

AGENDA: 7:00 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: December 18, 2023
7. Correspondence
 - A. Waterloo Region DSB re: letter to Minister – Toronto Youth Council Mental Health
 - B. Paul Berton re: Proposed Trustee Policy Manual Revisions

Reports from Legislated Committees:

8. Parent Involvement Committee – December 12, 2023

Reports from Community Advisory Committees:

9. Faith Community Advisory Committee – December 5, 2023
10. Request for Trustee representation to legislative committee – Special Education Advisory Committee
11. Report from Committee of the Whole (private) – January 15, 2024
12. Oral Reports from Liaison Committees:
 - A. City/School Board Liaison Committee
 - B. Hamilton-Wentworth Council of Home & School Associations
 - C. Hamilton Foundation for Student Success
 - D. Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA)
13. 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: Kathy Archer (electronic), Becky Buck, Sabreina Dahab, Amanda Fehrman, Maria Felix Miller, Graeme Noble (electronic), Paul Tut, and Todd White. **Student Trustees** Thomas Lin and Harry Wang.

Regrets: Trustees Dawn Danko, Ray Mulholland, and Elizabeth Wong.

1. Call to Order and Land Acknowledgment

Maria Felix Miller, Chair of the Board, called the meeting to order at 6:19 p.m. and recited the land acknowledgement.

2. Approval of the Agenda

RESOLUTION #23-172: Trustees Fehrman/Tut moved that the agenda be approved.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Student Trustees Lin and Wang voted in favour.

3. Declaration of Conflict of Interest - None

4. Confirmation of the Minutes: November 20, 2023

RESOLUTION #23-173: Trustees Dahab/Archer moved that the minutes from December 4, 2023 be approved as amended.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Student Trustees Lin and Wang voted in favour.

5. Correspondence:

RESOLUTION #23-174: Trustees Tut/Buck moved that correspondence be received and filed.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Student Trustees Lin and Wang voted in favour.

Reports from Trustee Special Committees:

6. Program – November 30, 2023

RESOLUTION #23-175: Trustees Fehrman/Tut moved that the Program Committee report from November 30, 2023 be approved including that staff move forward with developing the one-page resource document (translated into top 10 languages according to the We All Count Student Census) that provides further explanation of the Disproportionality Data Report.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Student Trustees Lin and Wang voted in favour.

7. Governance – December 6, 2023

RESOLUTION #23-176: Trustees White/Fehrman moved that the Governance Committee report from December 6, 2023, be received.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Student Trustees Lin and Wang voted in favour.

Reports from the Legislated Committees:

8. Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) – November 29, 2023

RESOLUTION #23-177: Trustees Dahab/Buck moved that the Special Education Advisory Committee report from November 29, 2023 be received.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Student Trustee Wang voted in favour.
Student Trustee Lin was not in the room for the vote.

Reports from Community Advisory Committees:

9. French as a Second Language Advisory Committee:

RESOLUTION #23-178: Trustees White/Buck moved that the French as a Second Language Advisory Committee report from November 29th, 2023, be received.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Student Trustees Lin and Wang voted in favour.

10. Human Rights & Equity Community Advisory Committee:

RESOLUTION #23-179: Trustees Dahab/Tut moved that the Human Rights & Equity Advisory Committee report from November 29th, 2023, be received.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Student Trustees Lin and Wang voted in favour.

11. Rural Schools Advisory Committee:

RESOLUTION #23-180: Trustees Fehrman/Buck moved that the Rural Schools Advisory Committee report from November 22nd, 2023, be received.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Student Trustees Lin and Wang voted in favour.

12. Standing Committee Report

RESOLUTION #23-181: Trustee Tut/Dahab moved that the Standing Committee report from December 4th, 2023, be approved including that staff proceed with public consultation for the School Year Calendar 2024-2025.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Student Trustees Lin and Wang voted in favour.

13. Oral Reports from Liaison Committees:

A. City/School Board Liaison Committee

There was no update to provide for this committee.

