

OCTOBER 27, 2026

Public Session: 6:00 pm

AGENDA

1. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF TRADITIONAL TERRITORY

2. CALL TO ORDER AND NOTING OF MEMBERS ABSENT

3. DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

4. SINGING OF O'CANADA

5. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Recommended Motion:

"That the Agenda be adopted."

6. APPROVAL OF BOARD MINUTES

Pages 8-12

Recommended Motion:

"That the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the District School Board of Niagara dated August 25, 2026, be confirmed as submitted."

7. DELEGATIONS

8. CEO REPORT TO BOARD

a. Provincial Education Requirements for Ontario School Boards

Pages 13-14

Recommended Motion:

"That the Provincial Education Requirements for Ontario School Boards report be received."

b. Verbal Updates

9. BUSINESS OF THE BOARD

a. Report of the Audit Committee

Pages 15-55

S. Barnett

Recommended Motion:

“That the report of the Audit Committee dated September 21, 2026, be received.”

“That the Regional Internal Audit Status Report be received.”

b. Report of the Ad Hoc Governance Committee

Pages 56-86

N. Beamer

Recommended Motion:

“That the report of the Ad Hoc Governance Committee dated September 22, 2026, be received.”

“That the Policy Governance Framework report dated September 22, 2026, be received.”

“That the report of the Ad Hoc Governance Committee dated October 6, 2026, be received.”

“That Policies i-01: Policy - General; i-02: Policy Committee; i-03: Policy Generating Process be revoked.”

“That Policy i-01: Policy – General be approved.”

“That the Policies listed in Category 1a – For Trustee Approval (attached) as amended are confirmed as ongoing governance policies that will be reviewed cyclically though the Governance Committee or as determined by Policy i-01: Policy Framework.”

“That the Policies listed in Category 1b – For Trustee Receipt (attached) as amended are confirmed as ongoing governance policies that will be received cyclically by the Board or as determined by Policy i-01: Policy Framework.”

“That the Policies listed in Category 2 – Policies to Revoke – Community Facing Resources Exist or is Recommended (attached) are hereby revoked for inclusion in a community facing resource.”

“That the Policies listed in Category 3 – Policies to Revoke – No Community Facing Resource Recommended (attached) as amended are hereby revoked.”

Subject to the Notice of Recommended Motion, below in the agenda, and the approval to be voted on at the November 17, 2026, Board meeting:

“That the By-Laws and Rules of Order be amended as following:

Q-2 No amendment, alteration or addition to the By-Laws shall be made unless written recommendation setting forth the proposed amendment, alteration or addition is given after consideration of the change at a Governance Committee meeting previous to that Board Meeting at which the same comes up for consideration and unless confirmed by two-thirds vote of all the members of the Board.

Q-4 The CEO may make administrative or editorial revisions to the Board By-Laws and Rules of Order and to Board Policies including:

- correction of grammatical, typographical, formatting, or numbering errors;
- updates to position titles, department names, organizational structures, and contact information;
- revisions to terminology, nomenclature, legislation citations, document references, hyperlinks, forms, or cross-references;
- changes required to maintain consistency within the Board By-Laws and Rules of Order and approved Board policies; and
- housekeeping changes that do not materially affect the authority, responsibilities, or substantive requirements established by the Board By-Laws and Rules of Order or Board Policies.

Administrative or editorial revisions to the Board By-laws and Rules of Order or Board Policies will be presented to Trustees for information at the next Board meeting. The requirements for prior notice and confirmation by two-thirds vote as set out in By-Law Q-2 do not apply. The revisions shall take effect immediately upon receipt by the Board.”

“That the Board approve Trustee Honoraria for the period commencing November 15, 2026, in accordance with Ontario Regulation 320/26, Honoraria for Board Members.”

“That commencing November 15, 2026, Board and Statutory Committee Agenda and official approved minutes are posted and remain on DSBN’s public website for a period of the current year plus three years.”

“That, for the purpose of implementing this retention period, Board official approved Minutes from the Board years commencing November 15, 2023, November 15, 2024, and November 15, 2025, be posted to DSBN’s public website; and that such records be removed from the website as they exceed the current Board year plus three-year posting period established by Board policy.”

c. Report of the Special Education Advisory Committee

Pages 87-89

E. Klassen/S. Mitchell

Recommended Motion:

“That the report of the Special Education Advisory Committee dated September 23, 2026, be received.”

d. Report of the Parent Involvement Committee

Pages 90-91

S.Mitchell/O. Riel

Recommended Motion:

“That the report of the Parent Involvement Committee dated September 24, 2026, be received.”

e. Student Trustee and Indigenous Student Trustee Report

Pages 92-93

D. Dong/I. Jones/W.Connor

Recommended Motion:

“That the Student Trustee and Indigenous Student Trustee report be received.”

f. Notice of Recommended Motion:

“Take Notice that in accordance with the Board By-law and Rules of Order section Q-2, the following proposed amendments to the By-Laws and Rules of Order of the District School Board of Niagara will come forward for consideration at the Board meeting scheduled on November 17, 2026, with such amendments to take effect upon the passing of the recommendations contained therein.”

Q-2	No amendment, alteration or addition to the By-Laws shall be made unless written notice recommendation setting forth the proposed amendment, alteration or addition is given <u>after consideration of the change</u> at a <u>Governance Committee</u> meeting previous to that <u>Board Meeting</u> at which the same comes up for consideration and unless confirmed by two-thirds vote of all the members of the Board.
Q-4	<p>Insert New By-Law:</p> <p>The CEO may make administrative or editorial revisions to the Board By-Laws and Rules of Order and to Board Policies including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • correction of grammatical, typographical, formatting, or numbering errors; • updates to position titles, department names, organizational structures, and contact information; • revisions to terminology, nomenclature, legislation citations, document references, hyperlinks, forms, or cross-references; • changes required to maintain consistency within the Board By-Laws and Rules of Order and approved Board policies; and • housekeeping changes that do not materially affect the authority, responsibilities, or substantive requirements established by the Board By-Laws and Rules of Order or Board Policies. <p>Administrative or editorial revisions to the Board By-laws and Rules of Order or Board Policies will be presented to Trustees for information at the next Board meeting. The requirements for prior notice and confirmation by two-thirds vote as set out in By-Law Q-2 do not apply. The revisions shall take effect immediately upon receipt by the Board.”</p>

10. STAFF REPORTS TO BOARD

a. Staffing and Recruitment 2026-2027

Pages 94-95

B. Pyke

Recommended Motion:

“That the Staffing and Recruitment 2026-2027 report dated October 27, 2026, be received.”

b. Responsive Instruction: Early Reading Strategy

Pages 96-97

M. Sendzik

Recommended Motion:

“That the Responsive Instruction: Early Reading Strategy report dated October 27, 2026, be received.”

c. Outdoor Education Annual Report 2025-2026

Pages 98-110

C. Fast

Recommended Motion:

“That the DSBN Outdoor Education Annual Report 2025-2026 be received.”

11. QUESTIONS ASKED OF AND BY BOARD MEMBERS

12. CORRESPONDENCE AND COMMUNICATIONS

Pages 111-114

- a. Correspondence - School Naming for new school in Thorold (Rolling Meadows)
- b. Correspondence - School Naming for new school in Welland (Fairgrounds)
- c. Correspondence - School Naming for new school in Welland (Dain City)
- d. Correspondence from the City of St. Catharines

13. FUTURE MEETINGS

- a. [Board and Committee Meetings](#)
- b. [Days of Significance](#)

14. COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

a. Motion to Move to Committee of the Whole (Private Session)

Motion:

“That the Board do now enter Committee of the Whole.”

b. Motion to Return to Open Board (Public Session)

15. RATIFICATION OF BUSINESS CONDUCTED IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Recommended Motion:

“That the business transacted in Committee of the Whole be now ratified by the Board.”

16. RATIFICATION OF BUSINESS CONDUCTED IN THIS REGULAR MEETING

Recommended Motions:

“That the business transacted by the Board of Trustees at its meeting held on October 27, 2026, be now ratified by the Board.”

“That the Chair and proper officials of the District School Board of Niagara are hereby authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to the business as decided by the Board of Trustees this day.”

17. ADJOURNMENT

MINUTES

TUESDAY, AUGUST 25, 2026

Public Session: 6:00 p.m. – 7:22 p.m.

ATTENDANCE

(*denotes approval received to attend electronically)

BOARD

Kate Baggott (Chair), Sue Barnett, Nancy Beamer, Mike Brousseau, Helga Campbell, Jonathan Fast, Elizabeth Klassen (Vice Chair), *Deanne MacIntosh, Shannon Mitchell, Owen Riel

ADMINISTRATION

Kelly Pisek (Chief Executive Officer), Karen Bellamy, Jennifer Feren, Ann Gilmore, Simon Hancox, Milica Petkovic, Breann Pyke, Melanie Sendzik, Neil Sheard, Stacy Veld

INDIGENOUS STUDENT TRUSTEE

Ivy Jones

STUDENT TRUSTEE

William Connor
Daisy Dong

RECORDING SECRETARY

Jennifer Reid

TECHNICAL SUPPORT

Nate Burns, Lyka Yatco

1. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF TRADITIONAL TERRITORY

Chair Kate Baggott opened the meeting with an Acknowledgement of the Traditional Territory of the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe peoples.

2. CALL TO ORDER AND NOTING OF MEMBERS ABSENT

Chair Baggott called the Regular Meeting of the Board to order at 6:00 p.m. and noted that Deanne MacIntosh was participating virtually. Trustee Lora Campbell was absent as previously approved.

3. DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of conflict of interest.

4. SINGING OF 'O CANADA'

The Board stood during a video performance of '*O Canada*' by the Richmond Street Public School choir.

5. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Moved by Mike Brousseau
Seconded by Nancy Beamer

"That the Agenda be adopted."
CARRIED

6. APPROVAL OF BOARD MINUTES

Moved by Shannon Mitchell
Seconded by Sue Barnett

"That the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the District School Board of Niagara dated June 22, 2026, be confirmed as submitted."

"That the Minutes of the Special Meeting of the District School Board of Niagara dated June 22, 2026, be confirmed as submitted."
CARRIED

7. DELEGATIONS

There were no delegations.

8. CEO REPORT TO BOARD

a. Putting Student Achievement First Act, 2026 – Executive Titles and Roles Update

Moved by Helga Campbell
Seconded by Shannon Mitchell

"That the Putting Student Achievement First Act, 2026 – Executive Titles and Roles Update report be received."
CARRIED

b. Provincial Education Requirements for Ontario School Boards Update

Moved by Nancy Beamer

Seconded by Mike Brousseau

“That the Provincial Education Requirements for Ontario School Boards Update report be received.”

CARRIED

c. Verbal Updates

CEO Pisek shared that DSBN is prepared to welcome over 40,000 students this September. She noted that while heavy rainfall over the summer caused minor damage at some DSBN schools, all sites are ready for the start of the school year.

9. BUSINESS OF THE BOARD

a. Report of the Special Education Advisory Committee

Moved by Shannon Mitchell

Seconded by Helga Campbell

“That the report of the Special Education Advisory Committee dated June 18, 2026 be received.”

CARRIED

Trustee Shannon Mitchell reported that the committee received updates on the Introduction to Special Education Services for kindergarten, the Special Education section on the DSBN website that includes the 2026-2027 Special Education Plan, and the 2026-2027 Special Education budget.

10. STAFF REPORTS TO BOARD

a. Delegation of Authority

Moved by Owen Riel

Seconded by Jonathan Fast

“That the Delegation of Authority report be received.”

CARRIED

CFOO Stacy Veld reported that the delegated authority was not exercised.

b. Student Transportation Update 2026-27

Moved by Nancy Beamer

Seconded by Shannon Mitchell

“That the Student Transportation Update 2026-27 report be received.”

CARRIED

CFOO Veld provided an operational update on student transportation for the 2026-2027 school year that included a kindergarten transportation opt-in process approved by Niagara Student Transportation Services (NSTS) Board of Directors to support safety, and operational planning.

c. Capital Priorities Program

Moved by Owen Riel

Seconded by Helga Campbell

“That the Capital Priorities Program report be received and the three business cases be approved for submission to the Ministry of Education.”

CARRIED

CFOO Veld provided an overview of the submission for capital priorities to the Ministry of Education. The submission includes three priority projects: Port Colborne secondary school new build, an addition at Riverview Public School that includes childcare space, and an addition at Princess Elizabeth Public School with a daycare with 49 infant and toddler spaces.

d. Special Education Plan 2026-2027

Moved by Helga Campbell

Seconded by Sue Barnett

“That the Special Education Plan 2026-2027 be approved as submitted.”

CARRIED

Superintendent Simon Hancox reported that the Special Education Plan is a public document required by the Ministry of Education (MOE) that outlines the programs, services, processes, and supports that are available to students with special education needs across the DSBN. The DSBN 2026-2027 Special Education Plan checklist has been submitted to the MOE and compliant with Ministry expectations and is posted on the DSBN website along with the Parent/Guardian Guide. It was noted that the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) provided important input and feedback throughout the process and DSBN will continue to review and revise to strengthen the plan.

11. QUESTIONS ASKED OF AND BY BOARD MEMBERS

There were no questions asked of and by Board members.

12. CORRESPONDENCE AND COMMUNICATIONS

There was no correspondence or communications.

13. FUTURE MEETINGS

a. [Board and Committee Meetings](#)



- b. [Days of Significance](#)

14. COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

n/a

15. RATIFICATION OF BUSINESS CONDUCTED IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

n/a

16. RATIFICATION OF BUSINESS CONDUCTED IN THIS REGULAR MEETING

Moved by Jonathan Fast

Seconded by Helga Campbell

“That the business transacted by the Board of Trustees at its meeting held on August 25, 2026, be now ratified by the Board.”

“That the Chair and proper officials of the District School Board of Niagara are hereby authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to the business as decided by the Board of Trustees this day.”

CARRIED

17. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:22 p.m.

KATE BAGGOTT

Chair

KELLY PISEK

Chief Executive Officer and Secretary

October 27, 2026

Provincial Education Requirements for Ontario School Boards

INTRODUCTION

This report summarizes the implications of the *Supporting Children and Students Act, 2025* (Bill 33), including its amendments to the *Education Act* governing police-school collaboration together with related provincial requirements for expanded police record check screening.

The memorandum issued on September 11th, 2026, from the Ministry of Education provided provincial direction over police-school collaboration and governance screening. It replaces locally developed police–school board protocols with a standardized provincial model, requires boards to provide police access to school programs where available, introduces Memorandum of Understanding requirements, and expands police record check obligations.

POLICE – SCHOOL COLLABORATION

Standardized Framework

School boards must follow a standardized provincial model rather than negotiate fully local police–school board protocols. Provincial direction will govern when police must be contacted, how school and police investigations proceed in parallel, and the respective responsibilities of school boards and police services. School boards will continue to oversee student safety, school discipline, and school-based investigations, but local collaboration will occur within a more prescriptive provincial framework.

School Resource Officer Programs

Where School Resource Officer (SRO) programs are available through the local police service, boards will be required to provide police access to schools and implement the programs through a formal Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). Currently the Niagara Regional Police (NRP) have the Community Oriented Response and Engagement Unit (CORE) which focuses on youth engagement, community outreach, problem- oriented policing, prevention, accountability and partnership.

The funding is directed to municipal police services, not to school boards. The provincial School Resource Officer Grant (2026–27 to 2028–29) identifies municipal police services as the eligible applicants and supports them in establishing or enhancing SRO programs.



REPORT TO BOARD

School boards are responsible for cooperating with their local police service, providing school access where a program is available, and implementing the required agreement and protocols; however, the announced SRO funding is not a direct school-board allocation.

As stated in previous reports to board, DSBN staff meet quarterly with Niagara Regional Police to discuss processes, opportunities and challenges with the goal always being strengthening our partnership in the best interest of the students we serve.

EXPANDED POLICE RECORD CHECK SCREENING REQUIREMENTS

Police record checks will be required for trustees and all statutory committee members, including members of Audit Committees, Special Education Advisory Committees, Parent Involvement Committees, and school councils. Specifically, a Criminal Record and Judicial Matters Check will be required, which differs from the check required by staff who work with students.

Checks must be renewed every five years, with an annual offence declaration required in intervening years. Existing screening requirements for employees, volunteers, service providers, and student placements remain in place.

CONCLUSION

The memorandum establishes a more standardized and directive provincial approach to police–school collaboration while broadening police record check requirements. Full implementation of the updated provincial model, SRO MoU requirements, and police record check changes are expected during the 2026–27 school year.

DSBN is positioned to implement these requirements through its established relationship with Niagara Regional Police, including regular liaison meetings, identified contacts, and clear processes for urgent matters. As further provincial guidance is released, staff will continue working with NRP to revise the current Memorandum of Understanding and related protocols and to support timely implementation of the expanded screening requirements during the 2026–27 school year.

RECOMMENDED MOTION

“That the Provincial Education Requirements for Ontario School Boards report be received.”

Respectfully submitted,
Kelly Pisek
Chief Executive Officer/Chief Education Officer



MINUTES

Monday, September 21, 2026

Public Session: 5:30 p.m.

ATTENDANCE

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Trustee Sue Barnett (Committee Chair), Board Chair Kate Baggott, Trustee Jonathan Fast, Aung Oo (External Member), Spencer Lee (External Member)

ADMINISTRATION

Kelly Pisek (Chief Executive Officer), Stacy Veld (Chief Finance and Operations Officer), Nicky Westlake (Controller of Finance)

TRUSTEE GUESTS

Trustee Mike Brousseau, Vice Chair Elizabeth Klassen

GUESTS

Andrea Eltherington (RIAT Manager), David Marks (KPMG)

RECORDING SECRETARY

Tamara Lockhart

A. CALL TO ORDER/NOTING OF MEMBERS ABSENT

Chief Finance and Operations Officer (CFOO) Stacy Veld called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. Quorum was met.

CFOO Veld thanked Spencer Lee for his service on the committee and noted the vacancy will be posted.

B. NOMINATIONS AND ELECTION OF CHAIR FOR 2026-27

CFOO Veld explained that Ontario Regulation 361/10 requires Audit Committees to elect a Chair at the first Audit Committee meeting of the new fiscal year. A nomination was received for Trustee Sue Barnett. Trustee Barnett accepted the nomination and was declared Chair of the Audit Committee for the 2026-27 fiscal year.

C. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF TRADITIONAL TERRITORY

Chair Barnett opened the meeting with an Acknowledgement of the Traditional Territory of the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe peoples.



AUDIT COMMITTEE PUBLIC SESSION

Monday, September 21, 2026

D. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Moved by Jonathan Fast

Seconded by Spencer Lee

“That the agenda be approved as presented.”

CARRIED

E. DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST RE: AGENDA

There were no conflicts of interest declared.

F. ANNUAL CONFLICT OF INTEREST FORM

Controller of Finance Nicky Westlake advised that, in accordance with Ontario Regulation 361/10, all Committee members are required to complete a Conflict-of-Interest Declaration form at the first meeting of each fiscal year and submit it to the CFOO’s office.

G. AUDIT COMMITTEE SELF-ASSESSMENT

Controller of Finance Nicky Westlake noted that all Committee members are required to complete an annual self-assessment. Completed assessments are to be submitted to the CFOO’s office and retained on file for the 2026-27 fiscal year.

H. REGIONAL INTERNAL AUDIT STATUS REPORT

Regional Internal Audit Manager Andrea Eltherington presented the RIAT Annual Report which included RIAT’s Purpose, Mandate and Charter, Mission, Vision & Strategy, Annual Independence Confirmation, RIAT Structure & Staffing, Professional Development & Memberships, Quality Assurance and Improvement Program, RIAT Plan and Engagements completed across the Region in 2025-26.

RIAT Manager Eltherington stated that the Charter has been revised to incorporate the new Standards and is based on the model public sector charter developed by the IIA. The charter will be presented annually and should be re-signed where there is a change in one or more of the charter’s signatories (Audit Committee Chair, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and/or Regional Internal Audit Manager). As the current Audit Committee Chair remains unchanged, the Charter does not require re-signing for the 2026-27 school year.

Moved by Kate Baggott

Seconded by Aung Oo

“That the Regional Internal Audit Status Report be received”.

CARRIED



AUDIT COMMITTEE PUBLIC SESSION

Monday, September 21, 2026

CEO Pisek mentioned The Ministry of Education has recently made amendments to Ontario Regulation 521/01 (Collection of Personal Information) related to Police Record Checks (PRCs). The amendments now require boards to collect PRCs from all statutory committee members and School Trustees. This is a new requirement for the 2026-27 school year.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:44 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, November 9, 2026, at 5:30 p.m.





AUDIT COMMITTEE MEMBER

DECLARATION RE CONFLICT OF INTEREST

As set out in Ontario Regulation 361/10 subsection 14 (1):

"Every member of an audit committee shall, when he or she is appointed to the committee for the first time and at the first meeting of the committee in each fiscal year, submit a written declaration to the chair of the committee declaring whether he or she has a conflict of interest as described in subsection 4 (2)"

Subsection 4 (2) states:

"... a person has a conflict of interest if his or her parent, child or spouse is employed by the board".

This Declaration applies to: *Please check one of the following:*

☐

My initial appointment to the Audit Committee

☐

The first Audit Committee meeting for the fiscal year 2026-27

☐

Any other time during my appointment

Please complete when declaring no conflict of interest:

I, _____, declare that I do not have a parent, child or spouse
Print Name
employed by the District School Board of Niagara and therefore have no conflict of interest as
defined in Ontario Regulation 361/10, s. 4 (2), of the *Education Act*.

Please complete when declaring a conflict of interest:

I, _____, declare that I have a conflict of interest as defined
Print Name
in Ontario Regulation 361/10, s. 4 (2), of the *Education Act*, as I have a parent, child or spouse
employed by the District School Board of Niagara.

Dated at St. Catharines, Ontario, this _____ day of _____, 2026

Signature of Audit Committee Member



Audit Committee Self-Assessment 2026-27

The following questionnaire will assist in the self-assessment of the audit committee's (AC) performance. The questionnaire should take less than 30 minutes to complete. When completing the performance evaluation, you may wish to consider the following process:

- Select a coordinator (perhaps the chair of the AC) and establish a timeline for the process.
- You may consider asking individuals who interact with the audit committee members (Regional Internal Audit Manager, Chair of the Board of Trustees, etc.) to also complete the assessment.
- Ask each audit committee member to complete an evaluation by selecting the appropriate response below.
- Consolidate the results into a summarized document for discussion and review by the committee.

If the answer is "Yes" for some criteria and "No" for others, check the box "No" and include comments for those criteria that were not met below each category.

1. COMPOSITION	Yes	No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has appropriately qualified members Has appropriate sector knowledge and diversity of experiences and backgrounds Demonstrates integrity, credibility, trustworthiness, active participation, an ability to handle conflict constructively, strong interpersonal skills, and the willingness to address issues proactively Meets all applicable independence and conflict of interest requirements Participates in continuing education programs for existing members and/or orientation programs for new members 	☐	☐
Comments: <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 40px; margin-top: 5px;"></div>		

2. PROCESSES AND PROCEDURES	Yes	No
Meetings contain the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adequate minutes and report of proceedings to the Board of Trustees Quorum Well prepared members Conducted effectively, with sufficient time spent on significant or emerging issues Respect the line between oversight and management Separate (in camera) sessions with management, internal and external auditors as required Recommendations for the Board of Trustees to adopt and/or approve Feedback to the Board of Trustees regarding their interactions with senior management, internal audit and external audit 	☐	☐
Meetings are appropriately planned/coordinated due to the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preparation of an annual calendar to guide meeting discussions Agenda and related materials are circulated in advance of meetings Held with enough frequency to fulfill the audit committee's duties Encouragement from the audit committee chair for agenda items from board members, management, the internal auditors, and the external auditors Written materials provided to/and from the audit committee are relevant and concise 	☐	☐
An annual self-assessment is conducted and presented to the Board of Trustees	☐	☐
Comments: <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 40px; margin-top: 5px;"></div>		



3. UNDERSTANDING OF THE BOARD, INCLUDING RISKS	Yes	No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has general knowledge about operating risks and risk appetite of the Board of Trustees (e.g. Regulatory requirements, Ministry of Education compliance rules, financing and liquidity needs, school board's reputation, senior management's capabilities, fraud control, school board pressures such as "tone at the top") Reviews the process implemented by management to effectively identify and assess significant risks, and assessed the steps taken to control such risks Reviews the Regional Internal Audit Team's risk assessment and understands the identified risks Considers the school board's performance versus that of comparable school boards in a manner that enhances risk oversight (particularly where significant differences are noted) Takes appropriate action (such as requesting and overseeing special investigations) where information was received that would lead you to believe that a fraudulent or unusual activity has taken place 	☐	☐
Comments:		

4. OVERSIGHT OF FINANCIAL REPORTING PROCESS, INCLUDING INTERNAL CONTROLS	Yes	No
Reviews the financial statements for the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completeness and accuracy Significant accounting policies followed by the board Quality, appropriateness and transparency of note disclosures Identification of related-party transactions Adjustments to the statements that resulted from the external audit Recommendation to the Board of Trustees for their approval 	☐	☐
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is consulted when management is seeking a second opinion or disagrees with the external auditor on an accounting or auditing matter. In the case of a disagreement, the audit committee leads the parties toward resolution Receives sufficient information to assess and understand management's process for evaluating the school board's system of internal controls (environment, risk assessment, information system, control activities, monitoring) Receives sufficient information to understand the internal control testing conducted by the internal auditors and the external auditors to assess the process for detecting internal control issues or fraud. Any significant deficiencies or material weaknesses that are identified are addressed, reviewed, and monitored by the audit committee Recommends to the Board of Trustees that management takes action to achieve resolution when there are repeat comments from auditors, particularly those related to internal controls Makes inquiries of the external auditors, internal auditors, and management on the depth of experience and sufficiency of the school board's accounting and finance staff 	☐	☐
Comments:		



5. OVERSIGHT OF INTERNAL AUDIT AND EXTERNAL AUDIT FUNCTIONS:	Yes	No
Understands the coordination of work between the external and internal auditors and clearly articulates its expectations of each.	☐	☐
INTERNAL AUDIT: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviews the annual and multi-year internal audit plans and makes recommendations for adjustments when appropriate Regularly reviews the internal audit function (e.g. independence, the mandate, activities, structure, budget, compliance with IIA standards and staffing) The internal audit reporting lines established with the audit committee promote an atmosphere where significant issues that might involve management will be brought to the attention of the audit committee Ensures that there are no unjustified restrictions or limitations on the scope of any internal audit Reviews significant internal audit findings, management's action plans to address these findings and the status of action plans presented in earlier meetings 	☐	☐
Comments:		
EXTERNAL AUDIT: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviews the annual external audit plan and provides recommendations, as necessary Oversees the role of the external auditors from selection to termination and has an effective process to evaluate their independence, qualifications and performance Reviews management's representation letters to the external auditors, including making inquiries about any difficulties in obtaining them Reviews significant external audit findings, management's action plans and the status of action plans presented in earlier meetings Reviews and makes recommendations to the board on the audit fees paid to the external auditors Reviews other professional services that relate to financial reporting (e.g., consulting, legal, and tax strategy services) provided by outside consultants Recommends to the Board of Trustees and oversees a policy regarding the permissible (audit and non-audit) services that the external auditors may perform and considers the scope of the non-audit services provided 	☐	☐
Comments:		
6. ETHICS, COMPLIANCE & MONITORING	Yes	No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviews the school board's system for monitoring compliance and reviews any action taken by the board to address non-compliance (compliance with regulatory agencies, Ministry of Education, etc.) Performs an adequate review of any findings of examinations by regulatory agencies or the Ministry of Education Reviews management's procedures for enforcing the school board's code of conduct Oversees the school board's whistleblower process and understands the procedures to prohibit retaliation against whistleblowers Receives sufficient funding to fulfill its objectives and engage external parties for matters requiring external expertise 	☐	☐
Comments:		





INTERNAL AUDIT TEAM

West of Central Region

MEMO

TO: District School Board of Niagara Audit Committee
FROM: Andrea Eltherington, Regional Internal Audit Manager
DATE: September 21, 2026
SUBJECT: Regional Internal Audit Status Report – Open Committee Session

This memorandum will serve to update the Audit Committee of the Regional Internal Audit Team's (RIAT) work since June 9, 2026.

A. RIAT Annual Report

As part of the International Professional Practices Framework (IPPF), RIAT is required to report to the audit committee on their activities. Please see attached the RIAT annual report.



West of Central Regional Internal Audit Team Annual Report – 2025-26

Introduction

The West of Central Regional Internal Audit Team (RIAT) provides independent and objective assurance and advisory services to ten school boards: (1) Halton Catholic District School Board, (2) Halton District School Board, (3) Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board, (4) Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board, (5) Niagara Catholic District School Board, (6) District School Board of Niagara, (7) Waterloo Catholic District School Board, (8) Waterloo Region District School Board, (9) Wellington Catholic District School Board, and (10) Upper Grand District School Board.

RIAT's work is guided by two main sources:

- The Regional Internal Audit Charter (Charter) (see Appendix A)
- Mandatory elements of the Institute of Internal Auditors (IIA) International Professional Practices Framework (IPPF), including the Global Internal Audit Standards¹ (Standards) and Topical Requirements (containing mandatory requirements for evaluating and assessing the effectiveness of governance, risk management, and control processes on specific risk topics²).

The IIA's newest standards came into effect on January 9, 2025. The West of Central RIAT has been working toward full implementation in 2025/26 having identified gaps between the current and previous versions of the standards.

In following this guidance, the West of Central RIAT has prepared an Annual Report to the Audit Committee for 2025-26. This report communicates information required by the Charter and/or IPPF (along with other relevant information), including:

- A description of RIAT's mandate and function
- RIAT's mission, vision and strategy
- Annual confirmation of RIAT's independence
- Professional development undertaken
- Quality assurance activities undertaken and results of these

¹ Further details on the IPPF and its mandatory elements can be found on the [IIA website](#).

² As of October 31, 2025, Topical Requirements have been issued for Cybersecurity and Third Party

Further, it supports the Audit Committee's duties related to internal audit, as outlined in subsection 9(3) of Ontario Regulation 361/10 (Audit Committees)³.

Purpose Statement, Mandate and Charter

RIAT's purpose statement and mandate are defined in the charter adopted by all English-language RIATs across the province. The charter has been revised to incorporate the new Standards and is based on the model public sector charter developed by the IIA (with modifications made based on RIAT's specific circumstances). The updated charter has been presented for agreement/approval by the Audit Committee.

The charter will also be presented annually as a refresher (Appendix A) and should be re-signed where there is a change in one or more of the charter's signatories (Audit Committee Chair, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and/or Regional Internal Audit Manager).

Mission, Vision and Strategy

IIA Standard 9.2 (Internal Audit Strategy) now requires RIAT to develop and implement a strategy for the regional internal audit function and present this to the Audit Committee and senior management periodically.

A province-wide strategic plan was developed for RIAT, including common goals, based on work previously completed by MNP on behalf of the RIATs.

See Appendix B for the Strategic Plan, which captures RIAT's mission, vision and strategy.

Annual Independence Confirmation

In accordance with IIA Standard 7.1 (Organizational Independence) and RIAT's charter, we confirm that RIAT is organizationally independent and free from interference in determining the scope of internal audits, performing work, and communicating results.

To ensure organizational independence, RIAT reports:

- Functionally to each Audit Committee of the ten boards in the West of Central Region; and
- Administratively to the Senior Business Official of the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (the host board).

In addition to the above reporting structure, the Regional Internal Audit Manager meets with the ten School Business Officials (SBO's) 1-2 times a year to assist in the coordination of the regional internal audit initiative for the West of Central boards and to facilitate discussions and action where required. Two meetings were held in 2025-26.

³ [Ontario Regulation 361/10: Audit Committees](#)

RIAT Structure & Staffing

RIAT consists of the:

- Regional Internal Audit Manager – Andrea Eltherington, CIA, CRMA, CISA
- Senior Regional Internal Auditor – Cathy DeLuca, CPA, CA
- Senior Regional Internal Auditor – Don Luce CIA, CISA, CRISC, CISM, CC, PMP
- Senior Regional Internal Auditor – Brad Sisson, CIA candidate
- Internal Audit Consultant (through Mason staffing) – John Mocarski

All staff are appropriately qualified. The senior auditors report directly to the manager.

Beginning in the 2025-26 fiscal year, the Ministry of Education has increased the annual funding for regional internal audit teams provincially. As a result, the West of Central expanded its headcount, as follows:

- One FTE for a Senior Regional Internal Auditor (permanent)

This position was filled in January 2026 by Brad Sisson.

In addition to the staff noted above, RIAT allocates a portion of its budget toward consulting fees, which allows the flexibility to co-source or outsource when a specialist or additional capacity is required. In 2025-26, RIAT engaged the following consultant to complete or assist in the following engagements:

- MNP – Business Continuity Planning (outsourced)
- MNP – 2 Strategic Risk refreshes (outsourced)

Annual funding from the Ministry of Education was sufficient to support the West of Central RIAT's approved audit plans in 2025-26 which are resource based. However, as the budget is set by the Ministry there is no opportunity to increase funding or resources as required by IIA standard 10.1 and 10.2 creating a limitation for these standards.

Professional Development and Memberships

IIA Standard 3.2 (Continuing Professional Development) requires internal auditors to maintain and continually develop their competencies to improve the effectiveness and quality of internal audit services through continuing professional development. This includes fulfilling the requirements applicable to certifications held by auditors (minimum number of continuing professional development hours annually, including an ethics training requirement). All RIAT staff have confirmed that they met the continuing education requirements of their respective certifications for 2025-2026. RIAT staff in 2025-2026 participated in a variety of courses that

covered a number of relevant topics. Training courses listed by staff member are listed in Appendix C.

Staff continue to be members of the OASBO Internal Audit Committee, the Municipal Internal Auditors Association (MIAA) and the IIA.

Quality Assurance and Improvement Program

Both the charter and Standards require RIAT to report on the quality assurance and improvement program (QAIP), which includes ongoing internal assessments and a periodic external assessment to assess conformance with the Standards. The following is an update on RIAT's progress in these areas:

- Internal Assessments – Quality is assessed internally through ongoing monitoring and review activities, both at the engagement level and overall. Annually, RIAT undertakes an internal self-assessment on its conformance with the Standards. The current year's self-assessment took the form of an update to the gap assessment to the new Standards. This involved comparing existing operations to the updated requirements and developing action plans to close gaps and achieve conformance. There was a gap presentation to each of the ten Audit Committees between January and June 2025. An update to the gap assessment was presented to the 10 boards' School Business Officials in February 2026.
 - There were three significant gaps noted that affect conformance with three of the fifty-two standards. Action plans have been developed to address these. See Appendix D.
- External Assessment – A contractor was engaged to perform an assessment for the common RIAT elements (see Appendix E). The result of the assessment is that we are in general conformance with the standards which is a pass. The RIAMs are investigating becoming QA trained to be able to perform file reviews between the regions. This is likely to occur in 2026-2027.

RIAT Plan & Activities

The Ministry of Education issued guidance in May 2016 (memorandum 2016: B10), requiring that each school board receive a minimum of two assurance or advisory engagements a year from the RIAT (or a comprehensive engagement covering at least two processes), in addition to follow-up activities on recommendations or management's action plans from previously issued reports. For each board in the region, RIAT prepares an annual audit plan based on a risk assessment that also considers feedback from management and the Audit Committee. The plan is presented to the Audit Committee for recommendation to the Board of Trustees for approval.

An update is provided at each Audit Committee meeting to communicate the progress toward completing planned engagements, as well as an update on any follow-up activities.

Engagements Completed Across the Region in 2025-26

RIAT was impacted by a staffing shortage in 2025-26 (down 1.0 FTE). Given the additional funding announced (as noted above), this has now been addressed.

The following engagements were started/completed in the West of Central Region in 2025-26:

- Entity Level Assessment
- Business Continuity (outsourced)
- Legislative Compliance
- Equity Audit Readiness Assessment
- Strategic Risk Assessment Refresh (outsourced) - 2
- Human Resources and Payroll
- Student Mental Health
- Community Use of Schools
- Attendance Support
- Strategic Risk Assessment (outsourced) – deferred until 26/27
- Staff Mental Health & Wellness

Some of the audits listed above were deemed the equivalent of two audits as they addressed multiple risks. In addition to the engagements listed above, RIAT completed follow-up procedures, risk assessments and audit plans at each of the ten boards.

