Ahona

From: Cameron Prosic <cprosic8502@hwdsb.on.ca>
Sent: Monday, October 28, 2019 3:19:12 PM
To: Alex Johnstone [Trustee] <ajjohnst@hwdsb.on.ca>
Subject: Planned points for item 12

Hey Alex,
Here's what I plan on saying about the safe schools report tonight

Let me know your thoughts,
Cam

Cameron Prosic
Student Trustee

1b) RESPONSE – Application of the rule on sharing personal experiences:

Following the Board's Governance Bylaws, both Student Trustees were informed that their comments needed to be issue-based. It was also clarified that the appropriate opportunity to share personal experiences would be to the review panel. The Board's bylaws and the Education Act (2012, c. 11, s. 21.) require that information must be conveyed in a private meeting of the Board when it relates to "the disclosure of intimate, personal or financial information in respect to an employee or prospective employee of the board or a pupil or his or her parent or guardian." At the time, the Student Trustees were both pupils of the board and therefore I understood that it would not be appropriate for them to share personal experiences. At the October 28, 2019, Board meeting, two Member Trustees shared historical personal experiences. I did not caution the two Member Trustees because their references were historic, did not relate to any current Board pupil or staff, and therefore did not contravene the Education Act.

While I believe that the Code of Conduct was upheld properly, I accept the report's findings that the guidance had the effect of being silencing. The board ruling that intimate and personal information relating to pupils and employees must be conveyed in a private meeting restricts student voice. I therefore fully support the recommendations that the Board needs to adopt an EDI approach to Board governance and policy.

- 2) Johnstone acted arbitrarily in denying the Complainant's written notice of motion by first denying her right to bring a motion from the floor with support from a Trustee mover; second, by subsequently failing to provide the Complainant with complete information on how to move the motion forward in writing; third, by directing the Complainant that she had to work on her written notice of motion directly with the Trustee Officer and a Member Trustee and had to name the Member Trustee in the motion; fourth, by failing herself or through the Trustee Officer to confirm with the Member Trustee if they in fact had any doubt that the Member Trustee was the supporter for the Complainant's motion; and

finally, by rigidly applying the Board's procedural rules to deny the Complainant's notice of motion despite past practice of flexibility in this regard.

2) RESPONSE – Denying a written notice of motion:

On June 8, 2019, the Complainant sought to bring a motion to the floor during the Board meeting without written notice. In the meeting and on public record, I consulted the Trustee Liaison Officer for governance procedural advice. Based on the advice, I ruled the motion out of order as per the Board's bylaw that "All motions shall be presented in writing except the motions listed in Bylaws 5.15 (adjourn, call the question, table the matter, refer the matter, met in Committee of the Whole)." Therefore, the Trustee Governance Bylaws were upheld and all reasonable measures were taken to uphold the Governance Bylaws.

In the June 8, 2019, meeting and on public record, I advised the Complainant to work with the Trustee Liaison Officer and a Member Trustee in order to submit a written notice of motion. I made a follow up phone call to the Complainant the next day where I reiterated this information and asked if she had any questions, which she did not. As per the Trustee Governance Bylaws, the Director must receive a written notice of motion before 4 pm on the same day of the week, one week prior to the meeting. It is the practice of the Board that written notices of motion are submitted to the Trustee Liaison Officer through to the Director. The Trustee Liaison Officer provides the trustee with information and guidance about how to ensure that the written notice of motion is in order with Board Bylaws and the Education Act. The advice to the Complainant to work with the Trustee Liaison Officer was to ensure that there was a clear understanding of the governance rules. In February 2019, I offered the same direction to the other Student Trustee and the Trustee Liaison Officer provided him with guidance on how submit a properly written notice of motion according to the Bylaws. Therefore, the Trustee Governance Bylaws were upheld, I applied the rules consistently between the two Student Trustees and I understood that I had fulfilled my duties as Chair.

Email

From: Heather Miller [Staff] <hmill@hwsb.on.ca>
Sent: February 14, 2019 8:35 AM
To: Cam Galindo [Trustee] <cgald@hwsb.on.ca>; Cameron Prosic <cprosic8502@hwsb.on.ca>
Cc: Alex Johnstone [Trustee] <ajjohnst@hwsb.on.ca>
Subject: MOTION - Ontario P.S. Funding Cuts.docx

Alex,

NOM is edited and attached – please review.

If this is good to go I need it by 12 noon tomorrow (Friday).

Heather

Trustee Governance Bylaws require the Chair, in consultation with the Director, to be responsible for the content of the regular and special Board agendas. The decision to deny the Complainant's written notice of motion was made in consultation with the Director, the Trustee Liaison Officer, and the Vice Chair. There were four considerations. First and foremost, the motion was in contravention of the Education Act as it sought to terminate the Board's protocol with municipal police services. As verified in the report by the Director, the Education Act requires that all school boards have a protocol with municipal police services. Second, only a Member Trustee can submit a written notice of motion to the Director; a Member Trustee did not submit the motion. Third, the motion was submitted past the deadline. Finally, a motion that was in order and effectively the same had been put forward by an advisory committee and added to the agenda (hence the ultimate dissolution of the Police Liaison Officer Program).

I maintain that the decision was weighed carefully with the intent of arriving at a decision that was procedurally fair. The Director, the Trustee Liaison Officer and the Vice Chair were each consulted. Further, as Chair, I approved the addition of a similar motion from an advisory committee, which was also late, however it was otherwise in compliance with Trustee Bylaws and the Education Act.