B. Hamilton-Wentworth Council of Home & School Associations

There was no update to provide for this association.

C. Hamilton Foundation for Student Success Meeting December 18th, 2023

Trustee Archer reported that the Foundation started accepting Student Support Grants (SSGs) on October 1st, 2023. As of November 30th, 2023 \$97,000.00 had been approved compared to \$69,000.00 in November of 2022. The Foundation continues to work with donors, funders, and the community to secure required funds. The Hamilton Community Foundation has awarded 49 school-based projects through its Abacus Teacher Small Grants (for students in Gr 6,7,8,9). Tandia Credit Union's Strive for Success Grants awarded a total of \$6,000.00 to 4 schools to support existing or new programs.

D. Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA)

- Trustee Buck participated in the OPSBA Advocacy Day which took place at Queens Park.
- OPSBA is working with CSBA on a template for all provincial Associations to use within their memberships to garner more support for the federal Private Member's Bill C-322 – National Framework for a School Food Program Act and is encouraging all member boards to submit letters to their local Members of Parliament.

- Registration is open for OPSBA's 2024 Public Education Symposium (PES), January 25 and January 26 at the Sheraton Centre in Toronto. Please contact Trustee Officer Miller to register.
- The 2024 Canadian School Boards Association National Trustee Gathering on Indigenous Education and Congress is taking place in Toronto from July 30-31, 2024. OPSBA will be hosting this event.

14. Oral Reports from:

A. Student Trustees Report – Local Activities & Ontario Student Trustees Association Report

- Student Trustee Wang was invited and attended the new Mental Health Advisory group with approximately 20 very passionate students who were also in attendance.
- In those meetings they discussed the role of what the student advisory is, provided an overview of w the board of trustees and how students and the trustees work together.
- Students shared where they go to get help when needed, what resources will eventually be available and where opportunities exist for mental health support.
- Student Wang was also invited to the Equity and Inclusion Student Advisory and is looking forward to future meetings.
- Trustee Lin shared they were involved with students and staff on the review of the student dress code guidelines to provide feedback on the use of student friendly language.
- Student Trustee Lin also shared he has supported many students with interest in the student trustee elections. He is looking forward to the information session and election process happening early next year and calls on all trustees to support students through this process.

B. Director's Report to the Community – [The Year in Review – Looking Back to Look Forward](#)

- The Director shared it is an important time in our school board because of the multi-year strategic plan.
- The Director focused on the previous plan (in place since 2016) that said "We empower students to learn and grow to their full potential. In a diverse world we are committed to learning, equity, engagement, and innovation." This plan had 5 strategic directions: Positive Culture and Well-Being, Student Learning and Achievement, Effective Communication, School Renewal and Partnerships.
- The purpose of looking back is to see what has been accomplished and to close the chapter on those strategic directions, taking a new path forward.
- In April 2022, HWDSB Staff and board of Trustees embarked on a new path forward. With the help of the community (over 3,000 survey respondents) the new multi-year strategic plan was approved for 2023 to 2028.
- The new Mission statement is to ensure that every student experiences a sense of belonging and engages in dynamic learning to reach their potential and build their own future. With the vision statement of Growing Together and the 4 values of: Compassion, Dignity, Trust, and Joy
- 5 Strategic Directions:
 - Upholding Human Rights, Safety and Well-Being
 - Providing Equitable Quality Education
 - Collaborating with Students, Families and Communities
 - Building a Sustainable Education System
 - Reinforcing Indigenous Educational Wellness and Reconciliation
- The official launch with staff of the Multi-Year Strategic Plan is planned for January 17, 2024.
- The Director congratulated Superintendent Jane McPherson on her incredible career and upcoming retirement.