Based on the approved audit plans, 14 audit or advisory engagements are expected to be completed across the region in 2026-27, along with follow-up activities at each board. In year audit plan approvals could occur if necessary.

Appendix A – Regional Internal Audit Charter

Purpose

The purpose of the regional internal audit team is to strengthen the ability of the district school boards in the West of Central Region to create, protect, and sustain value by providing the Audit Committee of the Board of Trustees (Audit Committee) and management with independent, risk-based, and objective assurance, advice, insight, and foresight.

The regional internal audit function enhances the district school board's:

- Successful achievement of its objectives.
- Governance, risk management, and control processes.
- Decision-making and oversight.
- Reputation and credibility with its stakeholders.
- Ability to serve the public interest.

The regional internal audit function is most effective when:

- Internal auditing is performed by competent professionals in conformance with The IIA's Global Internal Audit Standards™, which are set in the public interest.
- The regional internal audit team is independently positioned with direct accountability to the Audit Committee.
- Regional internal auditors are free from undue influence and committed to making objective assessments.

Commitment to Adhering to the Global Internal Audit Standards

The regional internal audit team will adhere to the mandatory elements of The Institute of Internal Auditors' International Professional Practices Framework, which are the Global Internal Audit Standards and Topical Requirements. The Regional Internal Audit Manager will report annually to the Audit Committee and senior management regarding the regional internal audit team's conformance with the Standards, which will be assessed through a quality assurance and improvement program.

Mandate

Authority

The regional internal audit function is established by the Ministry of Education through the annual Core Education Funding. The role of the Audit Committee towards the regional internal audit function is established by Ontario Regulation 361/10, "Audit Committees", subsection 9(3).

The regional internal audit team's authority is created by its direct reporting relationship to the Audit Committee. Such authority allows for unrestricted access to the Audit Committee.

The Audit Committee authorizes the regional internal audit team to:

- Have full and unrestricted access to all functions, data, records, information, physical property, and personnel pertinent to carrying out internal audit responsibilities. Regional internal auditors are accountable for confidentiality and safeguarding records and information.
- Allocate resources, set frequencies, select subjects, determine scopes of work, apply techniques, and issue communications to accomplish the regional internal audit function's objectives.
- Obtain assistance from the necessary personnel of the district school board and other specialized services from within or outside the district school board to complete internal audit services.

Independence, Organizational Position, and Reporting Relationships

The internal audit function follows a regional model. The function consists of a Regional Internal Audit Manager responsible to district school boards in one of the eight regions in the province of Ontario as identified by the Ministry of Education.

The Regional Internal Audit Manager (acting as the Chief Audit Executive (CAE) and/or Head of Internal Audit) will be positioned at a level in the school board that enables internal audit services and responsibilities to be performed without interference from management, thereby establishing the independence of the regional internal audit team. (See "Mandate" section.) The Regional Internal Audit Manager will report functionally to each audit committee in the region and be administratively (for example, day-to-day operations) supported by a host school board Senior Business Official. This positioning provides the organizational authority and status to bring matters directly to senior management and escalate matters to the Audit Committee, when necessary, without interference and supports the regional internal auditors' ability to maintain objectivity.

The functional reporting relationship between the Regional Internal Audit Manager and each Audit Committee will be further demonstrated by each Audit Committee performing the following functions for their Board:

- Approve the regional internal audit charter;
- Recommend for approval the risk based internal audit plan;
- Receive information from the Regional Internal Audit Manager about the internal audit activity performance to plan and other relevant matters;
- Inquire of the Regional Internal Audit Manager whether there are resource or scoping limitations; and
- Review annually the performance of the regional internal audit activity and provide the Board of Trustees with their comments regarding the performance of the Regional Internal Audit Manager.

The Regional Internal Audit Manager will interact directly with the Audit Committee, including in-camera sessions and between audit committee meetings as appropriate.

The Regional Internal Audit Manager will confirm to the Audit Committee, at least annually, the organizational independence of the regional internal audit team. If the governance structure does not support organizational independence, the Regional Internal Audit Manager will document the characteristics of the governance structure limiting independence and any safeguards employed to achieve the principle of independence. The Regional Internal Audit Manager will disclose to the Audit Committee any interference regional internal auditors encounter related to the scope, performance, or communication of internal audit work and results. The disclosure will include communicating the implications of such interference on the regional internal audit team's effectiveness and ability to fulfill its mandate.

Changes to the Mandate and Charter

Circumstances may justify a follow-up discussion between the Regional Internal Audit Manager, Audit Committee, and senior management on the regional internal audit mandate or other aspects of the regional internal audit charter. Such circumstances may include but are not limited to:

- A significant change in the Global Internal Audit Standards.
- A significant reorganization within the district school board.
- Significant changes in the Regional Internal Audit Manager, Audit Committee, and/or senior management.
- Significant changes to the district school board's strategies, objectives, risk profile, or the environment in which it operates.
- New laws or regulations that may affect the nature and/or scope of internal audit services.

Audit Committee Oversight

To establish, maintain, and ensure that the regional internal audit function has sufficient authority to fulfill its duties, the oversight role of the Audit Committee over the regional internal audit function is outlined in Ontario Regulation 361/10, "Audit Committees", subsection 9(3).

Further, subsection 10(c) of the regulation allows private meetings between the regional internal audit team and the Audit Committee members without senior management present.

Note: Funding for the regional internal audit function is determined by the Ministry of Education annually through the Core Education Funding.

Regional Internal Audit Manager Roles and Responsibilities

Ethics and Professionalism

The Regional Internal Audit Manager will ensure that regional internal auditors:

- Conform with the Global Internal Audit Standards, including the principles of Ethics and Professionalism: integrity, objectivity, competency, due professional care, and confidentiality.
- Understand, respect, meet, and contribute to the legitimate and ethical expectations of the organization and be able to recognize conduct that is contrary to those expectations.
- Encourage and promote an ethics-based culture in the organization.
- Report organizational behavior that is inconsistent with the organization's ethical expectations, as described in applicable policies and procedures.

Objectivity

The Regional Internal Audit Manager will ensure that the regional internal audit function remains free from all conditions that threaten the ability of regional internal auditors to carry out their responsibilities in an unbiased manner, including matters of engagement selection, scope, procedures, frequency, timing, and communication. If the Regional Internal Audit Manager determines that objectivity may be impaired in fact or appearance, the details of the impairment will be disclosed to appropriate parties.

Regional internal auditors will maintain an unbiased mental attitude that allows them to perform engagements objectively such that they believe in their work product, do not compromise quality, and do not subordinate their judgment on audit matters to others, either in fact or appearance.

Regional internal auditors will have no direct operational responsibility or authority over any of the activities they review. Accordingly, regional internal auditors will not implement internal controls, develop procedures, install systems, or engage in other activities that may impair their judgment, including:

- Assessing specific operations for which they had responsibility within the previous year.
- Performing operational duties for the district school board or its affiliates.
- Initiating or approving transactions external to the regional internal audit function.
- Directing the activities of any district school board employee that is not employed by the regional internal audit function, except to the extent that such employees have been appropriately assigned to the regional internal audit team or to assist regional internal auditors.

Regional internal auditors will:

- Disclose impairments of independence or objectivity, in fact or appearance, to appropriate parties and at least annually, such as the Regional Internal Audit Manager, Audit Committee, management, or others.
- Exhibit professional objectivity in gathering, evaluating, and communicating information.
- Make balanced assessments of all available and relevant facts and circumstances.
- Take necessary precautions to avoid conflicts of interest, bias, and undue influence.

Managing the Regional Internal Audit Function

The Regional Internal Audit Manager has the responsibility to:

- At least annually, develop a risk-based regional internal audit plan that considers the input of the Audit Committee and senior management. Discuss the plan with the Audit Committee and senior management and submit the plan to the Audit Committee for review and approval.
- Communicate the impact of resource limitations on the regional internal audit plan to the Audit Committee and senior management.
- Review and adjust the regional internal audit plan, as necessary, in response to changes in the district school board's business, risks, operations, programs, systems, and controls.
- Communicate with the Audit Committee and senior management if there are significant interim changes to the regional internal audit plan. Submit all proposed major changes to the regional internal audit plan to the Audit Committee for approval.
- Ensure internal audit engagements are performed, documented, and communicated in accordance with the Global Internal Audit Standards.
- Follow up on engagement findings and confirm the implementation of recommendations or action plans and communicate the results of internal audit services to the Audit Committee and senior management as available.
- Ensure the regional internal audit function collectively possesses or obtains the knowledge, skills, and other competencies and qualifications needed to meet the requirements of the Global Internal Audit Standards and fulfill the regional internal audit mandate.
- Identify and consider trends and emerging issues that could impact the district school board and communicate to the Audit Committee and senior management as appropriate.
- Consider emerging trends and successful practices in internal auditing.
- Establish and ensure adherence to methodologies designed to guide the regional internal audit function.
- Ensure adherence to the district school board's relevant policies and procedures unless such policies and procedures conflict with the regional internal audit charter or the Global Internal Audit Standards. Any such conflicts will be resolved or documented and communicated to the Audit Committee and senior management.
- Coordinate activities and consider relying upon the work of other internal and external providers of assurance and advisory services. If the Regional Internal Audit Manager cannot achieve an appropriate level of coordination, the issue must be communicated to senior management and if necessary escalated to the Audit Committee.

Communication with the Audit Committee and Senior Management

The Regional Internal Audit Manager will report annually to the Audit Committee and senior management regarding:

- The regional internal audit function's mandate.
- The regional internal audit plan and performance relative to its plan.
- Significant revisions to the regional internal audit plan.
- Potential impairments to independence, including relevant disclosures as applicable.
- Results from the quality assurance and improvement program, which include the regional internal audit function's conformance with The IIA's Global Internal Audit Standards and action plans to address the regional internal audit function's deficiencies and opportunities for improvement.
- Significant risk exposures and control issues, including fraud risks, governance issues, and other areas of focus for the Audit Committee that could interfere with the achievement of the district school board's strategic objectives.
- Results of assurance and advisory services.
- Resource requirements.
- Management's responses to risk that the regional internal audit function determines may be unacceptable or acceptance of a risk that is beyond the district school board's risk appetite.

Quality Assurance and Improvement Program

The Regional Internal Audit Manager will develop, implement, and maintain a quality assurance and improvement program that covers all aspects of the regional internal audit function. The program will include external and internal assessments of the regional internal audit function's conformance with the Global Internal Audit Standards, as well as performance measurement to assess the regional internal audit function's progress toward the achievement of its objectives and promotion of continuous improvement. The program also will assess, if applicable, compliance with laws and/or regulations relevant to internal auditing. Also, if applicable, the assessment will include plans to address the regional internal audit function's deficiencies and opportunities for improvement.

Annually, the Regional Internal Audit Manager will communicate with the Audit Committee and senior management about the regional internal audit function's quality assurance and improvement program, including the results of internal assessments (ongoing monitoring and periodic self-assessments) and external assessments. External assessments will be conducted at least once every five years by a qualified, independent assessor or assessment team from outside the district school boards served by the regional internal audit team; qualifications must include at least one assessor holding an active Certified Internal Auditor® credential.

Scope and Types of Internal Audit Services

The scope of internal audit services covers the entire breadth of the district school board, including all of the district school board's activities, assets, and personnel. The activities and processes within the scope are captured in the audit universe. The scope of internal audit activities also encompasses but is not limited to objective examinations of evidence to provide independent assurance and advisory services to the Audit Committee and management on the adequacy and effectiveness of governance, risk management, and control processes for the district school board.

The nature and scope of advisory services may be agreed with the party requesting the service, provided the regional internal audit function does not assume management responsibility. Opportunities for improving the efficiency of governance, risk management, and control processes may be identified during advisory engagements. These opportunities will be communicated to the appropriate level of management.

Internal audit engagements may include evaluating whether:

- Risks relating to the achievement of the district school board's strategic objectives are appropriately identified and managed.
- The actions of the district school board's officers, directors, management, employees, and contractors or other relevant parties comply with the district school board's policies, procedures, and applicable laws, regulations, and governance standards.
- The results of operations and programs are consistent with established goals and objectives.
- Operations and programs are being carried out effectively, efficiently, ethically, and equitably.
- Established processes and systems enable compliance with the policies, procedures, laws, and regulations that could significantly impact the district school board.
- The integrity of information and the means used to identify, measure, analyze, classify, and report such information is reliable.
- Resources and assets are acquired economically, used efficiently and sustainably, and protected adequately.

Approved by the Audit Committee of the *(name of school board)* at its meeting on [date].

Acknowledgments/Signatures

(insert your title here)

Date

Audit Committee Chair

Date

~~Director of Education~~ Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or designate Date

APPENDIX B – RIAT Strategic Plan, as developed province-wide for RIAT that includes Mission, Vision and Strategy (as per IIA Standard 9.2)

Mission Statement: The mission of the RIAT model is to provide independent, objective assurance and advisory services that support the achievement of each school board's objectives by providing them with reasonable assurance on the reliability of their internal controls, the management of their risks and the quality of governance processes.

Vision Statement: Increase collaboration and information sharing across all RIATs to increase efficiency, ensure timely, high-quality service delivery and demonstrate our value as a key partner to the school boards we serve, as well as to Audit Committees.

Strategy:

The West of Central Team has developed 5 goals (see below) and a detailed action plan for each goal.

1. Develop common tools and methodologies that can be utilized by all RIATs.
2. Identify and develop collaboration opportunities with school boards and Audit Committees.
3. Develop a shared schedule of professional development activities for all RIATs.
4. Enhance the timeliness of engagement completion, while clearing the backlog of prior-year engagements.
5. Achieve general conformance with the Global Internal Audit Standards.

APPENDIX C – Training by RIAT Staff Member in 2025/26

Objective:

1. To report on RIAT compliance to Global Internal Audit Standards, January 2024, Standard 3.2 Continuing Professional Development.
2. To define training plans to develop and maintain professional competencies.

Completed 2025-26

Auditor	Training Focus	Date
All Auditors	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. OASBO Internal Audit 2. Relevant seminars/websites on fraud, ethics, privacy and IT Security offered by the various institutes. 	On-going and when relevant throughout the year
Andrea Eltherington	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Maximizing Internal Audit Quality, Performance and Value 2. Harnessing the Power of AI in Internal Audit 3. Emerging Trends and Strategic Opportunities that Maximize Internal Audit's Value 4. MIAA Fall Conference 5. Guardians of Integrity: The Critical Role of Internal Audit in Ethics and Fraud 6. RIAT Conference 7. Strategic Insights into Audit Planning and Risk Assessments in the Public Sector 8. Transforming Internal Audit with Intelligent Analytics 9. OASBO Finance Conference 10. Innovative Procurement Auditing: Third Party Risks 11. Health Sleep Habits 12. 2026 AI CyberSecurity Summit 13. MIAA Spring Conference 14. Closing the Decision Gap: How Risk-Informed Decisions build Digital Trust 15. ISACA Toronto Annual Summer Conference 16. HWDSB Leadership Learning Lab (focussed on AI) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. September 17, 2025 2. September 23, 2025 3. September 23, 2025 4. October 22-24, 2025 5. November 20, 2025 6. December 3-5, 2025 7. January 21, 2026 8. February 10, 2026 9. March 5, 2026 10. April 15, 2026 11. April 20, 2026 12. April 21, 2026 13. April 27, 2026 14. May 28, 2026 15. June 17-18, 2026 16. August 27, 2026
Dondon Luce	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Certified Information Security Manager Exam 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. September 14, 2025

	2. Cybersecurity for Critical Infrastructure Protection	2. November 7, 2025
	3. Understanding AI Audits: Key Risks and Best Practices	3. November 10, 2025
	4. Implementing a Central AI Management System: Navigating ISO 42001 Compliance	4. November 11, 2025
	5. Scenario Planning 101: From uncertainty to actionable insight and executive buy-in	5. November 12, 2025
	6. The Road Ahead: Top Five Cybersecurity Predictions for 2026	6. November 12, 2025
	7. Responsible AI: Navigating Privacy, Security, and Accountability in Modern AI Systems	7. December 16, 2025
	8. Strategic Insights into Audit Planning and Risk Assessments in the Public Sector	8. January 21, 2026
	9. Cybersecurity: From Cost Center to Competitive Advantage	9. January 27, 2026
	10. AI and Cybersecurity in 2026: What Auditors, Implementers, and Organizations Must Prepare For	10. January 29, 2026
	11. Navigating the New Risk Landscape: AI, Governance and the Path to Maturity	11. February 4, 2026
	12. Smarter Audit Reports in the Age of AI	12. February 18, 2026
	13. Project Management Professional Exam Preparation	13. March 22, 2026
	14. Applying AI to Streamline Communication and Reporting	14. March 26, 2026
	15. Project Management Professional Certification	15. March 31, 2026
	16. Stop Chasing Alerts: Automating Email Security with Behavioral AI Roundtable	16. April 9, 2026
	17. Securing Remote and Hybrid Workforces Without Killing Productivity	17. April 15, 2026
	18. Planning and Performing Audits of Suppliers and Contractors	18. April 15, 2026
	19. IIA Topical Requirements: Tips and Tricks from CAEs for Conforming and Performing	19. April 15, 2026
	20. Beyond the Cybersecurity Topical Requirement: What Public Sector Internal Auditors Should be Asking	20. April 29, 2026
	21. Ethical Resilience in Internal Auditing: A Research-Based Framework to Reduce Bias	21. May 21, 2026
	22. Mastering Presentation Skills for Auditors & Managers	22. June 9, 2026