While the Trustee Governance Bylaws were upheld and in good faith, upon reflection I understand the report's findings that I rigidly applied the Board's procedural rules. As noted in my opening statement, I thought it was my role to apply the rules equally to everyone; however, equitable application of the rules should be paramount. I agree with the report's findings and recommendations that as Chair I needed to adopt an equity-informed understanding of Trustee Governance Bylaws, and I will further add a student-centered approach to recognize and compensate for the fact that Student Trustees have fewer privileges than do Member Trustees.

- 3) Johnstone failed to intervene, and failed to adopt an equity-informed understanding of the code of conduct , and should have taken a more active role to stop offensive and racist comments during the June 22, 2020 Board meeting.

3) RESPONSE – Failing to intervene and adopt an equity-informed understanding of the code of conduct:

I agree with these findings and accept full responsibility. Recognizing that I required resources and support to effectively Chair meetings, I reached out to the Anti-Racism Directorate following the Board's final June meeting to request assistance, as appened below.



Alex Johnstone • 11:20 am
Good Morning Ali,

I hope that you are well despite these challenging and unprecedented times. I'm reaching out to you today as I am hoping you can refer me to some anti-racism PD resources for organizational leaders and in particular politicians as it relates to chairing meetings.

At the end of June I Chaired a particularly difficult meeting on cancellating our police liaison program in schools. The issue rose from the community and in particular the BIPOC community. During the meeting some trustees asked questions or made comments that were racist through a lack of knowledge and understanding. Basically I need help to understand what I can do to better support Trustees in advance to prevent these instances, to understand what I can do in those moments (which may require a governance review) and what I can do to support the team following these moments. Most training is for bosses who have management powers. I'm looking for training for Chairs for myself, my Committee chairs and for my entire board of trustees. I'm hoping you might be able to direct me to resources as per your role with the Anti Racism Directorate.

Also I would welcome a phone call if it might be faster and easier to talk by phone

Thanks so much,
Alex

- 4) It is more probable than not that Johnstone implied that the Complainant should raise issues of oppression or anti-racism more gently and in a less challenging manner (like the other Student Trustee) in light of the conclusions.

4) RESPONSE – implied gentle and less challenging manner:

While I do not recall the specific event, I understand that the Complainant felt silenced. While this was at no point my intent, I understand that was my impact, and that impact is more

important than the intent. I accept the findings and I apologize for anything I said or did that made the Student Trustee feel this way.

For the remainder of my term as Chair, I utilized my PD budget to work with the Kojo Institute to better unpack my own bias and everyday actions in upholding systemic racism. I am fully committed to implementing all of the recommendations in order to build a culture of inclusion.

Primary contact:

Dr. Jean M Clinton, BMus MD FRCP(c)

Tel: (905) 317-5868

E-mail: clintonj@mcmaster.ca

Open letter to the Honourable Stephen Lecce
Minister of Education
438 University Ave, 5th Floor
Toronto, ON M7A 1N3

March 4, 2021

Dear Minister Lecce,

We are writing this open letter for two reasons: to share our hope for the future of education and to ask you to help us get there.

This is our hope. Imagine it's 2041 and a group of publicly educated 20-year-olds from across Ontario have been asked how they feel about the years they spent in school. The conversation is animated and positive. They say school made them feel like they belonged. It nurtured their compassion for themselves and others. It helped them grow from their mistakes. It welcomed their contributions. And it prepared them for a world of constant change. They say these things regardless of the school they attended, the colour of their skin, their sexual identity, the faith they practice, their physical or intellectual abilities, the teachers they had or the home they grew up in. Though they came from different places, their shared experience of education was one of caring, inclusion and excellence.

Who are we? We are the members of an independent review panel formed by the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB) to examine bullying prevention and intervention. The panel was created following the tragic death of Devan Bracci-Selvey on school property in October 2019. Our final report, *Building Healthy Relationships and an Inclusive, Caring Learning Environment*, was the result of a year-long review during which we heard from almost 10,000 students, parents, guardians, caregivers, educators, school administrators, board-affiliated groups, community agencies, union reps, bullying experts and concerned citizens. Our work received financial support from the Ministry. Our [final report](#) and [community summary report](#) were approved by the Board of Trustees on January 25, 2021. We are committed to monitoring HWDSB's response and ensuring our recommendations are implemented for the long term.

This is what we learned. Alarming, six out of every 10 students in HWDSB say they were bullied last year. Two out of every 10 students say they were bullied frequently. Students who identify as gender diverse and/or Two-Spirit and LGBTQIA+ report being bullied at up to three times the rate of other students, and there is a clear connection between bullying in HWDSB schools and discrimination in all its forms, including anti-Black, anti-Muslim and anti-Indigenous

racism. Bullying in HWDSB happens between students, staff, families, and at the organization level; it is both interpersonal and systemic. We were told repeatedly of a culture of fear and uncertainty that results in silence, inaction and harm. Everyone is impacted—if not by bullying itself, then by the culture that allows it to thrive—and everyone wants to see positive change.

Bullying is a symptom of a larger problem. When HWDSB accepted our report and committed to taking action on our recommendations, it made tragedy its teacher. But bullying isn't about one student, one school or one school board. And it can't be addressed one incident at a time. There are systemic problems that perpetuate bullying across the province, including racism, inequitable funding mechanisms, inadequate teacher training and pre-service education, and a focus on academic achievement over socio-emotional learning and equity and inclusion. Even system-wide wins such as increased retention and graduation rates, more inclusive classrooms and a commitment to educate every child come at a cost for schools that struggle to meet increasingly complex student needs. Bullying exists, in part, because we have an education system in need of re-design.