C. Chair's Report

- The Chair also congratulated Superintendent MacPherson on her upcoming retirement.
- Thanked Trustee Archer for her work with the Mountain Kids Club. They host their own version of the Santa Clause parade for children on the Mountain.
- Celebrate Queensdale 75th Anniversary.
- The Chair attended with Trustee Fehrman the Cathy Wever Rotary Club 25th year holiday festivities. Ancaster Highschool students raised \$1K to support this event.
- Chair Miller was invited and attended the Parent Involvement Committee meeting last week and thanked them for all the incredible work they do.
- Thank you to every educator and school-based staff, commend the effort of staff at this time of year to create memories and magic for students.
- Chair Miller wished everyone a peaceful, restorative, relaxing winter break, and all her deepest wishes for a happy New Year.

The meeting adjourned at 7:48 pm.

Reference: [Agenda Package](#) and [Recording](#)



December 18, 2023

The Honourable Stephen Lecce, Minister of Education
Ministry of Education
315 Front Street West, 14th Floor
Toronto, ON, M7A 0B8

Dear Minister Lecce,

At its meeting on October 30, 2023, the Board of Trustees for the Waterloo Region District School Board (WRDSB), agreed to write to you to express support for the Toronto Youth Cabinet's recommendations to improve children and youth mental health across Ontario as recently was supported by the Rainy River District School Board through a letter dated October 24, 2023.

The Toronto Youth Cabinet's recommendations support the WRDSB's Strategic Direction to have students and staff experience positive well-being as part of a caring and inclusive community. The WRDSB has committed to supporting students and staff with their mental, physical, emotional and spiritual health by providing them with the resources they need to support themselves, their peers and the community.

The WRDSB supports the Toronto Youth Cabinet's recommendations:

1. Mandatory Mental Health Literacy in the Curriculum.
2. Mental Health Days for students.
3. Additional mental health clinicians, and student support staff, such as mental health professionals, school psychologists, child & youth workers, social workers, nurses, guidance counsellors, and mental health crisis intervention workers.
4. Collection and reporting of data on mental health supports and services in schools.
5. School-based culturally appropriate mental health screening for all grades.

Minister Lecce, we respectfully request the Ministry of Education consider these recommendations to address child and youth mental health concerns for the WRDSB and other Ontario public school boards.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joanne Weston".

Joanne Weston
Chairperson of the Board of Trustees
Waterloo Region District School Board

cc: WRDSB Trustees and Student Trustees
Ontario Public School Boards' Association Member Board Chairs
Regional Chair, Region of Waterloo
Local Members of Provincial Parliament

January 2, 2024

HAMILTON-WENTWORTH DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

20 Education Court

Hamilton, ON L9A 0B9

Attn: Trustees & Governance Committee:
Elizabeth Wong, Trustee for Ward 1
Sabreina Dahab, Trustee for Ward 2
Maria Felix Miller, Chair & Trustee for Ward 3
Ray Mulholland, Trustee for Ward 4
Todd White, Trustee for Wards 5 & 10
Kathy Archer, Trustee for Wards 6 & 9
Dawn Danko, Trustee for Ward 7
Becky Buck, Trustee for Wards 8 & 14
Amanda Fehrman, Trustee for Wards 11 & 12
Paul Tut, Vice Chair & Trustee for Ward 13
Graeme Noble, Trustee for Ward 15
Harry Wang, Student Trustee
Thomas Lin, Student Trustee

RE: Proposed Trustee Policy Manual Revisions

To whom it may concern:

I am the Editor-in-Chief of Metroland Media Group Ltd., which publishes daily and community news throughout Southern Ontario, including the Hamilton Spectator. I also write on behalf of Cheryl Stepan, regional managing editor of The Hamilton Spectator and associated websites; Greg O'Brien, news director of CHCH TV; and Scott Monich, news director of CHML Radio.

It has come to our attention that the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board ("HWDSB" or the "Board") is considering amendments to its Trustee Policy Manual that would restrict the ability of Trustees to communicate directly with members of the media. We write to voice serious concerns about this proposal.