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 23. Agentic AI: How Internal Audit Should Be Preparing 24. Resilience in Action: From Compliance Checkbox to Strategic Continuity 25. The agentic blueprint: Architecting secure multi-agent workflows for modern GRC 26. Governing the autonomous enterprise: Balancing AI agent innovation with accountability 27. Beyond the heat map: Transitioning to continuous and proactive risk reporting 28. The continuous chain: Managing third-party risk in an interconnected ecosystem 29. Implementing and Reporting on AI Governance 30. AI for NIST, ISO 27001, and CMMC Compliance: Opportunities and Pitfalls 31. The Authentic Auditor: Elevating Value through Inclusion 32. Algorithmic Accountability- What Internal Auditors Need to Know About Auditing AI Systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 23. June 10, 2026 24. July 8, 2026 25. July 8, 2026 26. July 8, 2026 27. July 9, 2026 28. July 9, 2026 29. July 28, 2026 30. July 30, 2026 31. August 4, 2026 32. August 20, 2026
Cathy DeLuca	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Nudging your way to faster and more effective improvements to internal controls 2. Cybersecurity and IIA Standards: A Practitioner's Perspective 3. Beyond automation: The role of AI in modern internal auditing 4. 2025 MIAA fall workshop 5. Microsoft 365 Copilot QuickStart 6. Understanding AI audits: Key risks and best practices 7. Internal controls: What works, what doesn't and how to plug the holes 8. It's 2026! Five internal audit resolutions to navigate the year ahead 9. Automating the grind: Transforming control testing with innovative IA solutions 10. The top 5 GenAI use cases for internal audit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. September 24, 2025 2. September 30, 2025 3. October 7, 2025 4. October 23 & 24, 2025 5. October 30, 2025 6. November 10, 2025 7. November 18, 2025 8. January 7, 2026 9. January 14, 2026 10. January 21, 2026

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 11. How small audit teams can achieve big results 12. AI-generated audit evidence: The digital counterfeit 13. Navigating 2026: Top emerging risk for audit, risk, and compliance executives 14. 2026 MIAA spring workshop 15. Beyond audit: How leading organizations are connecting audit, risk, compliance, and cyber 16. Anatomy of a breach 17. Bill 72, Buy Ontario Act: What this means for Ontario DSBs and the road ahead 18. Workplace law update: AI, criminal records, and more! 19. Mastering presentation skills for auditors and managers 20. Ethics in action: real decisions, real consequences 21. From quiet potential to bold impact: unlocking leadership in internal audit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 11. January 22, 2026 12. March 5, 2026 13. March 31, 2026 14. April 27, 2026 15. May 6, 2026 16. May 14, 2026 17. May 14, 2026 18. May 14, 2026 19. June 9, 2026 20. June 29, 2026 21. July 14, 2026
Brad Sisson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. CIA Designation Part 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Foundations of Internal Auditing b. Ethics and Professionalism c. Governance, Risk Management, and Control d. Fraud Risks 2. CIA Designation Part 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Engagement Planning b. Information Gathering, Analysis, and Evaluation c. Engagement Supervision and Communication 3. OASBO Finance and IA Workshop 	<p>CIA Part 1 - completed May 2026</p> <p>CIA Part 2 – ongoing</p> <p>March 4, 2026 – March 5, 2026</p>

Planned 2026-27

Auditor	Training Focus	Date
All Auditors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. OASBO Internal Audit 2. Relevant seminars/webinar on fraud, ethics, privacy and IT Security offered by the various institutes. 3. MIAA fall training 	On-going and when relevant throughout the year



**INTERNAL
AUDIT TEAM**
West of Central Region

Acronyms

ACFE – Association of Certified Fraud Examiners

IIA – Institute of Internal Auditors

ISACA – Information System Audit and Control Association

CIA – Certified Internal Auditor

CPA – Chartered Professional Accountant

CISA – Certified Information Systems Auditor

MIAA – Municipal Internal Auditors Association

AICPA – Association of International Certified Professional Accountants

IMA – Institute of Management Accountants



APPENDIX D – RIAT Gap Analysis to Latest Institute of Internal Auditors Standards

Per presentation to SBO's, February, 2026:

Gap	Standard	Proposed Action	Update as of September 2026
External Quality Assessment	4.1 Conformance with the Global Internal Audit Standards 4.2 Due Professional Care 8.3 Quality 8.4 External Quality Assessment 11.2 Effective Communication 12.1 Internal Quality Assessment	Investigate the cost of an External Quality Assessment	This is underway and the common elements report is included as Appendix E.
RIAM meets with the AC independently – not at all boards	6.3 Board and Senior Management Support 7.1 Organizational Independence	Work with SBO's to ensure that there a mechanism to fulfill this requirement	In progress
Resource Limitations	10.1 Financial Resource Management 10.2 Human Resources Management	Document limitation as per Public Sector exceptions to the Standards	Complete. Documented in the RIAT Structure & Staffing section of this document.

APPENDIX E – Common Elements QA report

Ontario Regional Internal Audit Teams (RIATs)

Limited Scope External Quality Assessment (EQA) Report (focused on common documents)

Date of Evaluation: September 2026
Prepared By: Neel Shah, Independent Consultant



ASSESSMENT CONCLUSION – Strengths, Opportunities, and Next Steps

Conformance Assessment on the Common Documents

OVERALL RATING – Common elements only

GENERALLY CONFORMS

Under the IIA standards, the rating of “Generally Conforms” is considered a pass. The common documents reviewed as part of this assessment are in general alignment with the IIA Global Internal Audit Standards. Minor opportunities exist to enhance documentation and fully operationalize the Global Internal Audit Standards.

An external quality assessment (EQA) is intended to cover both design and implementation. For these common elements, details around implementation will be managed by the RIATs themselves as part of a peer review approach.

Key Strengths

- Most individual requirements assessed as part of this limited scope assessment were at the “Fully Conforms” level.
- Strong adherence to IIA standards despite the unique and challenging regulatory obligations and structure applicable to the RIATs.
- The intent and goals of the RIAT model have been considered in depth.

Key Opportunities

- The approach around advisory engagements should be clarified, with any deviations in the approach that differ from IIA standards being clearly articulated.
- The role of the RIAT and the role of internal auditors or other compliance professionals at an individual board level could be clarified.
- The identification and inclusion of sample performance metrics would encourage individual RIATs to measure performance in a more comparable manner.

Next Steps

- As part of the planned peer review process, each RIAT must consider the full breadth of IIA standards, including the ones covered in this report, to ensure that implementation is present at both the function and engagement level.



SCOPE & EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

EQA-Mirror Assessment Approach

Scope of Review

- All 5 Domains, 15 Principles, and 52 Standards of the Institute of Internal Auditors' (IIA) Global Internal Audit Standards (GIAS) were assessed, and then limited to the items that were most closely aligned to the common elements. The full list of standards reviewed is covered in Appendix A, along with the corresponding achievement rating.
- Evaluation of the common templates for the Internal Audit Manual (including mandate and charter) provided by the RIAT, and Ontario Regulation 361/10.
- The scope of review was limited to the above key common documents, and did not include interaction with all RIATs. Assessment of implementation at each RIAT will be covered through a peer review model. Interviews were conducted with Andrea Eltherington, RIAM, West of Central and Paula Hatt, Sr. RIAM, Toronto and Area to gain a high-level understanding of how the documents work within the RIAT model.

Methodology & Stakeholder Inputs

To ensure absolute objectivity, this External Quality Assessment was executed using the identical criteria and rigor of an independent External Quality Assessment (EQA), referencing the latest IIA Quality Assessment Manual (QAM), but limited to the noted scope.

An external quality assessment (EQA) is intended to cover both design and implementation. For these common elements, details around implementation will be managed by the RIATs themselves as part of a peer review approach.



CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN & ROADMAP

Path to the achievement to strengthen Conformance, specific to the common documents

Action Item 1: Performance Metrics

The RIATs will research applicable performance metrics and include the results in the annual report as appropriate.

Owner: Paula Hatt, Sr. RIAM, Andrea Eltherington, RIAM | Target Date: Q4 2027 | Priority: Medium

Action Item 2: Standards Alignment

The RIATs will review all of the items identified as general conformance is Appendix A and update the manual/charter as appropriate to enhance the value of RIAT to the School Boards and to address key opportunities to strength alignment with the IIA Standards.

Owner: Paula Hatt, Sr. RIAM, Andrea Eltherington, RIAM | Target Date: Q4 2027 | Priority: Medium



APPENDIX A: List of requirements covered in this assessment

Requirements and ratings (limited to review of common documents only)

6.1.b	In those jurisdictions and industries where the internal audit function's mandate is prescribed wholly or partially in laws or regulations, the internal audit charter must include the legal requirements of the mandate.	Generally Conforms
6.1.d	The chief audit executive must document or reference the mandate in the internal audit charter, which is approved by the board.	Fully Conforms
6.2.a	<p>The chief audit executive must develop and maintain an internal audit charter that specifies, at a minimum, the internal audit function's:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose of Internal Auditing. • Commitment to adhering to the Global Internal Audit Standards. • Mandate, including scope and types of services to be provided, and the board's responsibilities and expectations regarding management's support of the internal audit function. (See also Standard 6.1 Internal Audit Mandate.) • Organizational position and reporting relationships. (See also Standard 7.1 Organizational Independence.) 	Fully Conforms



APPENDIX A: List of requirements covered in this assessment

Requirements and ratings (limited to review of common documents only)

7.1.a	The chief audit executive must confirm to the board the organizational independence of the internal audit function at least annually. This includes communicating incidents where independence may have been impaired and the actions or safeguards employed to address the impairment.	Fully Conforms
7.1.b	The chief audit executive must document in the internal audit charter the reporting relationships and organizational positioning of the internal audit function, as determined by the board.	Fully Conforms
7.1.c	The chief audit executive must discuss with the board and senior management any current or proposed roles and responsibilities that have the potential to impair the internal audit function's independence, either in fact or appearance.	Fully Conforms
7.1.d	The chief audit executive must advise the board and senior management of the types of safeguards to manage actual, potential, or perceived impairments.	Fully Conforms
7.1.e	When the chief audit executive has one or more ongoing roles beyond internal auditing, the responsibilities, nature of work, and established safeguards must be documented in the internal audit charter.	Fully Conforms
7.1.f	If those areas of responsibility are subject to internal auditing, alternative processes to obtain assurance must be established, such as contracting with an objective, competent external assurance provider that reports independently to the board.	Fully Conforms
7.1.g	When the chief audit executive's nonaudit responsibilities are temporary, assurance for those areas must be provided by an independent third party during the temporary assignment and for the subsequent 12 months.	Fully Conforms
7.1.h	Also, the chief audit executive must establish a plan to transition those responsibilities to management.	Fully Conforms
7.1.i	If the governing structure does not support organizational independence, the chief audit executive must document the characteristics of the governing structure limiting independence and any safeguards that may be employed to achieve this principle.	Fully Conforms



APPENDIX A: List of requirements covered in this assessment

Requirements and ratings (limited to review of common documents only)

9.1.a	To develop an effective internal audit strategy and plan, the chief audit executive must understand the organization's governance, risk management, and control processes.	Fully Conforms
9.1.b	<p>To understand governance processes, the chief audit executive must consider how the organization:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishes strategic objectives and makes strategic and operational decisions. • Oversees risk management and control. • Promotes an ethical culture. • Delivers effective performance management and accountability. • Structures its management and operating functions. • Communicates risk and control information throughout the organization. • Coordinates activities and communications among the board, internal and external providers of assurance services, and management. 	Fully Conforms
9.3.a	The chief audit executive must establish methodologies to guide the internal audit function in a systematic and disciplined manner to implement the internal audit strategy, develop the internal audit plan, and conform with the Standards.	Fully Conforms
9.3.b	The chief audit executive must evaluate the effectiveness of the methodologies and update them as necessary to improve the internal audit function and respond to significant changes that affect the function.	Generally Conforms
9.3.c	The chief audit executive must provide internal auditors with training on the methodologies.	Fully Conforms



APPENDIX A: List of requirements covered in this assessment

Requirements and ratings (limited to review of common documents only)

11.1.a	The chief audit executive must develop an approach for the internal audit function to build relationships and trust with key stakeholders, including the board, senior management, operational management, regulators, and internal and external assurance providers and other consultants.	Fully Conforms
11.1.b	<p>The chief audit executive must promote formal and informal communication between the internal audit function and stakeholders, contributing to the mutual understanding of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizational interests and concerns. • Approaches for identifying and managing risks and providing assurance. • Roles and responsibilities of relevant parties and opportunities for collaboration. • Relevant regulatory requirements. • Significant organizational processes, including financial reporting. 	Fully Conforms
11.4.a	<p>If a final engagement communication contains a significant error or omission, the chief audit executive must communicate corrected information promptly to all parties who received the original communication.</p> <p>Significance is determined according to criteria agreed upon with the board.</p>	Fully Conforms



APPENDIX A: List of requirements covered in this assessment

Requirements and ratings (limited to review of common documents only)

12.3.a	The chief audit executive must establish and implement methodologies for engagement supervision, quality assurance, and the development of competencies.	Generally Conforms
13.2.a	Internal auditors must develop an understanding of the activity under review to assess the relevant risks. For advisory services, a formal, documented risk assessment may not be necessary, depending on the agreement with relevant stakeholders.	Fully Conforms
13.3.a	Internal auditors must establish and document the objectives and scope for each engagement.	Fully Conforms
13.4.a	Internal auditors must identify the most relevant criteria to be used to evaluate the aspects of the activity under review defined in the engagement objectives and scope. For advisory services, the identification of evaluation criteria may not be necessary, depending on the agreement with relevant stakeholders.	Fully Conforms
13.5.a	When planning an engagement, internal auditors must identify the types and quantity of resources necessary to achieve the engagement objectives.	Fully Conforms
13.6.a	Internal auditors must develop and document an engagement work program to achieve the engagement objectives.	Fully Conforms



APPENDIX A: List of requirements covered in this assessment

Requirements and ratings (limited to review of common documents only)

14.1.a	<p>To perform analyses and evaluations, internal auditors must gather information that is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant – consistent with engagement objectives, within the scope of the engagement, and contributes to the development of engagement results. • Reliable – factual and current. Internal auditors use professional skepticism to evaluate whether information is reliable. Reliability is strengthened when the information is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Obtained directly by an internal auditor or from an independent source. o Corroborated. o Gathered from a system with effective governance, risk management, and control processes. • Sufficient – when it enables internal auditors to perform analyses and complete evaluations and can enable a prudent, informed, and competent person to repeat the engagement work program and reach the same conclusions as the internal auditor. 	Fully Conforms
14.2.a	Internal auditors must analyze relevant, reliable, and sufficient information to develop potential engagement findings. For advisory services, gathering evidence to develop findings may not be necessary, depending on the agreement with relevant stakeholders.	Generally Conforms
14.3.a	Internal auditors must evaluate each potential engagement finding to determine its significance.	Fully Conforms



APPENDIX A: List of requirements covered in this assessment

Requirements and ratings (limited to review of common documents only)

14.4.a	Internal auditors must determine whether to develop recommendations, request action plans from management, or collaborate with management to agree on actions to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resolve the differences between the established criteria and the existing condition. • Mitigate identified risks to an acceptable level. • Address the root cause of the finding. • Enhance or improve the activity under review. 	Fully Conforms
14.5.a	Internal auditors must develop an engagement conclusion that summarizes the engagement results relative to the engagement objectives and management's objectives.	Fully Conforms
14.6.a	Internal auditors must document information and evidence to support the engagement results.	Fully Conforms
15.1.a	For each engagement, internal auditors must develop a final communication that includes the engagement's objectives, scope, recommendations and/or action plans if applicable, and conclusions.	Fully Conforms
15.2.a	Internal auditors must confirm that management has implemented internal auditors' recommendations or management's action plans following an established methodology, which includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inquiring about progress on the implementation. • Performing follow-up assessments using a risk-based approach. • Updating the status of management's actions in a tracking system. 	Generally Conforms
15.2.b	The extent of these procedures must consider the significance of the finding.	Generally Conforms



APPENDIX B: IIA Quality Assessment Manual 4-point Achievement (Conformance) Rating Scale

Rating scale

The Institute of Internal Auditors (IIA) uses an External Quality Assessment (EQA) rating scale to evaluate an internal audit function's conformance with the Global Internal Audit Standards. This scale is used at the individual standard level and aggregated into an overall rating.

Quality Rating	For Conclusions on Achieving Overall Conformance	For Conclusions on Achieving Each Principle	For Conclusions on Conforming with Each Standard
Full Achievement (or Full Conformance)	The internal audit function is fully achieving all 15 principles and the Purpose of Internal Auditing.	The internal audit function is fully achieving all the standards related to the principle and the principle's intent.	The internal audit function is fully conforming with all requirements of the standard and the standard's intent.
General Achievement (or General Conformance)	The internal audit function is not fully achieving at least one principle or aspect of Domain I but is achieving the Purpose of Internal Auditing.	The internal audit function is not fully achieving at least one standard but is achieving the principle's intent.	The internal audit function is not fully conforming with at least one requirement but is achieving the standard's intent.
Partial Achievement (or Partial Conformance)	The internal audit function is not fully achieving at least one principle or aspect of Domain I, and the impact is significant enough to rate the function's overall achievement as partially achieving. The CAE may not include in final reports that engagements were performed in conformance with the Standards if the overall achievement conclusion is partial achievement.	The internal audit function is not fully conforming with at least one standard, and the impact is significant enough to rate the function as partially achieving the principle.	The internal audit function is not fully conforming with at least one requirement, and the impact is significant enough to rate the function as partially conforming with the standard's intent.
Nonachievement (or Nonconformance)	The internal audit function is not fully achieving at least one principle, and the impact is significant enough to rate the function's overall conclusion as nonachievement.	The internal audit function is not fully conforming with at least one standard, and the impact is significant enough to rate the function as not achieving the principle's intent.	The internal audit function is not fully conforming with at least one requirement, and the impact is significant enough to rate the function as not achieving the standard's intent.



TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2026

Open Session: 5:30 p.m. – 6:15 p.m. (In person in the Boardroom)

MINUTES

ATTENDANCE

(*denotes approval received to attend electronically)

Trustee Committee Members

Trustee Beamer (Chair), Trustee Baggott, Trustee Barnett, Trustee Brousseau, Trustee Mitchell

Administration

Kelly Pisek (Chief Executive Officer), Karen Bellamy (Executive Assistant to Chief Executive Officer), Jennifer Feren (General Counsel)

Recording Secretary

Kerry Baker (Law Clerk to General Counsel)

Trustee Guests

Trustee Klassen

A. ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF TRADITIONAL TERRITORY

Chair Beamer opened the meeting with an Acknowledgement of the Traditional Territory of the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe peoples.