Our call to action. It is time for an education system in which healthy socio-emotional development, equity and academic achievement are seen as equal learning priorities and all students feel they are cared for, belong and can contribute within a supportive environment focused on continuous improvement. It is time to reimagine education with new ideas, new approaches and a new moral imperative in which learners are supported in learning, in their education and in society so they become good at learning and good at life.¹

Complex problems need holistic solutions. Education is complex. Tinkering with the system or attempting to deal with individual issues in isolation will not lead to the fundamental transformation that is necessary to prepare the system and the students for a very different future. Such holistic systemic changes require a champion at the highest level. As a result, we're asking you to undertake a comprehensive review of education in Ontario.

Now is the time for an education review. It makes sense to regularly revisit the purpose and delivery of education, and the Ministry has undertaken a comprehensive review approximately every 25 years since the late 60s.

Recent technological and social changes make a review even more pressing. Black Lives Matter, the Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and LGBTQIA+ advocacy have highlighted the harm caused by racism, discrimination and oppression and the costs to children and youth across the province if we don't rethink outdated systems. The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted education to a degree not seen since WWII, underscoring an immediate need to address inequities, student well-being and explore new delivery models, as remote learning becomes the preferred option for some while leaving others behind.

¹ Quinn, J., McEachen, J., Fullan, M., Gardener, M., & Drummy, M. (2019). *Dive into deep learning: Tools for engagement*. Corwin.

We know it's a lot to ask the Ministry to focus on preventing fires when there are so many to put out right now. However, we believe the complex challenges facing our education system are interconnected, and the best way to tackle them is at the same time. Your government has already made significant changes to education. A review, started now, ensures they're your legacy. Postponing a review puts them at risk.

Any delay will be felt well beyond education, since an education system that fails to meet the needs of students will compromise efforts to achieve the government's vision of a stronger Ontario: one with strong civic communities where all people can reach their potential.

We suggest the review process consider:

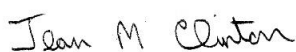
- Reimagining both learning and school structures to address the needs of today's student and move beyond education's industrial, colonial and patriarchal roots.
- Curriculum changes that emphasize human development.
- Teachers' College and other pre-service training that places greater focus on healthy child development, anti-racist socio-emotional learning and skills such as facilitation, coaching and integrated thinking.
- Different delivery models and how to fund them appropriately.
- Ways to address inequities across school boards through changes in funding formulas.
- Ensuring decisions are data-informed, evidence-based and draw from acknowledged best practices.
- Including continuous improvement at all levels of the system.

We're committed to this process. This letter is simply the start of our efforts to see education reform in Ontario. We will continue to share our findings with key stakeholders and will accept all invitations from the Ministry to share our learnings and contribute to next steps—because the only way to move forward is together.

Ontario's public education system is respected around the world, and your actions will protect the gains that have been made to date. Even more important, the 20-year-olds of 2041 will be born this year. They may not know to thank you, but their success in life will be in large part due to your courage to bring together people who care during a time of crisis to renew public education for all.

We welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss how we can reimagine the future of education together.

Respectfully submitted,



Dr. Jean Clinton



Brenda Flaherty



Dr. Gary Warner

HWDSB Safe Schools Bullying Prevention and Intervention Review Panel

COPY:

Donna Skelly, M.P.P. Flamborough-Glanbrook
Nancy Naylor, Deputy Minister of Education
Dawn Danko, Chair, Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board
Manny Figueiredo, Director of Education, Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board

Association des conseillers(ères) des écoles publiques de l'Ontario (ACÉPO)
Association des directions et directions adjointes des écoles franco-ontariennes (ADFO)
Association Franco-ontarienne des conseils scolaires catholiques (AFOCSC)
Children's Mental Health Ontario (CMHO)
Council of Ontario Directors of Education (CODE)
KOJO Institute
Ontario Association of Parents in Catholic Education (OAPCE)
Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association (OCSTA)
Ontario Federation of Home and School Associations (OFHSA)
Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA)
Ontario Safety Advocacy for Education (Ontario SAFE)
Ontario Student Trustees Association (OSTA-AECO)
Parents partenaires en éducation (PPE)
People for Education
School Mental Health Ontario

February 7th 2021

To: HWDSB Trustees, Executive Counsel:

I am writing to express my concern about the recently released Final Report of the External Investigation for HWDSB. I am extremely disappointed that this whole situation happened in Hamilton and especially in a school board by the trustees who are responsible to create learning environments where curiosity, creativity, and possibility are what we strive to create for students.

I was shocked to learn about the decision to remove the names of the offending trustees and not to impose sanctions against them. That this outcome has been agreed upon in my own city, against students like those with whom I work, has left me deeply saddened and concerned for the future of education.

Trustees Becky Buck, Kathy Archer, and Carole Paikin-Miller were found by an independent report to have done/ said racist remarks. As they were under scrutiny, the honorable action would have been to recuse themselves from voting on the report and allow the investigation to proceed without interference. Instead of recusing themselves, they chose self-preservation by voting to impose no sanctions against their racist actions towards students and to remove their names from the public record.

As an educator, I feel a moral obligation to ensure the system in which my students learn, is free from racist ideology. Due to these trustees' actions, this is clearly no longer the case.

How can I, as a voting, tax-paying citizen of Hamilton, feel any confidence that these elected officials will make future decisions in the best interest of students? I no longer feel this confidence and it deeply saddens me.