As you know, as a public body, HWDSB is required to exercise its powers in a manner consistent with the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. Section 2(b) of the *Charter* protects freedom of expression and the freedom of the press, and our courts have held that it should only be restricted in the clearest of cases: *Native Women's Assn. of Canada v. Canada*, [1994] 3 S.C.R. 627 at para. 41.

In our view, the proposed amendment to prohibit trustees communicating with the media without the prior approval/direction of the Chair would unjustifiably violate s. 2(b) of the *Charter*. The Supreme Court of Canada has stated that: "[t]he full and fair discussion of public institutions, which is vital to any democracy, is the *raison d'être* of the s. 2(b) guarantees. Debate in the public domain is predicated on an informed public, which is in turn reliant upon a free and vigorous press": *Canadian Broadcasting Corp. v. New Brunswick (Attorney General)*, [1996] 3 S.C.R. 480 at para. 23.

Further, section 2(b) protects the ability of the press to gather news as well as to report it: *Canadian Broadcasting Corp. v. Lessard*, [1991] 3 S.C.R. 421 at 429-430. As Justice McLachlin stated in that decision,

“[a]n effective and free press is dependent on its ability to gather, analyze and disseminate information, independent from any state imposed restrictions on content, form or perspective except those justified under s. 1 of the *Charter*.”

While it is understood that the Chair of the Board is its official spokesperson, per s. 218.4(e) of the *Education Act*, R.S.O. 1990, c. E.2, reporters often seek the personal opinions of individual trustees. As elected officials who represent the constituents in their respective wards, it is imperative that trustees be available and accountable to the public they represent. The Supreme Court has recognized that the press plays a fundamentally important role as the conduit between the public and public institutions: *Edmonton Journal v. Alberta (Attorney General)*, [1989] 2 S.C.R. 1326 at 1339-1340. Prohibiting trustees from speaking to the media directly and from offering their personal views without prior approval would significantly hamper the media’s ability to keep the public apprised of developments in local politics, lessen the board’s public accountability, and would decrease political participation for the trustees, the press, and the public.

We urge the Board to reconsider these proposals in a way that recognizes and respects the *Charter* right of freedom of expression and the role of the free press in reporting on local government. Should this letter raise any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Sincerely,

Paul Berton
Editor-in-Chief,
Metroland Media Group Ltd.
pberton@thespec.com

Cheryl Stepan
Regional Managing Editor
The Hamilton Spectator
cstepan@thespec.com

Greg O’Brien
News Director
CHCH TV
greg.obrien@chz.com

Scott Monich
News Director
CHML Radio
scott@980cfpl.ca

Committee Report

Presented to: Board

Meeting date: January 15 , 2024

From: Parent Involvement Committee

Meeting date: December 12, 2023

The committee held a PIC meeting on November 14, 2023, from 6:34 pm. to 8:24 p.m. with Chair Mike Palma presiding.

Members Present: Shelley Clemence, Jennifer Csele, Alissa Fairley, Adriana Harris, Leah Ferleyko, Emma Haslam Topping, Heather Lambert Hillen, Laura Mulder, Heidi Oglesby, Mike Palma, Christine Sandor, Christine Schewee, Alissa Shuker, Cindy Stranak, Trustee Amanda Fehrman, Trustee Becky Buck

Regrets: Cindy Bourassa, Kristina Collier, Chantell Crawford, Channah Fonseca Becar, Christine Joseph Davies, Lorraine Lowry, Nikita Mahood, Mehar Nandra, Megan Ryan, Omer Ahmed Sheikh, Cindy Stewart. Cheryl Hue, Mohamed Khamis, Amanda Lloyd, Tim Louks, Katrusia Marunchak, Alyse Nishimura

MONITORING ITEMS:

A. Old Business

Policy Updates

Superintendent Simon Goodacre provided an update related to policy consultations; further information will be brought back to PIC in the new year.