B. CALL TO ORDER /NOTING OF ABSENCE

Chair Beamer called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Quorum was met.



C. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The Agenda was reviewed and approved.

Moved by Trustee Baggott

Seconded by Trustee Mitchell

“That the Agenda of the Ad Hoc Governance Committee is approved.”

CARRIED

D. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

1. Policy Governance Framework

Moved by Trustee Brousseau

Seconded by Trustee Barnett

“That the Policy Governance Framework report dated September 22, 2026 be received.”

CARRIED

General Counsel Feren presented the Policy Governance Framework report. The Committee discussed the proposed framework for organizing and reviewing the Board’s policy library, offering some suggestions for further consideration. The Committee confirmed it would defer approval of the framework until the mapping of the policies was presented at the next Committee meeting.

2. Policy Update - Preamble

General Counsel presented the report and rationale for the proposed updated preamble policy. The Committee reviewed the proposed new policy and offered feedback including making the first review in one year, removing “significant” from the Board Receipt Policies, modifying the CEO delegation for compliance with binding Ministry Direction only and inclusion of language confirming policy generation similar to the current policy. The matter was tabled for further refinement and consideration at the next meeting.

E. NEW BUSINESS



1. Draft Minute Posting

CEO Pisek proposed posting draft or pending-approval minutes to the Board website before formal approval to improve timely public access and transparency. Trustees supported the concept, provided draft minutes are clearly identified as subject to approval. Trustees also requested that draft minutes also be made available to Trustees before public posting.

F. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be Tuesday, October 6, 2026 in person in the Boardroom.

G. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting of the Ad Hoc Governance Committee adjourned at 6:15 p.m.



Policy Governance Framework

Tuesday, September 22, 2026

BACKGROUND:

During this Board's term, the Policy Committee met three times a year to review policies scheduled under the established review cycle and determine whether they should be updated or revoked. The Trustees' proactive engagement in reviewing individual policies and considering their governance role provided a strong foundation for taking a broader view of the policy library, while also highlighting the opportunity for a more coordinated and efficient approach.

At its June 8, 2026, meeting, the Governance Committee discussed a more purposeful approach to reviewing the policy library and supported the concept of working to streamline the policy library focusing on the policies that need to be public facing and eliminating others. As reflected in the Minutes, the Governance Committee identified three categories for reviewing and streamlining the policy library:

- policies to retain
- policies to revoke and convert to public guidance available as tools or guidelines to assist families and Trustees navigate situations
- Policies to revoke as not relevant to the public (e.g., staff retirement guidance)

The Governance Committee Minutes also reflect that once the policy library review is complete, future policy reviews could be brought directly to the Board as part of its ongoing work.

Based on the discussion and feedback received through the Governance Committee meeting, a Policy Governance Framework has been developed.

CATEGORY			RATIONALE
1A	GOVERNANCE	FOR TRUSTEE APPROVAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies that address significant legislative, regulatory or other legal requirements, or that involve an exercise of permitted discretion warranting Board authorization • Propose that these policies would be considered at the Governance Committee before being presented to the Board
1B	GOVERNANCE	FOR TRUSTEE RECEIPT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies that primarily reflect or give administrative effect to legislation, regulations, Ministry policy or other legal requirements, without requiring the Board to make a significant discretionary policy choice • Propose that these policies be received directly at Board meetings
2	POLICY TO REVOKE	COMMUNITY FACING RESOURCE EXISTS OR RECOMMENDED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information is already contained in community facing resources on website through guidelines, handbooks or other practical resources • Alternatively, convert important concepts to public guidance as policy may contain some useful information for family and/or community that could instead be provided on the website through guidelines, handbooks or other practical resources

AD HOC GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Tuesday, September 22, 2026

3	POLICY TO REVOKE	NO COMMUNITY FACING RESOURCE RECOMMENDED	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Content is operational in nature and/or internal and/or staff related
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At the next meeting, the proposed placement of policies within the framework will be considered further, informed by the perspectives and preliminary observations brought to the discussion.

RECOMMENDED MOTION:

“That the Policy Governance Framework report dated September 22, 2026, be approved. “

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Feren
General Counsel

Date: September 22, 2026

For further information, please contact Jennifer Feren, General Counsel



Policy Update - Preamble

Tuesday, September 22, 2026

BACKGROUND:

At its June 8, 2026 meeting, the Governance Committee considered a more purposeful approach to reviewing and considering the Board's policy library, which is being considered in the proposed companion Policy Governance Framework report.

On June 22, 2026, the Board amended its By-Laws and Rules of Orders streamlining its committee structure.

These changes require changes to the current pre-amble policies **i-01: Policy-General**; **i-02: Policy Committee**; and **i-03: Policy Generating Process** to reflect the changes to the By-Laws and Rules and Order and Governance Committee's more purposeful approach to reviewing and streamlining the policy library.

RECOMMENDED MOTION:

"That Policies i-01: Policy-General; i-02: Policy Committee; i-03: Policy Generating Process be revoked."

"That Policy i-01: Policy Framework be approved."

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Feren
General Counsel

Date: September 22, 2026

For further information, please contact Jennifer Feren, General Counsel

POLICY

SECTION:	PREAMBLE	POLICY:	i-01
TOPIC:	POLICY FRAMEWORK	PAGE:	Page 1 of 2
		DATE:	September 2026
REVIEW DATE:	September 2031	REVISED:	

The *Education Act* establishes distinct and complementary roles for the Board of Trustees in governing the school board and for the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) in providing executive, administrative and educational leadership in accordance with their statutory responsibilities. Within this framework, the Board of Trustees establish focused governance policy in accordance with legislation while respecting the distinct statutory authority of the CEO.

The Board of Trustees govern through strategic direction, policy, oversight and accountability. Board policies set governance expectations within their legal authority. The Board of Trustees do not direct routine operations or detailed administrative processes.

The Board of Trustees are required under the *Education Act* to develop and maintain policies to:

- Promote student achievement and well-being
- Promote positive school climate that is inclusive and accepting of all pupils, including pupils of any race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, marital status, family status or disability
- Promote the prevention of bullying
- Deliver effective and appropriate education programs to its pupils.

The policy library will support the District School Board of Niagara's strategic priorities.

Consistent with this focused role, policies will come before the Board of Trustees in one of two ways. Policies will proceed through the Governance Committee to the Board for approval where the significance of the applicable legislation, regulations or other legal requirements—or the discretion exercised in implementing them—calls for Board authorization. Policies that primarily reflect or give administrative effect to legislation, regulations, Ministry policy or other legal requirements will be presented directly to the Board for receipt where Board awareness supports oversight and accountability.

- **Board Approval Policies:** policies that address significant legislative, regulatory or other legal requirements, or that involve an exercise of permitted discretion warranting Board authorization. These policies will be considered by the Governance Committee before being presented to the Board for approval. They will be reviewed on the Board-approved cycle or sooner where required.

Board Approval Policies scheduled for review will be posted on the DSN website for thirty (30) calendar days, with notice provided through an email distribution list. Stakeholders may submit input electronically, and a summary of the input will be presented with the revised policy to the Governance Committee.

- **Board Receipt Policies:** policies that primarily reflect or give administrative effect to legislation, regulations, Ministry policy or other legal requirements, without requiring the Board to make a significant discretionary policy choice. These policies will be presented directly to the Board for information and oversight, with receipt serving as the appropriate governance action.

Where an immediate policy amendment is required to maintain compliance with a legislative or regulatory change, binding Ministry direction, or other legal requirement, and the usual committee or Board process cannot reasonably be completed in time, the CEO will make the required amendment to ensure that the Board continues to meet its legal obligations. The CEO's office will promptly advise the Board of the amendment, and the amended policy will be presented at the next Board meeting for information.

Similarly, the CEO may make administrative or editorial revisions to Board policies to Board policies between review cycles, including such things as:

- correction of grammatical, typographical, formatting, or numbering errors;
- updates to position titles, department names, organizational structures, and contact information;
- revisions to terminology, nomenclature, legislation citations, document references, hyperlinks, forms, or cross-references;
- changes required to maintain consistency with approved Board policies and



POLICY

SECTION:	PREAMBLE	POLICY:	i-01
TOPIC:	POLICY FRAMEWORK	PAGE:	Page 2 of 2
		DATE:	September 2026
REVIEW DATE:	September 2031	REVISED:	

- housekeeping changes that do not materially affect the policy's authority, responsibilities, or substantive requirements of the policy.

These revised policies will also be presented at the next Board meeting for information.

Current governance policies will be published in DSBN's public policy library. Superseded and revoked versions will be retained in accordance with DSBN's records management requirements.

References

Education Act

DSBN Website - Policies



POLICY

SECTION:	PREAMBLE	POLICY:	i-01
TOPIC:	POLICY - GENERAL	PAGE:	Page 1 of 1
REVIEW DATE:	December 2030	DATE:	December 2025
		REVISED:	

The District School Board of Niagara (DSBN) will establish policy in the general areas of:

- A. Board Governance and Administration
- B. Business
- C. Community Relations
- D. Educational Programs and Student Services
- E. Human Resources - General
- F. Facility Services and Operations
- G. General School Operations
- H. Support Staff
- I. Teaching Staff
- J. Transportation

All clauses of the *Education Act* and the Regulations of the Ministry of Education which apply to public elementary schools or secondary schools shall be considered as part of the governance of the DSBN.

Policy may be defined as the statement of formal guidance that provides the operational framework within which the organization functions. Policy statements help focus attention and resources on high priority issues by aligning and merging efforts to achieve the organizational vision.

The Policy Manual shall include all Policies passed by the Board of Trustees.

If there is any conflict between the collective agreements and a DSBN Policy, the terms of the collective agreement(s) shall take precedence.

DSBN Policies are available on the external website.

References

[Education Act](#)
[DSBN Website - Policies](#)



POLICY

SECTION:	PREAMBLE	POLICY:	i-02
TOPIC:	POLICY COMMITTEE	PAGE:	1 of 1
REVIEW DATE:	December 2030	DATE:	December 2025
		REVISED:	

The District School Board of Niagara (DSBN) recognizes that input is valuable in the formulation of sound organizational policies. The Policy Committee shall provide access to policy input from all stakeholders including staff, students, parents, and members of the community. The DSBN Board of Trustees understand their legislative responsibility for making policy.

The Policy Committee shall be a standing committee of the Board which will meet a minimum of three times per year between the months of September and June or as required.

Policies scheduled for review will be made available to stakeholders via posting on the DSBN public website and an email distribution list will be developed to alert stakeholders. This webpage will enable stakeholders to provide their input electronically on any policy within the review timeframe of 8 weeks.

A summary of the input shared will be presented to the Trustees at each of the Policy Committee meetings

At the Policy Committee meeting, after the expiration of the review timeframe, the revised Policy will be presented. Individuals or organizations may make a presentation to the Policy Committee provided they have followed the application process and been approved. Presentations will follow the By-laws & Rules of Order relevant to Delegations as published on the DSBN website.

References

[District School Board of Niagara By-Laws and Rules of Order](#)



POLICY

SECTION:	PREAMBLE	POLICY:	i-03
TOPIC:	POLICY GENERATING PROCESS	PAGE:	1 of 1
REVIEW DATE:	December 2030	DATE:	December 2025
		REVISED:	

The District School Board of Niagara (DSBN) Board of Trustees are required under the *Education Act* to develop and maintain policies to:

- Promote student achievement and well-being
- Promote positive school climate that is inclusive and accepting of all pupils, including pupils of any race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, marital status, family status or disability
- Promote the prevention of bullying
- Deliver effective and appropriate education programs to its pupils.

Recommendations for development of Policy may be initiated by a variety of sources: Trustees, students, staff, members of System Leadership, Ministry of Education or parents/guardians and community.

Recommendations for Policy development will normally be channeled through the Policy Committee for consideration by the Board of Trustees. Where this is not possible or practical, due to short timelines or other constraints, the recommendation may be routed directly to the Board of Trustees.

The development or approval of some specific Policy matters (e.g., Finance, Board Governance) may be directed to other DSBN Committees.

The Policy Committee may also review any existing Policy and recommend to the Board of Trustees reconsideration, revision, modification, revocation or any other course of action.

When creating or reviewing Policy, the DSBN is committed to fostering an inclusive, respectful learning and working environment, in alignment with the principles of the Canadian *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, the Ontario *Human Rights Code*, and the *Education Act*.

Reference

[Education Act](#)
[Charter of Rights and Freedoms](#)
[Human Rights Code](#)



TUESDAY, OCTOBER 6, 2026

Open Session: 5:31 p.m. – 7:05 p.m. (In person in the Boardroom)

MINUTES

ATTENDANCE

(*denotes approval received to attend electronically)

Trustee Committee Members

Trustee Beamer (Chair), Trustee Baggott, Trustee Barnett*, Trustee Brousseau, Trustee Mitchell

Administration

Kelly Pisek (Chief Executive Officer), Stacy Veld (Chief Finance and Operations Officer)
Jennifer Reid (Administrative Assistant to Chief Executive Officer), Jennifer Feren (General Counsel)

Recording Secretary

Kerry Baker (Law Clerk to General Counsel)

Trustee Guests

Trustee E. Klassen

A. ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF TRADITIONAL TERRITORY

Chair Beamer opened the meeting with an Acknowledgement of the Traditional Territory of the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe peoples.

B. CALL TO ORDER /NOTING OF MEMBERS ABSENT

Chair Beamer called the meeting to order at 5:31 p.m.

Quorum was met.



C. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The Agenda as amended was reviewed and approved.

**Moved by Trustee Brousseau
Seconded by Trustee Baggott**

“That the Agenda of the Ad Hoc Governance Committee as amended is approved.”

CARRIED

D. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

1. Policy Update - Preamble

**Moved by Trustee Mitchell
Seconded by Trustee Baggott**

“That Policies i-01: Policy - General; i-02: Policy Committee; i-03: Policy Generating Process be revoked.”

“That Policy i-01: Policy – General be approved.”

CARRIED

At the meeting, Jennifer Feren reviewed the report, Policy Update - Preamble.

The revised policy incorporated feedback and key elements from the three previous policy preambles. Trustees expressed support for the revised preamble and its clarification of how policy recommendations may come forward. In response to a question about the public consultation timeframe, Trustees were advised that they could defer approval of a policy if additional time for public feedback was needed.

2. Policy Library Working Exercise

**Moved by Trustee Trustee Brousseau
Seconded by Trustee Baggott**

“That the Policies listed in Category 1a – For Trustee Approval (attached) as amended are confirmed as ongoing governance policies that will be reviewed cyclically through the Governance Committee or as determined by Policy i-01: Policy Framework.”



“That the Policies listed in Category 1b – For Trustee Receipt (attached) as amended are confirmed as ongoing governance policies that will be received cyclically by the Board or as determined by Policy i-01: Policy Framework.”

“That the Policies listed in Category 2 – Policies to Revoke – Community Facing Resources Exist or is Recommended (attached) are hereby revoked for inclusion in a community facing resource.”

“That the Policies listed in Category 3 – Policies to Revoke – No Community Facing Resource Recommended (attached) as amended are hereby revoked.”

CARRIED

The Committee reviewed and adopted the four-category Policy Mapping Framework, with one addition to the rationale for Category 3: "Policy/procedure/guidelines only applied under rules related to Closed Session Meetings."

Using the adopted framework, Staff and Trustees collaboratively reviewed the proposed mapping of each policy to one of the four categories. Trustees raised questions and proposed changes, resulting in the re-categorization of several policies and a final Policy Library mapped to the new framework.

Trustees expressed appreciation for the opportunity to consider the policy library as a whole, noting that this collaborative approach was efficient and provided a more comprehensive perspective than reviewing policies individually. Moving forward, the review and generation of policies will have clear pathways to the Board of Trustees and community at large.

E. NEW BUSINESS

1. By-Law Q-4 & Q-5: By-Law Amendment re: Ministry Directive & Housekeeping

Moved by Trustee Mitchell

Seconded by Trustee Baggott

“That the By-Laws and Rules of Order be amended as following:

Q-2 No amendment, alteration or addition to the By-Laws shall be made unless written notice recommendation setting forth the proposed amendment, alteration or addition is given after consideration of the change at a Governance Committee meeting previous to that Board Meeting at which the same comes up for consideration and unless confirmed by two-thirds vote of all the members of the Board.

Q-4 The CEO may make administrative or editorial revisions to the Board By-Laws and Rules of Order and to Board Policies including:

- **correction of grammatical, typographical, formatting, or numbering errors;**
- **updates to position titles, department names, organizational structures, and contact information;**



- revisions to terminology, nomenclature, legislation citations, document references, hyperlinks, forms, or cross-references;
- changes required to maintain consistency within the Board By-Laws and Rules of Order and approved Board policies; and
- housekeeping changes that do not materially affect the authority, responsibilities, or substantive requirements established by the Board By-Laws and Rules of Order or Board Policies.

Administrative or editorial revisions to the Board By-laws and Rules of Order or Board Policies will be presented to Trustees for information at the next Board meeting. The requirements for prior notice and confirmation by two-thirds vote as set out in By-Law Q-2 do not apply. The revisions shall take effect immediately upon receipt by the Board.”

CARRIED

CEO Pisek recommended that the Committee not consider the proposed By-Law amendment related the Ministerial Directives contained in the Report at this time to, instead, allow for by-laws impacted by legislation changes to be dealt with collaboratively through the committee. Trustees supported the By-Law amendment for housekeeping changes (to be re-numbered Q-4). The Committee also supported revising Q-2 so that proposed by-law amendments would first be considered by the Governance Committee, whose recommendation would provide notice to all Board members before the amendment came to the Board for approval by a two-thirds vote. Trustees noted that this process would be more efficient while preserving advance consideration and transparency. Notice of these By-Law amendments will be given at the October Board meeting and considered at the November Board meeting.

2. Trustee Honorarium

Moved by Trustee Mitchell

Seconded by Trustee Baggott

“That the Board approve Trustee Honoraria for the period commencing November 15, 2026, in accordance with Ontario Regulation 320/26, Honoraria for Board Members.”

CARRIED

The report was presented based on the recent Regulation that was passed. Trustees raised questions about funding related professional development, discretionary budgets and honoraria for Trustees and Student Trustees and were advised that future reports would be provided.