Trustees Alex Johnstone, Becky Buck, Kathy Archer, and Carole Paikin-Miller, I am appalled that you are not stepping down out of remorse for your actions. I have no confidence that any level of training will help change the racist thought processes which clearly directed your behaviours. HWDSB is an educational institution where adults are expected to protect, nurture and guide young people as they explore their goals and realize their potential. Any level of racism is unacceptable in such an institution which is designed for learning. When racist thoughts, words, or actions are demonstrated toward students, from the people who are making board policies, no less, there is cause for public outrage and grave concern. The people of Hamilton can no longer trust that you will make responsible, caring, inclusive decisions for the students of HWDSB.

On behalf of the BIPOC students you have harmed and all students, who deserve respectful and inclusive educational leadership, I ask that Trustees Alex Johnstone, Becky Buck, Kathy Archer, and Carole Paikin-Miller step down immediately and allow the healing process to begin for all BIPOC people. While you remain in a position of power, healing can not begin.

Please, make the ethical, responsible, and moral decision and step down from your elected positions.

Respectfully,
Carol Gaudet

Sent February 19th 2021

To HWDSB Trustees and members of HWDSB Executive Council:

I am saddened that I feel I must write another letter to express my deep concern regarding the behaviour of some of the HWDSB trustees and my lack of trust that those individuals will look out for the best interests of HWDSB students and the community as a whole.

It is clear that Alex Johnstone, Becky Buck, Kathy Archer, and Carole Paikin-Miller are experiencing no real consequences for the racist actions that were identified in an independent investigation. Their racist actions and words were unethical, unprofessional, and profoundly disturbing.

As individuals in positions of responsibility in a public institution which promotes equity, opportunity, and inclusion, their actions are reprehensible and in direct contrast to the ideals of the office to which they were elected.

In a clear conflict of interest, 3 of these individuals (Buck, Archer, and Paikin-Miller) actually continued to vote in decisions relating to their own actions. That their votes were allowed by Council is difficult to understand; their decision to cast their votes was blatantly self-serving. Now, having been publicly named (although they had also voted to suppress this disclosure), these individuals face an undisclosed “alternative process” as supposed restitution for their racist acts and words. How does the lack of transparency around the “alternative process” instill confidence in the HWDSB and assure families that this will not happen again?

How can HWDSB justify the decision to allow Alex Johnstone, Becky Buck, Kathy Archer, and Carole Paikin-Miller to remain in their positions?

How can these individuals be allowed to represent the interests of BIPOC students when they clearly hold racist views?

How can Johnstone, Buck, Archer, and Paikin-Miller, who have actively discriminated against BIPOC, continue to make decisions which affect the daily work and chosen careers of HWDSB staff?

Simply saying ‘I’m truly sorry’ and ‘We don’t need to talk about this’ is not good enough. We do need to talk about it and we need to continue to talk about it until real change happens, no matter how uncomfortable this may make some people. BIPOC are already uncomfortable and, as a public education institution, HWDSB has a moral obligation and a publicly stated commitment to have these uncomfortable conversations until change happens. Healing will not happen until real change happens.

Once again, I call on Alex Johnstone, Becky Buck, Kathy Archer, and Carole Paikin-Miller to act in a moral and professional way: resign your seats and make space for healing. Your words and actions have done irreparable harm to students, families, and staff in the community and you have lost the trust and respect of the community you were elected to serve.

If the HWDSB is to live out the values it professes, then it must begin by making the way clear for change. Only then can the process of healing and rebuilding begin.

Respectfully,
Carol Gaudet

March 7th, 2021

To: HWDSB Trustees, Executive Counsel:

Again, I am writing this letter to express my disappointment in the leadership of trustees Danko, Bingham, Mulholland, and Deathe for not working to protect HWDSB students from the racist actions of trustees Johnstone, Buck, and Archer. You have demonstrated a complete lack of moral correctness in protecting these trustees who are no longer worthy of making decisions for students and the HWDSB in general.

When we see and hear racism occurring we must stop it and address it with the harshest of responses, not just because it is a nice thing to do but because it is our moral obligation.

Asking trustee Paikin Miller to resign is a good first step but it needs to go further. All 4 trustees, Johnstone, Buck, Archer and Paikin Miller need to step down immediately to allow healing, from the real harm they have caused, to begin. Students should not have to wait to feel safe and supported in their public education system while these people take training on how not to be racist. The entire system exists for students and their wellbeing should be the focus.

By not even acknowledging that Buck and Archer did anything wrong shows a complete lack of understanding around racism and accountability for one's actions. This is disgraceful.

The community is frustrated because the system allows racism to continue. In order to begin to rebuild trust, a real change must happen and unfortunately, this doesn't seem to be occurring. As long as these trustees remain in their seats, I will not trust that the best decisions are being made in the interests of students.

I have to acknowledge the brave and courageous trustees who tried to hold these trustees accountable: Maria Felix Miller, Cam Galindo, Paul Tut and student trustee Ethan Hesler. I thank you for standing up for human rights, even when it is difficult to do so. I thank you for showing integrity in the face of a system that is allowing racism to continue. I thank you for doing what it uncomfortable and thereby showing students that doing what is morally right is not always easy. It has not gone unnoticed that the trustees who are standing up for human rights are also people that belong to racialized and or other vulnerable groups in our society. Not one white adult trustee stood up for human rights and against racism. I think this speaks volumes about the system that continues to negatively impact students.

Please reconsider your decisions and hold trustees Johnstone, Buck, and Archer accountable for their actions by asking them to resign.

Respectfully,
Carol Gaudet

ATTENTION: Manny Figueiredo, HWDSB Director

20 Education Ct,
Hamilton, ON L9A 0B9

Subject: Include this letter in the next board meeting. We demand the Resignation or Removal of Trustees who have made racist comments

Mr. Figueiredo,

We are writing to you today, as a collective of concerned educators who have watched with dismay the events which unfolded over the past few months at Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB).