B. New Business

Multi-Year Strategic Plan – Director of Education

Director of Education Sheryl Robinson Petrazzini shared an overview of the new 2023-28 Multi Year Strategic Plan.

Hamilton-Wentworth Council of Home & School Associations

HWCHSA members provided an overview and role of HWCHSA in schools and shared some ways to engage parents that do not require fundraising.

C. Trustees Report

Trustee Amanda Fehrman thanked PIC on behalf of Chair Miller for their time given to share parent voice. Trustee Becky Buck shared MAAP (Math Achievement Action Plan) that Superintendent Estella Jones is the Math lead for the Board, and 46 schools have been identified as priority schools in math. She also shared that the Trustees are completing a self-review and tracking how they are doing after a year as a Board of Trustees, identify strengths and weaknesses. The Student Trustees brought a notice of motion reflecting what he was hearing in the school communities relating to global conflict. The motion asked for staff training and clarification in dress code and fundraising policies. The motion passed unanimously. Trustees will attend the Public Education Symposium (PES) in January for learning.

D. Reports from other Committees

French as a Second Language Advisory Committee

FASLAC was joined by Michelle Lemaire, who shared an overview of the MYSP. The committee reviewed the FSL three-year plan, Right to Read training and Grade 9 destreaming. Access to FSL transportation was brought forward as a topic for future meetings.

Hamilton-Wentworth Council of Home & School

Heather Lambert Hillen shared that HWCHS looks forward to a fundraising follow-up and has meetings scheduled to review procedure for Hold & Secure situations.

Rural Schools Community Advisory Committee

Rural Schools funding has been received and Superintendent MacPherson shared the Rural Schools budget with the RSCAC at their last meeting.

Respectfully submitted,
Mike Palma, Chair

Committee Report

Presented to: Board

Meeting date: January 15, 2024

From: Faith Community Advisory
Committee

Meeting date: December 5, 2023

The committee held a meeting on December 5th, 2023 from 5-6:30 pm via MS Teams with Chair Geoff Cameron presiding.

Members present were: Geoff Cameron, Sukhdeep Dhillon, Nick Sahami, Mahendra Deonarian, Noah Strickland, Pooja Mathuria, Rachel Loewith Rochweg.

MONITORING ITEMS:

A. Election of Chair/Co-Chair

Geoff Cameron self-nominated for Chair. The nomination was accepted, and Geoff was appointed as Chair of the committee.

B. Review of committee purpose, governance, Trustee Policy Manual & HWDSB Code of Conduct

Superintendent Denomme shared an overview of the Board of Trustees Policy Manual and HWDSB Code of Conduct to committee members, along with the groups purpose and alignment to HWDSB's Human Rights Policy and Ontario Human Rights Code Grounds.

C. Terms of Office

Members confirmed their term of office (1 year or 2 years)

D. HWDSB Multi-Year Strategic Plan

Superintendent Denomme introduced elements of the Multi-Year Strategic Plan to set a context of Board priorities moving forward that will guide the System and this committee.

E. Religious Accommodation

Superintendent Denomme spoke to the committee about the potential to engage in conversation around what religious accommodation looks like and could look like in HWDSB.

For example: Trustees have a Board motion around School Year Calendar (SYC) holidays in alignment with days of religious/faith observances. The committee will be consulted on SYC through a visit from Superintendent Simon Goodacre who has oversight.

F. Advisory Discussion

Meeting structure determined: In-person with a hybrid option. Members were invited to submit potential areas of future discussion for the committee. Members are interested to obtain demographic data about HWDSB, particularly regarding faith.

G. Trustee Update

Trustee Buck shared that a Board motion was passed to be responsive to the impact of what is happening in the Mid-East on students. Trustee Buck also shared that there is a Math Action Plan underway to identify gaps in learning and provide supports.

Trustee White shared that the launch of the Multi-Year Strategic Plan will look at specific measurable outcomes and the Board looks forward to receiving feedback and advice from this committee.

Respectfully submitted by
Geoff Cameron, Chair