3. Board & Committee Minute Public Posting

Moved by Trustee Brousseau

Seconded by Trustee Mitchell



“That commencing November 15, 2026, Board and Statutory Committee Agenda and official approved minutes are posted and remain on DSBN’s public website for a period of the current year plus three years.”

“That, for the purpose of implementing this retention period, Board official approved Minutes from the Board years commencing November 15, 2023, November 15, 2024, and November 15, 2025, be posted to DSBN’s public website; and that such records be removed from the website as they exceed the current Board year plus three-year posting period established by Board policy.”

CARRIED

Trustees shared the importance of maintaining the current year plus 3 prior years of Board and Committee Agenda and official approved Minutes on the Board public website for transparency. It was agreed that going back for the prior 3 years, the Board packages would be posted as they contain the Agenda and Minutes for the Board and each Committee. In response to a question, it was confirmed that to the extent that they were available, DSBN has historical minute books, which can be available for inspection upon request.

F. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be at the call of the Chair in person in the Boardroom

G. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting of the Ad Hoc Governance Committee adjourned at 7:05 p.m.



POLICY

SECTION:	PREAMBLE	POLICY:	i-01
TOPIC:	POLICY - GENERAL	PAGE:	Page 1 of 1
		DATE:	September 2026
REVIEW DATE:	September 2027	REVISED:	

Policy may be defined as the statement of formal guidance that provides the operational framework within which the organization functions. Policy statements help focus attention and resources on high priority issues by aligning and merging efforts to achieve the organizational vision.

The District School Board of Niagara (DSBN) is required under the *Education Act* to develop and maintain policies to:

- Promote student achievement and well-being
- Promote positive school climate that is inclusive and accepting of all pupils, including pupils of any race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, marital status, family status or disability
- Promote the prevention of bullying
- Deliver effective and appropriate education programs to its pupils.

A new policy may be required by Ministry direction or proposed by a variety of sources including, Trustees, the CEO, parents/guardians or community members.

Recommendations for policy development will normally be channeled through the Governance Committee for consideration by the Board of Trustees. Where this is not possible or practical, due to short timelines or other constraints, the recommendation may be routed directly to the Board of Trustees.

DSBN recognizes that input is valuable in the formulation of sound organizational policies. The DSBN shall provide access to policy input from all stakeholders including staff, students, parents, and members of the community. The DSBN Board of Trustees understand their legislative responsibility for making policy.

Policies scheduled for review will be posted on the DSBN website for thirty (30) calendar days, with notice provided through an email distribution list. Stakeholders may submit input electronically, and a summary of the input will be presented with the revised policy to the Governance Committee.

DSBN Policies are available on the external website.

NEWLY DEVELOPEDReferences

Education Act
DSBN Website - Policies



POLICY

SECTION:	PREAMBLE	POLICY:	i-01
TOPIC:	POLICY - GENERAL	PAGE:	Page 1 of 1
REVIEW DATE:	December 2030	DATE:	December 2025
		REVISED:	

The District School Board of Niagara (DSBN) will establish policy in the general areas of:

- A. Board Governance and Administration
- B. Business
- C. Community Relations
- D. Educational Programs and Student Services
- E. Human Resources - General
- F. Facility Services and Operations
- G. General School Operations
- H. Support Staff
- I. Teaching Staff
- J. Transportation

All clauses of the *Education Act* and the Regulations of the Ministry of Education which apply to public elementary schools or secondary schools shall be considered as part of the governance of the DSBN.

Policy may be defined as the statement of formal guidance that provides the operational framework within which the organization functions. Policy statements help focus attention and resources on high priority issues by aligning and merging efforts to achieve the organizational vision.

The Policy Manual shall include all Policies passed by the Board of Trustees.

If there is any conflict between the collective agreements and a DSBN Policy, the terms of the collective agreement(s) shall take precedence.

DSBN Policies are available on the external website.

References

[Education Act](#)
[DSBN Website - Policies](#)



POLICY

SECTION:	PREAMBLE	POLICY:	i-02
TOPIC:	POLICY COMMITTEE	PAGE:	1 of 1
REVIEW DATE:	December 2030	DATE:	December 2025
		REVISED:	

The District School Board of Niagara (DSBN) recognizes that input is valuable in the formulation of sound organizational policies. The Policy Committee shall provide access to policy input from all stakeholders including staff, students, parents, and members of the community. The DSBN Board of Trustees understand their legislative responsibility for making policy.

The Policy Committee shall be a standing committee of the Board which will meet a minimum of three times per year between the months of September and June or as required.

Policies scheduled for review will be made available to stakeholders via posting on the DSBN public website and an email distribution list will be developed to alert stakeholders. This webpage will enable stakeholders to provide their input electronically on any policy within the review timeframe of 8 weeks.

A summary of the input shared will be presented to the Trustees at each of the Policy Committee meetings

At the Policy Committee meeting, after the expiration of the review timeframe, the revised Policy will be presented. Individuals or organizations may make a presentation to the Policy Committee provided they have followed the application process and been approved. Presentations will follow the By-laws & Rules of Order relevant to Delegations as published on the DSBN website.

References

[District School Board of Niagara By-Laws and Rules of Order](#)



POLICY

SECTION:	PREAMBLE	POLICY:	i-03
TOPIC:	POLICY GENERATING PROCESS	PAGE:	1 of 1
REVIEW DATE:	December 2030	DATE:	December 2025
		REVISED:	

The District School Board of Niagara (DSBN) Board of Trustees are required under the *Education Act* to develop and maintain policies to:

- Promote student achievement and well-being
- Promote positive school climate that is inclusive and accepting of all pupils, including pupils of any race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, marital status, family status or disability
- Promote the prevention of bullying
- Deliver effective and appropriate education programs to its pupils.

Recommendations for development of Policy may be initiated by a variety of sources: Trustees, students, staff, members of System Leadership, Ministry of Education or parents/guardians and community.

Recommendations for Policy development will normally be channeled through the Policy Committee for consideration by the Board of Trustees. Where this is not possible or practical, due to short timelines or other constraints, the recommendation may be routed directly to the Board of Trustees.

The development or approval of some specific Policy matters (e.g., Finance, Board Governance) may be directed to other DSBN Committees.

The Policy Committee may also review any existing Policy and recommend to the Board of Trustees reconsideration, revision, modification, revocation or any other course of action.

When creating or reviewing Policy, the DSBN is committed to fostering an inclusive, respectful learning and working environment, in alignment with the principles of the Canadian *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, the Ontario *Human Rights Code*, and the *Education Act*.

Reference

[Education Act](#)
[Charter of Rights and Freedoms](#)
[Human Rights Code](#)



Policy Library Mapping

Tuesday, October 6, 2026

BACKGROUND:

This work continues the Governance Committee's review of the DSBN Policy Library and discussion of a new Policy Framework at its last meeting.

With the Framework now considered and set out below (as amended September 22, 2026), the current Policy Library was reviewed by staff, and each policy was mapped to one of the new categories based on legislative requirements, its purpose, and the role of the Board under the Framework. The resulting proposed mapping table is attached for the Governance Committee's discussion and consideration.

CATEGORY		RATIONALE
1A	FOR TRUSTEE APPROVAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policies that address significant legislative, regulatory or other legal requirements, or that involve an exercise of permitted discretion warranting Board authorization Propose that these policies would be considered at the Governance Committee before being presented to the Board
1B	FOR TRUSTEE RECEIPT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policies that primarily reflect or give administrative effect to legislation, regulations, Ministry policy or other legal requirements, without requiring the Board to make a discretionary policy choice Propose that these policies be received directly at Board meetings
2	POLICY TO REVOKE - COMMUNITY FACING RESOURCE EXISTS OR RECOMMENDED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information is already contained in community facing resources on website through guidelines, handbooks or other practical resources Alternatively, convert important concepts to public guidance as policy may contain some useful information for family and/or community that could instead be provided on the website through guidelines, handbooks or other practical resources
3	POLICY TO REVOKE - NO COMMUNITY FACING RESOURCE RECOMMENDED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Content is operational in nature and/or internal and/or staff related

APPENDED DATA:

Proposed Policy Library Mapping



AD HOC GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Tuesday, October 6, 2026

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Feren
General Counsel

Date: October 6, 2026

For further information, please contact Jennifer Feren, General Counsel



CATEGORY 1a

For Trustee Approval (via Governance Committee)

Policy	Recommendation & Rationale
i-01: Policy Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supports Trustee role under <i>Education Act</i>
A-02: Attendance at Board of Trustee and Committee Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Required by Reg 463/97, section 2 2. (1) Every board shall develop and implement a policy providing for the use of electronic means for the holding of meetings of a board and meetings of a committee of a board, including a committee of the whole board
A-03: Trustee Budgets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trustee Education Development Budget – removed by Ministry directive - May 19, 2026, Minister of Education issued policies and guidelines under paragraph 3.7 of subsection 8(1) of the <i>Education Act</i> governing school board expense policies requiring: “Effective immediately, all school boards must have and implement an expense policy that includes the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The board will not incur or reimburse expenses for board members to pay membership fees in a Trustee Association or similar professional association. The board will not incur or reimburse expenses for board members to attend or participate in a discretionary event or activity. This includes registration fees and travel, meal, accommodation and hospitality expenses. <p>A discretionary event or activity is any of the following events or activities in cases where a member’s attendance or participation is not essential to a board’s core business operations and for which</p>



	<p>expenses are incurred by choice rather than operational necessity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional development activities • Professional associations' or sector organizations' events or activities • Education-related symposiums, conferences or conventions • Chair's Discretionary Budget – removed by Ministry directive • Combine with A-04
A-04: Trustee Travel and Business Expenses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See above re: Ministry directives • Combined with A-03
A-05: Director's Performance Appraisal Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports Reg 83/24 • Approves compressed timeline to complete legislated requirements within school year to avoid summer meetings
A-06: Trustee Honorarium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Putting Student Achievement First Act, 2026</i> confers upon the Minister of Education the authority to make regulations respecting honoraria for members of boards including: amount, method of calculation, setting limits, conditions for payment, and governing board policies regarding payment of honoraria and process respecting adoption of policies
A-07: Expense Allowances for Members of Board Advisory Committees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides direction for allowances for non-Trustee members of Board Advisory Committees as part of annual Board Estimates/Budget process
A-08: Parent Involvement Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add family friendly language to school council handbook/ PIC Handbook and/or website
A-09: Naming/Renaming of Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports <i>Education Act</i> section 174, which confirms that Minister approval is required before a Board's preferred name can take effect
A-15: Policy Advocacy and Participation in the Political Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides guidance for elected officials as part of governance



B-09: Privacy Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides legislative designation of “Head of Institution” required under legislation and the delegation to and appointment of FOI Coordinator Remove legislative definitions as redundant
C-01: Community Use of Schools - General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider including appropriate external/community facing information to website to ensure components are captured Content is operational
E-13: Attendance Support Program (formerly Wellness Support Program)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy required by PPM 171
E-15: Workplace Violence and Harassment Prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy required by OHSA s. 32.0.1
E-19: Teacher Termination Resulting from Unsatisfactory Performance Appraisal Process*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trustee role required by <i>Education Act</i> s. 277.39
F-02: Accommodation Review Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On hold – 2017 MOE Moratorium
G-11: Assault/Threatening Incidents Involving Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supports PPM 145 but could be a broader statement than the current narrow focus
G-28: Student Discipline*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education Act requires Trustee policy for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> designation of Student Discipline Committee under <i>Education Act</i> additional policy grounds for suspension/expulsion Supports PPM 141 and 142 which require policies for programs for students who are suspended or expelled and PPM 145 which require policies and guidelines on progressive discipline in accordance with s. 302 of the <i>Education Act</i> Other provisions can be added in family friendly language to SAFE & Accepting Schools tab of DSBN website



G-29: Safe and Accepting Schools: Bullying Prevention and Intervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports PPM 144, which requires a policy statement
J-01: Transportation Eligibility and Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider including appropriate external/community facing information to website to ensure components are captured • Content is operational and with CEO's budgeting process • Consider including appropriate external facing information in a parent/guardian guide



CATEGORY 1b

For Trustee Receipt (at Board)

Policy	Recommendation & Rationale
A-01: Student Trustees & Indigenous Student Trustee on Boards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supports <i>Education Act</i> section 55
C-03: Accessibility Standards for Ontarians with Disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supports AODA and Reg 191/11
D-01: Use of Digital Technology by Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supports Ministry requirements related to use of personal devices in schools by students
D-16: Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supports PPM 129 and 132 which requires policies and procedures related to the challenge and/or equivalency processes
E-02: Conflict of Interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supports transparency to community
E-09: Human Rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supports <i>Education Act</i> and Strategic Plan legislative requirements can be met operationally, and information can be included in Equity section of website
E-20: DSBN Employee Hiring Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Required by PPM 165
F-06: Video Security Surveillance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supports transparency to community
G-01: School Volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supports Regulation 521/01 which requires police checks for school volunteers
G-02: Safe Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supports PPM 145 include appropriate external facing information in SAFE & Accepting Schools tab of DSBN website
G-03: Equity and Inclusion Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Required by PPM 119
G-04: Trespass	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supports designation of all employees as “occupiers” with responsibility to control over school sites under <i>Trespass to Property Act</i>



G-06: Criminal Record Check	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports Reg 521/01
G-08: DSBN Code of Conduct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports PPM 128 “School boards must develop and update their own codes of conduct to implement, at minimum, standards consistent with this Provincial Code of Conduct. “ • Appropriate external facing information in a parent/guardian guide – e.g., School Council/PIC resources
G-09: Anti-sex Trafficking: Keeping Students Safe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports PPM 166 • Appropriate external facing information re: Protocol is found in SAFE & Accepting Schools tab of DSBN website
G-20: Sponsorships, Scholarships, Donations and Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports transparency to community on process
G-31: Voluntary, Confidential Indigenous Student Self-Identification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports Ontario First Nation, Metis and Inuit Education Policy Framework, MOE guidance document Building Bridges to Success
G-36: Concussions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports PPM 156 which requires policy on concussions
G-38: Complaints Resolution Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports transparency to community on process of engaging when issues arise
G-39: Harassment and Discrimination Prevention (Ontario Human Rights Code & Ontario Occupational Health & Safety Act)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports transparency to community
G-40: Supporting Students with Prevalent Medical Health Conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports PPM 161 which requires policy for prevalent medical conditions



CATEGORY 2 – POLICIES TO REVOKE

COMMUNITY FACING RESOURCE RECOMMENDED

(posted on website or within parent/guardian guides)

Policy Name	Recommendation
A-11: Flag Protocol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> summarize using family friendly language for external website
A-12: School Councils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add family friendly language to school council handbook/ PIC Handbook and/or website Add link to MOE Resource
A-13: DSBN Board Logo, School Logo and Mascot	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add family friendly language to school council handbook/ PIC Handbook and/or website Operational, although mainly internal, there is good information to share with families
A-18: Environmental Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data available on website as required by Reg 507/18
B-03: Financial Accountability of School Generated Funds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add family friendly language to school council handbook/ PIC Handbook and/or website Content is operational
C-04: Community Planning and Facility Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider including appropriate external/community facing information to website to ensure components are captured Content is operational
D-02: Selection, Approval and Review of Educational Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add family friendly language to include new legislation of selection of resources by MOE as well as what to do if a family has concerns about a school resource
D-03: Approval and Conduct of Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add community facing language on website for navigation on process to apply
D-04: Elementary Interschool Athletic Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> information accessible through elementary athletics tab on website
D-05: Home Schooling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> add to the Guide to Special Education Resource and/or post on website
D-06: Electronic Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add family friendly language to school council handbook/ PIC Handbook and/or website PPM 167 requires Boards to have a <i>protocol</i> or <i>procedure</i> that allows for students to be opted



	out of the online learning graduation requirements available digitally or paper-based – no requirement for a policy
D-07: Third Party Provision of Student Support Services External Providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operational - very detailed AP outlines process for approving and managing student support services delivered or funded by third parties. • Review what is already written in Guide to Special Education Resource
D-08: Cooperative Education/Experiential Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include information for families in secondary section of website
D-09: Framework for the Provision of Special Education Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information is visionary in nature and is better shared within Special Education section of Website and in the Guide Resource
D-12: Home Use of Equipment Purchased through the Special Equipment Amount (SEA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • include in the Guide to Special Education Resource
D-13: Applied Behaviour Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • create parent information within the Guide to Special Education resource
D-14: Assessment and Evaluation and Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidelines and principles are provided by the MOE with both Growing Success and the updated MOE Assessment and Evaluation (2024)
E-01: Smoke-free Learning and Workplace Environments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure signage for awareness
G-05: Weapons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add family friendly language to school council handbook/ PIC Handbook and/or website • Include in SAFE & Accepting Schools tab of DSBN website
G-12: Alcohol, Drug and Substance Use and Abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add family friendly language to school council handbook/ PIC Handbook and/or website
G-17: Provisions of Health Support Services to Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add language to the Guide to Special Education Resource
G-18: Infectious and Communicable Diseases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add language from Niagara Region Public Health to public facing resource • Content is operational
G-19: Fundraising/Canvassing Initiated by School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add family friendly language to school council handbook/ PIC Handbook and/or website • Content is operational



G-21: Advertising in Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add family friendly language to school council handbook/ PIC Handbook and/or website • Content is operational
G-23: Transfer of Students from Elementary to Secondary Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include information in the registration section regarding alternate school requests
G-32: Fees for Learning Materials and Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide parent language to share that schools are required to reduce financial barriers for students when asking for funds • Very detailed AP and operational in nature



CATEGORY 3 – POLICIES TO REVOKE NO COMMUNITY FACING RESOURCE

Policy	Recommendation & Rationale
A-16: Employee Travel and Business Expenses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Content is operational
B-01: Procurement of Goods and Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DSBN website contains bid information and confirms compliance with the Broader Public Sector (BPS)
B-02: Mileage Reimbursement Rate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Content is operational and based on CRA rates
B-04: Investment and Management of Board Funds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Content is operational Legislation has removed investment option
B-06: Purchasing Cards (P-Cards)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Content is operational
B-07: DSBN Vehicles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Content is operational
B-08: Records Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal process only - 3 AP's that outline electronic management of documents, privacy breach response and privacy management
D-15: Health and Physical Education Curriculum-Elementary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Process already in place that ensures all families are notified in writing of the dates that the human development and sexual health curriculum expectations are being taught in their child's classroom and an option to exempt is provided
E-03: Health & Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Content is operational/ internal /process required under legislation
E-05: Digital Technology Use by Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Content is operational/ internal
E-12: Workplace Wellness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Content is operational/ internal / HR
E-16: Social Media Use by DSBN Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Content is operational/ internal / HR
E-17: Performance Appraisal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Content is operational/ internal / HR driven by MOE standards and timelines
F-03: Facility Access and Intrusion Alarm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Content is operational



G-14: Out of School Programs/Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content is operational
G-24: On-Site/Off-Site Evacuation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content is operational/internal
G-25: Co-Curricular Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • school-based decisions – dependent on availability of staff
G-27: Mobile Phone Purchase for School Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content is operational/internal
G-33: School Logos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Duplicative of Policy A-13: DSBN Board Logo, School Logos and Mascot
G-35: Copyright Provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content is operational/internal
I-01: Guidelines for Retirement/Resignation Dates for Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content is operational/internal / staff only
I-04: Teacher Exchange – Within The District School Board of Niagara	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content is operational/internal / staff only
J-02: Accessibility Standards for School Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NSTS process • Singular standard part of larger Policy C-03: Accessibility Standards for Ontarians with Disabilities



DSBN By-Laws and Rules of Order Amendments

By-Law Q-4 & Q-5: By-Law Amendment re: Ministry Directive & Housekeeping

Tuesday, October 6, 2026

PURPOSE

The Governance Committee has been reviewing opportunities to streamline its processes. At its September 22, 2026, meeting, the Committee considered a new policy preamble. Feedback received during that discussion led to the preamble being revised to align more closely with the policies it would replace and was brought forth in the prior report.