We speak specifically of the treatment of Ahona Mehdi who experienced a shameful degree of violence during her term as a student trustee within the HWDSB. Instead of encouraging and uplifting a young racialized leader, she was met with racism in the HWDSB. She has been subjected to racial violence, gaslighting, intimidation and abuse which violates every standard of our profession.

Instead of acting conscientiously to stop these egregious actions against minors, under your leadership, the board and trustees doubled-down to cause even more harm by presenting no serious consequences for the abusers and no reparations towards the victim of such violence.

After an independent report substantiated Mehdi's claims, the board still has not removed the trustees in question. We have noted that Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board trustees have recommended that fellow trustee Carole Paikin Miller for Ward 5 resign for Islamophobic comments. This, however, is not enough. We demand that the other 3 trustees named in the investigation resign as well. These are Alex Johnstone - Wards 11 & 12, Kathy Archer - Ward 6, and Becky Buck - Wards 8 & 14.

An apology to the public is not enough. Anti-bias, anti-oppression and anti-racism training after the harm has been done is not enough. These trustees should not have entered the role without a strong anti-oppressive framework; they should leave now following communities' concerns. We cannot entrust trustees to care for the lives of Black, Indigenous and racialized children when they do not already have this knowledge.

The board and trustees have failed to heed students', families', and communities' concerns for months.

As Ontario educators, we cannot stand in silence as we watch another generation of students experience such callous violence at the hands of those who are charged with their care and well-being. As such, we, the undersigned, demand the immediate resignation of trustees Carole Paikin Miller, Alex Johnstone, Kathy Archer, and Becky Buck.

Natasha Faroogh, OCT
L ***** Julius, OCT
Beyhan Farhadi, OCT
Arshdeep Singh Phagoora, OCT
Shawna Rothgeb-Bird, OCT
Mary McMillan, OCT
Navdeep Dhillon, OCT
Alycia Rodrigues, OCT
Cheryl Woolnough, OCT
Thurka ***** , OCT
Vickita Bhatt, OCT

Dear HWDSB,

I am writing to let you know as a HWDSB parent and citizen, I find the actions of the 4 HWDSB Trustees, Alex Johnstone, Becky Buck, Carole Paikin Miller and Kathy Archer inexcusable and the lack of accountability undermines my confidence in the HWDSB.

The HWDSB Trustees racist actions, attitudes, and beliefs inflicted upon one of the HWDSB's students, Ahona Mehdi is a reflection of their attitudes toward all students. People that are comfortable voicing their racism and comfort with racism should not be in these positions.

We are saddened that 3 (Becky Buck, Kathy Archer and Carole Paikin Miller) of the 4 chose to vote on their recourse and that the current chair allowed them to do so without raising any objections. How is this morally sound? The report outlined instances of your Board bullying and acting with racist intentions. Your attempt to cover it up and criticize the author of the report fits a pattern which is appalling. I hear our BIPOC and marginalized students' voices because they have spoken truth to power.

The HWDSB students are expected to adhere to consequences for wrongdoing, and as such we are holding our HWDSB Trustees accountable.

The standards for HWDSB Trustees should at a minimum be the same as for our students, if not at a higher level. There have been numerous code of conduct and ethical violations.

I understand that the Board of Trustees, under the Education Act, has no authority to remove trustees, but as a concerned citizen, I am calling for Alex Johnstone, Becky Buck, Carole Paikin Miller and Kathy Archer to take responsibility and resign.

The complicity that the HWDSB Trustees who supported the above members is also noted. It is also glaring that you are using your positions of power to exploit the process, by gaslighting Ms. Mehdi.

I am going to continue to pay attention and hope that for the sake of all the HWDSB children, 3 of whom are mine, that Alex Johnstone, Becky Buck, Carole Paikin Miller and Kathy Archer resign so that our community can move toward healing.

Regards,

Amanda Charland

Dear HWDSB,

I am writing to advise that the actions of the 4 HWDSB Trustees, Alex Johnstone, Becky Buck, Carole Paikin Miller and Kathy Archer are inexcusable and the lack of accountability undermines my confidence in the HWDSB.

The HWDSB Trustees racist actions, attitudes, and beliefs inflicted upon one of the HWDSB's students, Ahona Mehdi is a reflection of their attitudes toward all students.

We are saddened that 3 (Becky Buck, Kathy Archer and Carole Paikin Miller) of the 4 chose to vote on their recourse and that the current chair allowed them to do so without raising any objections. The report outlined instances of your Board bullied and acted with racist intentions. Your attempt to cover it up and criticize the author of the report fits a pattern which is appalling. I hear our BIPOC and marginalized students' voices because they have spoken truth to power.

The HWDSB students are expected to adhere to consequences for wrongdoing, as such we are holding our HWDSB Trustees accountable.

The standards for HWDSB Trustees should at a minimum be the same as for our students, if not at a higher. There have been numerous code of conduct and ethical violations.

I understand that the Board of Trustees, under the Education Act, has no authority to remove trustees, but as a concerned citizen, I am calling for Alex Johnstone, Becky Buck, Carole Paikin Miller and Kathy Archer to take responsibility and resign.

The complicity that the HWDSB Trustees who supported the above members is also noted. It is also glaring that you are using your positions of power to exploit the process, by gaslighting Ms. Mehdi.

I am going to continue to pay attention and hope that for the sake of all the HWDSB children that Alex Johnstone, Becky Buck, Carole Paikin Miller and Kathy Archer resign so that our community can move toward healing.