As the preamble policy was revised to reflect the Committee's feedback and align more closely with the policies it would replace, it became apparent that the proposed delegation of authority to the CEO did not fit as well within the preamble policy. It is therefore proposed that this authority instead be addressed in the By-Laws, where it can apply to both the Board's By-Laws and Rules of Order and Board Policies.

RECOMMENDED MOTION:

"That the By-Laws and Rules of Order be amended to insert the following:

- Q-4 Where an immediate amendment to the Board By-Laws and Rules of Order or Board Policies is required to maintain compliance with a binding Ministry direction, the CEO shall convene the Governance Committee and bring forward the required amendment for submission to the Board. The requirements for prior notice and confirmation by a two-thirds vote set out in By-Law Q-2 do not apply. The amendment shall take effect immediately upon receipt by the Board.
- Q-5 The CEO may make administrative or editorial revisions to the Board By-Laws and Rules of Order and to Board Policies including:
- correction of grammatical, typographical, formatting, or numbering errors;
 - updates to position titles, department names, organizational structures, and contact information;
 - revisions to terminology, nomenclature, legislation citations, document references, hyperlinks, forms, or cross-references;
 - changes required to maintain consistency within the Board By-Laws and Rules of Order and approved Board policies; and
 - housekeeping changes that do not materially affect the authority, responsibilities, or substantive requirements established by the Board By-Laws and Rules of Order or Board Policies.

Administrative or editorial revisions to the Board By-laws and Rules of Order or Board Policies will be presented to Trustees for information at the next Board meeting. The requirements for prior notice and confirmation by two-thirds vote as set out in By-Law Q-2 do not apply. The revisions shall take effect immediately upon receipt by the Board."



AD HOC GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Tuesday, October 6, 2026

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Feren
General Counsel

Date: Tuesday, October 6, 2026

For further information, please contact Jennifer Feren, General Counsel



Trustee Honorarium

Tuesday, October 6, 2026

BACKGROUND:

Ontario Regulation 320/26, *Honoraria for Board Members*, was filed on September 28, 2026. The Regulation establishes the following honorarium requirements for elected trustees:

1. For a member of the board, including the chair and vice-chair, an amount that is the lesser of,
 - i. \$9,000, and
 - ii. the total of the base amount and the enrolment amount determined by the board for its members for the 2025-2026 year of the term of office under Ontario Regulation 357/06 (*Honoraria for Board Members*) made under the Act and the board's policy, as they read on September 21, 2026.
2. For the chair of the board, an additional amount of \$1,000.
3. For the vice-chair of the board, an additional amount of \$500.

Approval of the prescribed honorarium framework will support the Board's continued commitment to transparency, public accountability, and compliance with provincial requirements.

TIMELINE:

For the year of the term of office commencing November 15, 2025 and ending November 14, 2026, each district school board is required to pay each board member the honorarium that would have been determined under Ontario Regulation 357/06, *Honoraria for Board Members*, and the Board's policy, as those instruments read on September 21, 2026.

Ontario Regulation 320/26 applies to a term of office beginning on or after November 15, 2026. For the purposes of the Regulation, each year of a trustee's term of office begins on November 15 and ends on November 14 of the following year.

COMMUNICATION REQUIREMENTS:

The Board is required to publish its trustee honorarium policy on the Board's website.

The Board is also required, by November 16 of each year, to publish on its website the honorarium paid to each board member for the preceding year of the member's term of office. The disclosed amount for each year must remain available on the Board's website for the duration of the member's term of office.

RECOMMENDED MOTION:

"That the Board approve trustee honoraria for the period commencing November 15, 2026, in accordance with Ontario Regulation 320/26, *Honoraria for Board Members*."



AD HOC GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Tuesday, October 6, 2026

APPENDED DATA:

Appendix A: Ontario Regulation 320/26, *Honoraria for Board Members*

Respectfully submitted,

Kelly Pisek, Chief Executive Officer
Stacy Veld, Chief Financial and Operations Officer

Date: October 6, 2026

For further information, please contact Jennifer Feren, General Counsel



Education Act

ONTARIO REGULATION 320/26 HONORARIA FOR BOARD MEMBERS

Consolidation Period: From September 28, 2026 to the [e-Laws currency date](#).

No amendments.

This is the English version of a bilingual regulation.

Term of office

1. For the purpose of this Regulation, a year of a member's term of office begins on November 15 and ends on the following November 14.

Honorarium for members of district school boards, 2025-2026

2. In respect of the year beginning on November 15, 2025 and ending on November 14, 2026, a district school board shall pay to a member of its board an honorarium for that year of the member's term of office in the amount that would have been determined for the member under Ontario Regulation 357/06 (Honoraria for Board Members) made under the Act and the board's policy, as they read on September 21, 2026.

Honorarium for members of district school boards, November 15, 2026 and later

3. (1) For a term of office beginning on November 15, 2026 or later, a district school board shall pay to a member of its board an honorarium for each year of the member's term of office consisting of the following amounts:

1. For a member of the board, including the chair and vice-chair, an amount that is the lesser of,
 - i. \$9,000, and
 - ii. the total of the base amount and the enrolment amount determined by the board for its members for the 2025-2026 year of the term of office under Ontario Regulation 357/06 (Honoraria for Board Members) made under the Act and the board's policy, as they read on September 21, 2026.
2. For the chair of the board, an additional amount of \$1,000.
3. For the vice-chair of the board, an additional amount of \$500.

(2) If, as of September 21, 2026, a district school board was subject or deemed to be subject to a vesting order under subsection 230.3 (1) of the Act, the amount for the purpose of subparagraph 1 ii of subsection (1) shall be the total of the base amount and the enrolment amount determined by the board for its members under Ontario Regulation 357/06 and the board's policy, as they read,

- (a) immediately before the vesting order was made under subsection 230.3 (1) of the Act; or
- (b) if the vesting order was originally made under subsection 257.31 (2) of the Act, as it read on November 19, 2025, immediately before that vesting order was made.

Honorarium policy

4. (1) A district school board shall establish a policy, on or before October 15 in the year in which a term of office begins, that sets out the amount of the honorarium determined under section 3 that will be paid to its members, chair and vice-chair during the term of office.

(2) The board shall publish its honorarium policy on a board website.

(3) The board shall publish on a board website, by November 16 in each year, the amount of the honorarium that was paid to each member of a board in the preceding year of the member's term of office, and the amount for each year shall remain on the board website for the member's entire term of office.

Honorarium for members of school authorities

5. (1) A school authority may pay to its members an honorarium at the same rate and on the same conditions as the allowance that was being paid to its members on December 1, 1996.

(2) If a school authority was paying an amount as an additional allowance to its chair or vice-chair on December 1, 1996, the school authority may pay that amount as an additional honorarium to its chair or vice-chair, at the same rate and on the same conditions as applied on December 1, 1996.

Service for partial year



6. The honorarium amount for a board member who serves for a partial year shall be determined by prorating the amount determined under section 3 or 5, as the case may be, according to the time served by the member during the year of the term of office.

Reduction for breach of code of conduct

7. For the purposes of paragraph 2 of subsection 218.3.1 (1) of the Act, the maximum amount of a reduction from a member's honorarium for a breach of the board's code of conduct is 25 per cent of the amount the board would otherwise pay to the member for the year of the term of office in which the breach occurred.

Boards subject to vesting order

8. If a board is subject to a vesting order made or deemed to be made under subsection 230.3 (1) of the Act, the Minister or a person appointed under subsection 230.15 (2) of the Act may, while the board is subject to the vesting order,

- (a) reduce the honorarium amount for members of the board; or
- (b) determine that an honorarium will not be paid to members.

9. OMITTED (REVOKES OTHER REGULATIONS).

10. OMITTED (PROVIDES FOR COMING INTO FORCE OF PROVISIONS OF THIS REGULATION).

Français

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WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2026

MINUTES

ATTENDANCE

Committee Members Present

Flavia Orvitz (Acting Chair) - Autism Ontario – Niagara Chapter, Patty Ferrie – Inclusion West Niagara, Tessa Alexander – VOICE for Children Who Are Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Katie McKay – Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Coalition, Tom Janzen – Down Syndrome Niagara

Administration/Resource

Kelly Pisek – Chief Executive Officer, Simon Hancox - Superintendent of Student Achievement and Well-being, Catherine Hodson- Student Achievement Leader Special Education Elementary, Matt Ezrin – Student Achievement Leader Special Education Secondary, Tracey Krysa – Senior Manager Special Education, Shannon Mitchell - Trustee, District School Board of Niagara,

Regrets

Cynthia Nyaundi- NSS-NTEC
Brienne Friewat – Bethesda
Barb Wilson – Inclusion Action Ontario
Kathy Bell – Niagara Children’s Centre
Michelle Toy – Pathstone Mental Health
Elizabeth Klassen- Trustee, District School Board of Niagara

Recording Secretary

Jennifer McGugan, Safe Schools and Student Well-Being Coordinator

1. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF TERRITORY

Quorum was established and the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) meeting was called to order at 5:35 p.m. Acting Chair, Flavia Orvitz, opened the meeting with the Acknowledgement of Traditional Territory of the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe peoples.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Moved by Tessa Alexander
Seconded by Katie McKay

“That the Agenda dated September 23, 2026, be approved as presented.”

CARRIED

3. WELCOME

Acting Chair, Flavia Orvitz, welcomed new representative Tom Janzen from Down Syndrome Niagara and invited committee members to introduce themselves.

4. STUDENT VOICE



Catharine Hodson, Student Achievement Leader for Special Education – Elementary, presented a video highlighting the success of summer partnership programs for families of children with special learning needs. Participating staff, students, and families shared their enthusiasm and appreciation for programs hosted by Niagara Children’s Centre, Bethesda Services, and the Learning Disabilities Association of Niagara Region.

5. **DSBN PRESENTATIONS/UPDATES**

Kelly Pisek, Chief Executive Officer, reviewed recent Ministry of Education updates and outlined DSBN’s initiative to build a 100% Culture centred on Proving What’s Possible for every student. Staff received a consistent message emphasizing two priorities across all areas of work: belonging and inclusion, and responsive instruction at both the system and school levels.

Simon Hancox, Superintendent of Student Achievement and Well-Being, reported that Special Education Support Services provided training and resources on IEP development, including clear guidance on their framework and required components. IEPs promote belonging and inclusion by ensuring students receive the supports they need and by incorporating input from parents and guardians. Simon Hancox also identified specialized programs as a priority, emphasizing the importance of providing consistent regional programming, setting clear baseline expectations, providing adequate resources, and promoting stronger professional collaboration among staff.

6. **SEAC COLLABORATION AND FEEDBACK**

Simon Hancox reported that some healthcare providers are recommending educational resources beyond their scope of practice. Committee members discussed and recommended clear communication with families and collaboration with SEAC to support effective family advocacy around special education supports.

Also, the Special Education Plan was updated in June and submitted to the Ministry of Education in July, as required pending board approval. The Board approved the plan in the August board meeting. The accompanying Special Education Parent/Guardian Guide incorporated valuable SEAC feedback, resulting in a more family-friendly resource that clearly explains available supports. This year, DSBN will continue collaborating with SEAC to update the plan and ensure it aligns with evolving Ministry expectations.

Simon Hancox shared that each organization represented on SEAC received a membership confirmation letter, and all current members confirmed their participation for the next four-year term. Organizations will receive further communication confirming their representatives and alternates.

Finally, the SEAC Handbook was shared with members for their review. The group will work collaboratively to revise this document to better support SEAC members in their role.

7. **ASSOCIATION INFORMATION**

Committee members shared information and updates from their respective associations and roles.

8. **TRUSTEE UPDATE**

Trustee Mitchell provided an update on the August Board meeting.

9. **CORRESPONDENCE**

There was no correspondence received.



SEAC MINUTES

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2026



10. **QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

There were no questions.

11. **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 6:51 p.m.

Next Meeting: Wednesday October 28, 2026



THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2026

MINUTES

ATTENDANCE

Committee Members

Ryan Morris (Chair), Melissa Lofquist, Amber Hughes, Ray Darukhanawalla, Lisa Mooney, Kelly Goulding, Sarah Richert, Melissa Roberts, Caitlyn MacInnis, Jon Cairns (Administrator), Carolyn Jonovich (Administrator), Michael Burns (Superintendent), Kelly Pisek (CEO)

Trustee Committee Members

Owen Riel, Shannon Mitchell

Recording Secretary

Elisha von Wuthenau, Administrative Assistant to Michael Burns

A. WELCOME

Chair Lofquist welcomed everyone to the meeting and facilitated introductions.

B. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Moved by Ray Darukhanawalla

Seconded by Melissa Lofquist

“That the Agenda be approved.”

CARRIED

C. ACCLAIMED CHAIR

Chair Lofquist has completed her term and has stepped down. Chair Morris will continue as sole Chair for the 2026-2027 term.

D. SUPERINTENDENT REPORT

Superintendent Burns recognized the growth and success of PIC over the past few years and the importance of continued improvement and working relationships with School Council Chairs. To ensure clear direction Superintendent Burns requested a sub-committee to be established to review and revise the PIC by-laws. Four members have volunteered to join the sub-committee.

CEO REPORT

CEO Pisek provided details about recent Ministry of Education requirements affecting Ontario School Boards. She also shared the board-wide initiative “100% Culture” that



PARENT INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2026



Administrators and school staff have started to explore. More information will be shared with School Councils in the coming months.

E. STAFF PRESENTATIONS

Milica Petkovic, Public Relations Manager

Milica Petkovic presented an overview of the dsbn.org website redesign that was launched at the beginning of the school year. She reviewed the PIC webpage. Superintendent Burns thanked the committee for providing input into the changes that were implemented. Milica as providing a short tour of the Student and Family Support Office webpage.

Mat Miller, Superintendent of Student Achievement and Well-being (Secondary)

Jon Cairns, Administrator

Superintendent Miller and Mr. Cairns presented new Ministry guidelines that impact secondary students this year. They provided an overview of the mandates and clarification regarding the attendance, participation and exam expectations put forth by the Ministry. School Councils will be provided with this information as well.

F. CHAIR REPORT

Chair Morris provided a summary of decisions and plans established by the planning sub-committee for the “Chairing with Confidence” event scheduled on Wednesday, November 4th. After indicating the funds available for 2026-2027 PIC events, he requested the committee vote to dedicate funds for additional expenses associated with the upcoming event.

Moved by Melissa Lofquist

Seconded by Sarah Richert

“That an additional \$5000 will be dedicated toward the Chairing with Confidence event.”

CARRIED

The Parent Involvement Committee meeting was adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Event – Chairing with Confidence, November 4, 2026

Next meeting – November 26, 2026 (location tbd)



Tuesday, October 27, 2026

STUDENT TRUSTEE & INDIGENOUS STUDENT TRUSTEE UPDATE

BACKGROUND

The DSBN Student Trustees and Indigenous Student Trustee continue to provide leadership and representation for students across the DSBN by advocating for student voice and supporting student engagement initiatives. Their ongoing efforts help strengthen connections between students, schools, and the DSBN.

INFORMATION

Indigenous Student Trustee Ivy Jones participated in several events during September and October and looks forward to continuing her work as an advocate for Indigenous students while promoting leadership opportunities across DSBN schools.

- Southeast Scarborough Powwow – September 24
- National Day for Truth and Reconciliation at Greater Fort Erie Secondary and St. Davids Public School – September 30
- IEC meeting Thursday - October 8
- Fall Indigenous Symposium for Grades 7 & 8 – October 14 and 15
- Waneek Horn-Miller and Kaniehtiio Horn Speaker Event at Laura Secord - October 20

Ivy is pleased to report that sixty-seven secondary students have signed up to be an Indigenous student rep this school year

Student Trustees William Connor and Daisy Dong are collaborating to represent student voice through key leadership opportunities, including:

- DSBN Student Senate Orientation Meeting - October 7
- the DSBN Student Leadership Forum at White Oaks Conference Centre - October 22.

William Connor has also taken on a provincial leadership role as a member of the OSTA-AECO Public Education Interest Group Executive Cabinet Board.



RECOMMENDED MOTION:

“That the Student Trustee & Indigenous Student Trustee Report be received.”

Respectfully submitted,
William Connor, Student Trustee
Daisy Dong, Student Trustee
Ivy Jones, Indigenous Student Trustee



Tuesday, October 27, 2026

Staffing and Recruitment 2026-27

BACKGROUND

The Human Resources department has undergone several personnel changes in the past two (2) school years. This has brought on opportunities to structure the department in a manner that elevates the quality of the work produced and promotes cross-departmental collaboration to be more responsive to the needs of the system.