Regards,

Amy Ballinger

Dear HWDSB,

I am writing to advise that the actions of the 4 HWDSB Trustees, Alex Johnstone, Becky Buck, Carole Paikin Miller and Kathy Archer are inexcusable and the lack of accountability undermines my confidence in the HWDSB.

The HWDSB Trustees racist actions, attitudes, and beliefs inflicted upon one of the HWDSB's students, Ahona Mehdi is a reflection of their attitudes toward all students.

We are saddened that 3 (Becky Buck, Kathy Archer and Carole Paikin Miller) of the 4 chose to vote on their recourse and that the current chair allowed them to do so without raising any objections. The report outlined instances of your Board bullied and acted with racist intentions. Your attempt to cover it up and criticize the author of the report fits a pattern which is appalling. I hear our BIPOC and marginalized students' voices because they have spoken truth to power.

The HWDSB students are expected to adhere to consequences for wrongdoing; as such we are holding our HWDSB Trustees accountable.

The standards for HWDSB Trustees should at a minimum be the same as for our students, if not at a higher. There has been numerous code of conduct and ethical violations.

I understand that the Board of Trustees, under the Education Act, has no authority to remove trustees, but as a concerned citizen, I am calling for Alex Johnstone, Becky Buck, Carole Paikin Miller and Kathy Archer to take responsibility and resign.

The complicity that the HWDSB Trustees who supported the above members is also noted. It is also glaring that you are using your positions of power to exploit the process, by gas lighting Ms. Mehdi.

I am going to continue to pay attention and hope that for the sake of all the HWDSB children that Alex Johnstone, Becky Buck, Carole Paikin Miller and Kathy Archer resign so that our community can move toward healing.

Regards,

Julie Whittaker

March 11, 2021

Attn: Hamilton Wentworth School Board

I am writing to advise my opinion that the actions of Alex Johnstone, Becky Buck, Carole Paikin Miller and Kathy Archer are inexcusable and the attempts to shift blame and push this under the rug as well as the alarming lack of accountability undermines mine and my children's confidence in the HWDSB.

As a mother of children of colour, I see that the HWDSB Trustees racist actions, attitudes, and beliefs inflicted upon one of the HWDSB's students, Ahona Mehdi is a reflection of their attitudes toward all students. This scares me as it will directly impact my children's views of themselves as well as how they are allowed to be treated within their schools and the board as a whole.

I cannot believe that Becky Buck, Kathy Archer and Carole Paikin chose to vote on their recourse and that the current chair allowed them to do so without raising any objections. The report outlined instances of your Board bullying and acting with racist intentions. Your attempt to cover it up and criticize the author of the report fits a pattern which is appalling. Our BIPOC and marginalized students' voices must be heard and the fact that in 2021, they need to raise them to get treated with respect and dignity is atrocious.

All HWDSB students and staff are expected to adhere to consequences for wrongdoing, as such we are holding our HWDSB Trustees accountable. You need to show that you follow through on your "0 tolerance policy", because as it is right now, the bullies are being given a small tap on the wrists.

My children now have no interest in the Student Trustee position as they realize that they will be left open to bullying and racist behaviour with no guarantee of protection. This is a large setback in Hamilton's journey towards equity.

The standards for HWDSB Trustees should at a minimum be the same as for our students, if not higher. There have been numerous code of conduct and ethical violations.

I understand that the Board of Trustees, under the Education Act, has no authority to remove trustees, but as a concerned citizen, I am calling for Alex Johnstone, Becky Buck, Carole Paikin Miller and Kathy Archer to take responsibility and resign. I understand that you had a meeting and asked that Carole Paikin Miller and that Alex Johnstone offered an apology. We are asking for more definitive actions.

The complicity that the HWDSB Trustees who supported the above members is also noted. It is also appalling that you are using your positions of power to exploit the process, by gaslighting Ms. Mehdi.

I am going to continue to pay attention and hope that for the sake of all the HWDSB children that Alex Johnstone, Becky Buck, Carole Paikin Miller and Kathy Archer do the right thing and resign so that my family and our community can move toward healing.

Regards,

Sarah Greenwood Hamilton, Ontario

Dear HWDSB,

I am writing to advise that the actions of the 4 HWDSB Trustees, Alex Johnstone, Becky Buck, Carole Paikin Miller and Kathy Archer are inexcusable and the lack of accountability undermines my confidence in the HWDSB.

The HWDSB Trustees racist actions, attitudes, and beliefs inflicted upon one of the HWDSB's students, Ahona Mehdi reflects their attitudes toward all students. We are saddened that 3 (Becky Buck, Kathy Archer and Carole Paikin Miller) of the 4 chose to vote on their recourse and that the current chair allowed them to do so without raising any objections.

The report outlined instances of your Board bullied and acted with racist intentions. Your attempt to cover it up and criticize the author of the report fits a pattern which is appalling. I hear our BIPOC and marginalized students' voices because they have spoken truth to power. The HWDSB students are expected to adhere to consequences for wrongdoing, as such we are holding our HWDSB Trustees accountable.

The standards for HWDSB Trustees should at a minimum be the same as for our students, if not at a higher.

There have been numerous code of conduct and ethical violations. I understand that the Board of Trustees, under the Education Act, has no authority to remove trustees, but as a concerned citizen, I am calling for Alex Johnstone, Becky Buck, Carole Paikin Miller and Kathy Archer to take responsibility and resign.

The complicity that the HWDSB Trustees who supported the above members is also noted. It is also glaring that you are using your positions of power to exploit the process by gaslighting Ms. Mehdi.

I am going to continue to pay attention and hope that for the sake of all the HWDSB children that Alex Johnstone, Becky Buck, Carole Paikin Miller and Kathy Archer resign so that our community can move toward healing.

Regards,

Stephanie Hiltz
Dundas, ON

COMMITTEE REPORT (Public)

Presented to: Board

Meeting Date: March 15, 2021

From: Human Resource Committee

Meeting Date: March 1, 2021

The committee held a meeting March 01, 2021 - from 5:30 p.m. – 6:06 p.m. via MS Teams, Hamilton, Ontario, with Penny Deathe presiding.

Members present were: Trustees Penny Deathe (Chair), Dawn Danko, Maria Felix Miller and Alex Johnstone.

INFORMATION ITEMS:**A. EMPLOYEE AND STAFFING – RECRUITMENT UPDATE**

Human Resource Services, in collaboration with our Equity Team, has implemented a number of key strategies to strengthen the Boards' equitable, inclusive, accessible hiring and promotion practices, based on recommendations from the Employment Equity Audit. Staff continue to work closely with community employment partners to promote employment opportunities with the HWDSB and participate in on-going Equity training. Additionally, Staff will meet with various Faculty of Education Deans to review our HWDSB Equity Action Plan and Employment Equity Audit to support the work they are doing to remove barriers for candidates applying to the Faculty of Education.

Since September 2020, over 550 Occasional/Casual Staff have been hired over several Employee Groups. As part of our recruitment and outreach strategy, team members will attend numerous virtual job fairs from December through April with various institutions and organizations throughout Ontario and Quebec.

The Staffing and HR Operations and Professional Development team will continue to work to promote enhanced diversity in hiring and promotion and implementing the Employment Equity Action Plan.

B. EMPLOYEE ATTENDANCE UPDATE

Staff provided the Committee with an update pertaining to employee attendance. For the period from September 01, 2020 to January 31, 2021, there has been an increase of 1.38 days overall for combined personal illness days and COVID-19 related absences for this reporting period when compared to the same period of time in 2019 – 2020. COVID-19 has directly impacted this increase as these absences account for an average .36 days.

Employee Support and Wellness continues to support staff with return-to-work planning and accommodations as well as with COVID-19 related absences to early and safe return-to-work or remote work accommodations. Supporting all staff continues to be a top priority by providing all staff information on our Employee Assistance Program and early intervention and wellness support and resources to support staff.

Respectfully Submitted,
Penny Deathe, Chair of the Committee

COMMITTEE REPORT

Presented to: Board

Date of Meeting: March 15, 2021

From: Governance Committee

Date of Meeting: March 2, 2021

The committee held a meeting from 5:30 p.m. to 6:44 p.m. on March 2, 2021 at 20 Education Court, Hamilton, ON, virtually through MS Teams, with Trustee Paul Tut presiding.

Members present were: Trustees Alex Johnstone, Dawn Danko, Maria Felix Miller, Cam Galindo, and Paul Tut. Also in attendance were Trustees Christine Bingham, Becky Buck and Penny Deathe.

MONITORING ITEMS:**A. Governance Review and Recommendations**

In February, 2021, trustees adopted the recommendations provided by the external investigator and asked that staff report back with what is actionable within the recommendations in terms of timelines.

Staff reviewed the recommendations noting in each case, which part of the recommended action can be done in the short terms and what would be completed as part of a long term plan. Staff noted for Trustees that in order to continue to be transparent with our communities, the plan presented to the Governance Committee would also be posted to our website, under a page titled "Governance Action Plan" (<https://www.hwdsb.on.ca/about/trustees/governance-action-plan/>) and will be updated following each Governance Committee Meeting. The Governance Committee asked if this item could be a standing item on agendas and staff welcome the opportunity to provide regular updates on the action plan.

It was also noted that within the recommendations adopted, reference is made to a Governance Review. Trustees passed a motion earlier this year to conduct a governance review and staff are currently working with community partners who might be able to conduct this review over the next several months.

Respectfully submitted,
Paul Tut, Chair of the Committee

COMMITTEE REPORT

Presented to: Board

Date of Meeting: March 15, 2021

From: Program Committee

Date of Meeting: March 3 2021

The committee held a meeting through MS TEAMS from 5:31 p.m. to 6:47 p.m. on March 3 2021 with Trustee Becky Buck presiding.

Members virtually present were: Trustee Becky Buck, Penny Deathe and Maria Felix Miller. Regrets were received from: Trustee Kathy Archer. Also in Attendance: Trustee Chair Dawn Danko

MONITORING ITEM:**A. Student Learning and Achievement Annual Plan 2020 2021 and Student Learning and Achievement Update**

Staff presented the Report which included:

- An overview of the annual plan for Student Learning and Achievement for 2021-22
- A COVID-19 pandemic update on student achievement for 2020-21
- Appendix A: Professional Learning 2020-21
- Appendix B: Student Achievement and Engagement Data

Staff provided highlights and shared the expanded scope for the two Goals of the 2021 2022 Annual Plan for student learning and achievement noting the adjustment to deliberately include a focus on students who have been historically underserved. New Targets were shared which reflect the expansion of the number of students and the three strategies restated; Investing in People, Leveraging Effective Practices and Refining Measures of Progress.

- Goal # 1 Improving the graduation outcome for all students and closing the gap for those historically underserved
- Goal # 2 Improving the reading achievement of all students and closing the gap for those historically underserved

Staff presented three key strategies being implemented to support Goal #1 Improving the graduation outcome for all students and closing the gap for those historically underserved:

- Differentiated Professional Learning
- Three core instructional practices:
 - Culturally Responsive and Relevant Pedagogy/Indigenous Cultural Safety
 - Blended Learning
 - Personalization
- Progress Monitoring

Noting that the Goal expands grades and focuses on students historically underserved, staff presented the three key strategies being implemented to support Goal # 2 Improving the reading achievement of all students and closing the gap for those historically underserved:

- Differentiated Professional Learning
- Effective reading practices within a comprehensive literacy program
- Progress Monitoring

Graduation and COVID -19 Updates were provided and highlights include:

- 82% five-year graduation rate for students who started Grade 9 with HWDSB in 2014-15 and remained with HWDSB
- 5th consecutive year with HWDSB cohorts achieve a graduation rate at or above 80%
- Credit attainment improved for the first Semester of 2020 -21 from a midterm rate of 84% to 91% at Semester end
- Over 75% of students in Grades 4 to 6 are reading at the provincial standard at the end of Term 1
- Improvement recorded in Reading for Grade 1 students across the entire Board and a continued narrowing of the gap for High Priority Schools

Key supporting Initiatives were identified.

- Graduation Rates
 - Honouring of all five Pathways for students
 - Ongoing commitment to student success
 - Innovation Programming (e.g. SHSM, Co-Op, Dual Credits, Art Smart)
- Credit Attainment During COVID-19
 - Adaptation and adjustment to the rotational model

- Shift from exams to Student Success Days
- Key changes for Semester Two involving morning check in for all Secondary students and 30 minutes of connected time and suggest improved engagement
- Focus of Student Success on Grade 9 students adapting to move to Secondary
- Improved Reading Outcomes
 - Strong Instructional and assessment practices resulting from 4 years of Early Reading Strategy and Support from Reading Specialists.

The Program Committee received the Student Learning and Achievement Annual Plan 2020 2021 and Student Learning and Achievement Update.

Respectfully submitted,
Becky Buck, Chair of the Committee

11-1
Committee Report

Presented to: Board

Meeting Date: March 15, 2021

From: Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)

Meeting date: February 24, 2021

The Committee held a meeting on Wednesday, February 24th beginning at 5:34 pm ending at 7:01 pm, with Vice-Chair Mark Courtepatte presiding.

Members present were Alex Johnstone, Trustee Wards 11 & 12, Cecile Santos-Ayrault, Association for Bright Children of Ontario, Lita Barrie, VOICE for Hearing Impaired Children, Lorraine Sayles, Children's Aid Society of Hamilton, Lynn Vanderbrug, Lynwood Charlton Centre, Mark Courtepatte, Vice Chair, FASD Parent & Caregiver Support Group, Michelle Campbell, Autism Ontario (H-W Chapter), Penny Deathe, Trustee Ward 15, Susi Owen, CNIB Hamilton and Niagara, Tracy Sherriff, Community Living Hamilton, Jessica Malcew, VOICE for Hearing Impaired Children (Alternate)

Regrets: Alyson Kowalchuk P.A.L.S. Parent Advocacy Learning Support Group, Judy Colantino, SEAC Chair, Down Syndrome Association of Hamilton, Lindsay Bray, McMaster Children's Hospital Developmental Pediatrics and Rehabilitation Portfolio

INFORMATION ITEMS:

A. Project SEARCH: Student and Staff Voices

Vesna Frankovich, Project SEARCH Teacher, Trisha Woehrle, Consultant, Cindy Francis, Senior Manager of Human Resources, Project SEARCH Interns and their parents

- Students shared their work experience in HWDSB. Parents spoke about positive changes in their children as a result of this experience
- Cindy shared about the experience with the student that was working in Human Resources

B. SEAC Nomination Letter – Learning Disabilities Association of Halton-Hamilton

- On the motion of Lita Barrie, seconded by Tracy Sherriff, the Committee recommends that Learning Disabilities Association of Halton-Hamilton (LDAH) be added to the Committee **CARRIED**.

C. Durham District School Board Letter – Online Learning Supports/Universal Design for Learning

- On the motion of Michelle Campbell, seconded by Lorraine Sayles, the Committee recommends that the letter from Durham DSB be read and filed **CARRIED**.

MEMBERS' UPDATE

D. Trustees

- Trustee Deathe updated the Committee on the Safe Schools Review Panel Report, the investigation of allegations from student trustee and the Equity Action Plan. Will implement the recommendations that were noted in the HR Equity Audit
- Trustee Johnstone noted that we are conducting an anti-racism and anti-oppression governance review

E. Local Association Representatives

Mark Courtepatte, Vice Chair, FASD Parent & Caregiver Support Group

- Participated in a meeting with Ontario FASD Action Network (OFAN) with Minister Todd Smith. Minister Smith acknowledged concerns, agreed with the importance of increasing awareness, and promised to provide us with an update and definitive actions within 2 weeks. He also advised he will investigate why Ministry of the Attorney General has not moved forward with Sandy's Law
- Link below includes webinar and speaker session information offered for March
- <http://www.hamiltonfasdsupport.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Together-Towards-a-Better-Tomorrow-6.pdf>
- Bill 172 – FASD Education Bill is presently before the Standing Committee on Social Policy. Actions in process to advocate MPPs to support the 3rd/Final reading (timing not known)

F. SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE

Peggy Blair, Superintendent of Specialized Services

- Safe School Review Panel Report: there are recommendations related to special education; more information will be provided at a later date
- Individual Education Plans (IEP):
 - Have been sent home to align with second reporting period
 - Have created a checklist based on the IEP Standards for Principal and Teacher use
 - Are developing IEP Exemplars
 - Will begin migration of IEPs from SPED Assist to Power School Special Program soon
- Personalized Transportation Request Form: revisions to the document are underway

Respectfully submitted
Mark Courtepatte, Vice-Chair