The HR department has been working diligently to improve its hiring practices. HR is leveraging the skill and expertise of staff to recruit highly qualified employees who are prepared to take on their respective role.

Additionally, HR is being intentional in the timing of its recruitment initiatives to align strategically with post-secondary graduation/certification. This enables us to proactively retain qualified candidates before they have an opportunity to retain employment elsewhere.

KEY INFORMATION

We are pleased to report that there were no layoffs across the board to start the 2026-2027 school year.

Recruitment Strategies

Human Resources continues to support community outreach and recruitment efforts through participation in career and recruitment fairs, with representatives from Human Resources and the PVP team attending on behalf of DSBN.

While DSBN has historically focused on recruitment fairs within the Niagara region due to its strong local networks, evolving workforce needs require a broader recruitment strategy. Human Resources will expand its presence to fairs across the GTA to attract a more diverse candidate pool and strengthen recruitment efforts with individuals bringing a wide range of skills and experiences.

Faculties of Education

Human Resources has developed strong relationships with local faculties of education and continues to prioritize requests from Brock University for student teacher placements. This involves strategic placement of student teacher candidates with seasoned staff, matching qualifications, teaching areas/subjects, and geographical needs/preferences.



Supply Educational Assistant Recruitment

Human Resources engages in continuous intake; reviewing resumes and interviewing candidates monthly. HR has partnered with a retired principal to conduct the interviews. Members of the Special Education team also assist in the screening of resumes and candidate selection following interviews.

Human Resources has built a resume screening matrix and has overhauled the interview questions, in conjunction with Special Education, to target crucial areas of the job, which will ensure we are offering placement the most prepared and suitable candidates.

Police Checks – Supporting Children and Students Act, 2025

The Act received Royal Assent on November 20, 2025, amending the *Education Act* in several areas; particularly in respect of the collection of personal information for existing employees.

The Act has expanded school boards' obligations to collect police checks from additional individuals who previously were not required to provide a police check (unless otherwise obligated to do so via Board policy), including volunteers and student teachers on educational placements.

The Act also now requires school boards to collect new police checks from current employees, volunteers, and third-party providers **every 5 years**, or any time an individual is charged with, or convicted of, an offence under the Criminal Code of Canada (as soon as reasonably possible).

This new process was required to be implemented on February 1, 2026.

Human Resources partnered with other key departments, including Information Technology and Financial Services, to design a process for collecting this information in a manner that protected the privacy and confidentiality of employees' information.

Note, the process for newly hired employees has not changed.

RECOMMENDED MOTION:

"That the Staffing and Recruitment 2026-2027 Report dated October 27, 2026, be received."

Respectfully submitted,
Breann Pyke
Executive Officer of Human Resources



Tuesday, October 27, 2026

Responsive Instruction: Early Reading Strategy

BACKGROUND

Building strong foundational reading skills remains a key priority for the District School Board of Niagara. Consistent with provincial direction (PPM 168) and the recommendations of the *Right to Read Inquiry*, DSBN continues to strengthen a comprehensive approach to ensuring all students develop the reading skills necessary for future success.

At DSBN, students in Senior Kindergarten and Grades 1 and 2 participate in up to 3 universal reading screening assessments during the school year. Screening occurs in November, February and May, creating a cycle through which educators identify learning needs, respond through instruction and intervention, and monitor student progress. Results are also communicated to families through established interview and reporting cycles.

Screening is one component of DSBN's broader approach to responsive reading instruction. Educators use screening and classroom assessment information to identify student learning needs, strengthen universal classroom instruction, and determine when additional targeted support is required. Evidence-informed instructional resources and professional learning support consistent approaches to foundational reading instruction across schools.

For 2026-27, DSBN strengthened school-based reading intervention capacity across the system. The shift from an itinerant to a more school-based model increases schools' capacity to provide timely, sustained intervention and strengthens connections between classroom instruction and intervention. Based on recommendations from Area Superintendents, reading intervention resources are deployed across the system in response to identified student and school needs.

Reading Support Teachers use structured, evidence-informed intervention resources and approaches focused on foundational reading skills. Curriculum Services and Special Education Services are jointly supporting implementation through professional learning, resources and ongoing support for educators, aligning classroom instruction and targeted intervention with current research and provincial expectations.

Together, these components create a coordinated continuum of early reading support: universal screening, responsive classroom instruction, targeted intervention and ongoing monitoring of student progress. This system-wide approach reflects DSBN's commitment to early identification and intervention and support for improved reading achievement for every learner.



RECOMMENDED MOTION

“That the Responsive Instruction: Early Reading Strategy report dated October 27, 2026, be received.”

Respectfully submitted,

Melanie Sendzik, Superintendent of Student Achievement & Well-Being





DSBN OUTDOOR EDUCATION

— ANNUAL REPORT —
2025 - 2026



PLAY • EXPLORE • DISCOVER



DSBN.org/OutdoorEducation



A Year in Outdoor Education

Outdoor education continues to play an important role in supporting student achievement, well-being, and belonging across the District School Board of Niagara during the 2025–2026 school year. Through experiences at the Adventure Campus, Living Campus, conservation areas across Niagara, school grounds, and community spaces, thousands of students connected classroom learning to real-world experiences while developing confidence, resilience, leadership, and a deeper appreciation for the natural world.

This year, DSBN Outdoor Education programs reached more students than ever before. From Kindergarten students exploring habitats for the first time to secondary students earning SHSM certifications and participating in community-building experiences, outdoor education created opportunities for students to learn, grow, and discover strengths that are not always visible in a traditional classroom.

Year at a Glance

• **12,605** students participated in programs at the DSBN Adventure Campus and Living Campus

• **7,117** students participated in DSBN-organized outdoor education programs delivered with community partners

• **23,000** students and educators participated in Take Me Outside outdoor learning initiatives

• **218** students earned SHSM certifications



Outdoor Education Campuses

The Adventure Campus and Living Campus hosted 12,605 students during the 2025–2026 school year. Through hands-on, curriculum-connected programming, students explored habitats, biodiversity, environmental stewardship, navigation, survival skills, leadership, and teamwork while spending meaningful time outdoors.

Programs were intentionally designed to support curriculum expectations across science, geography, physical education, environmental education, and social-emotional development. They provided opportunities for students to apply learning in authentic ways and develop skills that extend far beyond the classroom.

For many students, the campuses offered experiences they may not otherwise have access to.

"Our students live a very city-centred life and don't often get the chance to just be in nature. It was a true gift for them to spend the day outside with each other and build relationships."
– DSBN Teacher

Teachers frequently shared that outdoor learning revealed strengths that are not always visible in traditional learning environments.

"Students that don't necessarily excel in academics in the classroom often shine at the Adventure Campus." – DSBN Teacher

Others described the powerful impact that spending time outdoors had on student confidence and engagement.

"Several of our multilingual learners were especially engaged. They are very quiet in class and often struggle to share their ideas. Experiences like this reinforce how powerful outdoor learning can be in deepening understanding, fostering confidence, and building connections in our students." – DSBN Teacher



Specialized Student Programming

Secondary English Language Learner Days

The school year began with Secondary English Language Learner Days at the Living Campus, welcoming students from four DSBN secondary schools. These outdoor learning experiences provided opportunities for students who are new to Canada to connect with classmates, practice communication skills in authentic settings, and experience a day in a new and unique natural environment.

Through campfires, team-building activities, nature exploration, and cooperative challenges, students strengthened language skills while building friendships and confidence in a welcoming outdoor environment.

One teacher reflected:

"Most of the ESL students had never roasted a marshmallow. They enjoyed the Canadian experience."

Another highlighted the importance of creating opportunities for students to build relationships while participating in experiences they may not otherwise have access to.

"Students new to our school engaged in fun activities and learning alongside peers, allowing strong relationships to build. This gave them valuable life experiences."

By beginning the school year outdoors, students were able to connect with peers, staff, and their new school communities in a relaxed and supportive environment.



Secondary Special Education Days

New this year, the Living Campus hosted four Secondary Special Education Days designed specifically to meet the diverse needs of students while providing meaningful opportunities for outdoor learning, exploration, and connection.

Programs were carefully adapted to ensure all students could participate successfully and experience a sense of accomplishment. Through nature exploration, campfire experiences, hands-on environmental activities, and collaborative challenges, students were encouraged to engage at their own pace while building confidence and developing relationships with peers.

The impact was evident in both student participation and teacher feedback.

"Our students enjoyed the day so much! Students who never attend school trips signed up for this one!" – DSBN Teacher



Another teacher shared:

"The students appreciated an opportunity to spend time outdoors together and see themselves as people who can enjoy being in nature."

For many students, these days created opportunities to experience success, build relationships, and develop a stronger sense of belonging.



SHSM Certification Days

The Adventure Campus continued to support Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM) programming by offering industry-recognized certifications in Maps, Orienteering and GPS and Team Building and Leadership.

A total of 218 students earned certifications through hands-on learning experiences that developed leadership, communication, navigation, and problem-solving skills. Students applied technology and critical thinking while working collaboratively in outdoor settings.

One teacher noted:

"This is a great program for teaching orientation, GPS use and technology. It also gave students a chance to work in groups, team-build and communicate."

These certifications continue to support student pathways while helping learners develop practical skills that are transferable to future education, employment, and community involvement.



Eco Days

During Spring 2026, the Living Campus hosted our Eco Days program, providing students with hands-on opportunities to explore environmental stewardship, sustainability, and their role in caring for the natural world.



Through interactive activities focused on biodiversity, habitats, recycling, composting, and ecological reciprocity, students connected classroom learning to real-world environmental issues. The program supported curriculum expectations in science, environmental education, and citizenship while encouraging students to consider how their everyday actions can positively impact their communities.

More importantly, Eco Days inspired students to see themselves as environmental stewards. Through exploration, discussion, and hands-on learning, students developed a deeper appreciation for nature and a stronger understanding of their responsibility to care for it.

One teacher shared:

"I heard a couple students say this was the BEST trip ever!"

Another reflected on the impact of connecting environmental learning with Earth Day:

"It was a great way to teach kids to respect the environment and doing the trip on Earth Day was a wonderful way to talk about and explore nature, recycling, habitats, etc."

The success of the Eco Days program continues to demonstrate the value of providing students with meaningful opportunities to learn about environmental sustainability while experiencing nature firsthand.



Earth Month Water Bottle Drive

As part of Earth Month initiatives, DSBN Outdoor Education launched its first Water Bottle Drive, engaging 12 schools and approximately 3,500 students.



The initiative encouraged students and families to donate gently used reusable water bottles that could be redistributed within schools to students who may not have access to one or who occasionally forget theirs at home. In total, 254 reusable water bottles were collected.

Beyond the environmental impact, the project provided meaningful opportunities for student leadership and curriculum-connected learning. Schools incorporated mathematics and data management by surveying students, graphing results, and sharing findings through school announcements. Student councils played an important role in promoting and organizing collections within their school communities.

Teachers highlighted the educational value of the initiative and the important conversations it generated around waste reduction and environmental responsibility.

"Our students were excited to receive their reusable water bottles, and it's sparked great conversations about sustainability. It's wonderful to see environmental stewardship being reinforced through everyday actions."



Another school shared:

"Students who forget their water bottles or don't have one now have access to one as we collected a lot. Washed and stored in the staff room for students who forget their water bottle at home and/or given to students who don't have one of their own."

The Water Bottle Drive demonstrated how small actions can have a meaningful impact while empowering students to take an active role in creating more sustainable school communities.

Archery

The Grade 7 and 8 Archery Program at the Living Campus continued to be one of the most popular offerings of the year.

For many students, archery provided an opportunity to try something completely new while developing focus, perseverance, self-regulation, and confidence. Under the guidance of our certified outdoor guides, students learned proper archery techniques in a safe, supportive, and encouraging environment.

The program aligns with curriculum expectations in Health and Physical Education while also fostering important transferable skills such as goal setting, concentration, resilience, and personal responsibility.

Teachers consistently commented on the confidence students gained throughout the experience.

"Many students in our school would never get the chance to do an activity like this because of access to specialized programs and affordability. Doing this program allowed them to build confidence in a sport they have never tried."

Another teacher observed:

"There were a couple of students who stood taller, smiled more and exuded confidence when their arrow hit the target."

The supportive approach of the instructors was frequently highlighted as a key factor in student success.

"My students are reluctant to try new things, but the instructors were so encouraging that the kids kept trying and really loved the experience."

For many students, the day was about much more than learning to shoot arrows—it was about stepping outside their comfort zone, discovering new strengths, and experiencing success.



Animation in Nature

Thanks to support from the Ontario Arts Council, artist educator Mike Cope, and DSBN Outdoor Education, 461 students participated in Drawn to Life: Animation in Nature during the 2025–2026 school year.

This unique visual arts retreat combines outdoor learning, environmental exploration, and digital creativity. Students used nature as inspiration while learning animation techniques from professional cartoonist and artist educator Mike Cope. Through a series of engaging, hands-on activities, students explored storytelling, artistic expression, and stop-motion animation before bringing their own nature-inspired creations to life.

The program supported curriculum expectations in Visual Arts, Media Literacy, and Science while providing students with opportunities to develop creativity, communication skills, confidence, and self-expression.

Teachers consistently highlighted the positive impact the program had on student engagement and participation.

"Students loved seeing their animations come to life right in front of them."

Many educators also noted the program's ability to reach students who do not always see themselves as artists or who may struggle in traditional classroom settings.

"My artists who are naturally timid, FLOURISHED!" – DSBN Teacher

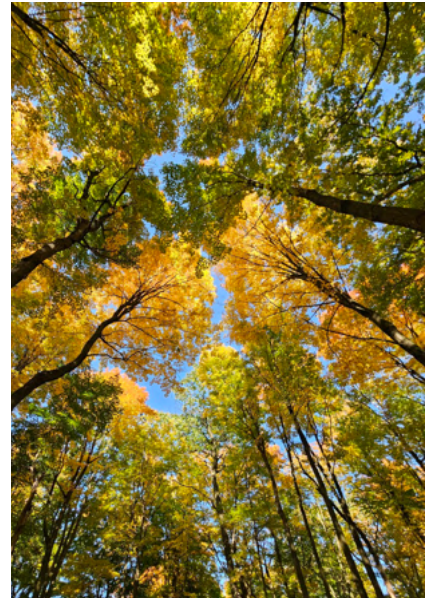
Another teacher shared:

"A student who struggles with ADHD lit right up—it was such a positive experience."

One of the program's greatest strengths is its accessibility. Every student is able to participate successfully, regardless of artistic experience or skill level.

"All students were able to create an animated clip regardless of skill level." – DSBN Teacher

By combining creativity, technology, nature, and outdoor learning, Animation in Nature continues to provide students with an unforgettable learning experience that celebrates imagination, curiosity, and confidence.



Community Partnerships



Strong community partnerships continue to expand opportunities for DSBN students to experience high-quality outdoor learning beyond the classroom. Through collaborations with the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority (NPCA), the Ontario Arts Council, local artists, and community organizations, students were able to participate in unique programs that complemented and enhanced the learning opportunities available at the Adventure Campus and Living Campus.

Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority (NPCA)

DSBN Outdoor Education and the NPCA continued to work together to provide a wide range of outdoor learning experiences for students across Niagara. During the 2025–2026 school year, 7,117 students participated in DSBN-organized outdoor education programs delivered in partnership with the NPCA.

These experiences included Grade 9 Community Connections Days, team-building programs for Grades 7 and 8, fishing and forest exploration at St. John's Conservation Area, day programs at Ball's Falls, Stevensville, and Chippawa Creek Conservation Areas, and overnight camping experiences for intermediate students.

Grade 9 Community Connections Days

A total of 2,278 Grade 9 students from 11 secondary schools participated in Grade 9 Community Connections Days at Ball's Falls Conservation Area. Designed to support the transition into secondary school, these experiences focused on relationship building, teamwork, leadership, and creating a sense of belonging within new school communities.

Through activities such as orienteering, team challenges, scavenger hunts, and the popular Amazing Race, students worked collaboratively, met new classmates, and connected with senior student leaders and staff.

One teacher shared:

"The day is a wonderful way to start things off and support transitions for students coming into Grade 9. It allows our senior leadership and council students to make connections with our junior students, and everything comes together to support our creation of a community."

For many schools, these experiences have become an important part of helping students build confidence and connections during one of the most significant transitions in their educational journey.



Fishing and Forest Exploration – St. John's Conservation Area

In partnership with the NPCA students in Grades 4–6 continue to enjoy one of our most unique outdoor learning experiences at St. John's Conservation Area. The program introduces students to the lifelong skill of fishing while fostering an appreciation for local ecosystems, environmental stewardship, and responsible outdoor recreation. For many students, it is their first opportunity to fish and to experience the excitement of catching a fish in a safe, supportive environment.

The day extends well beyond fishing. Students hike through the conservation area, learn the fundamentals of fly casting, create their own fishing flies, and discover how healthy watersheds support thriving aquatic ecosystems. Through these authentic outdoor experiences, students make meaningful connections to the Science curriculum while developing environmental stewardship, problem-solving skills, and a deeper appreciation for Niagara's natural spaces.



Overnight Camping Experiences

Outdoor Education and the NPCA also partnered to provide 16 overnight camping trips for 761 students during the spring of 2026.

For many students, this was their first camping experience. Over two days and one night, students learned how to set up tents, cook outdoors, participate in hiking, fishing, orienteering, astronomy, and leadership activities, and spend meaningful time away from screens and technology.

Teachers consistently highlighted the lasting impact these experiences had on students.

"A lot of kids had never camped before. Having this opportunity was priceless for them. It was brilliant to see the kids have tech-free free time and enjoy each other's company in the outdoors."

Another teacher reflected:

"For many of our students this might be the only opportunity they ever have to experience nature in such close proximity. The wonder and awe that many of them felt gave me goosebumps."

Students left with new skills, stronger friendships, increased confidence, and memories that will remain with them long after the school year has ended.



Take Me Outside and Outdoor Learning Across the DSBN

Outdoor learning continued to grow across the DSBN through participation in Take Me Outside initiatives.



This year more than 20,490 students and educators took their learning outdoors during Take Me Outside Week.

The challenge welcomed 80 educators participating for the first time, while 236 educators committed to the Take Me Outside Learning Challenge, pledging to teach outdoors at least once each week throughout the school year.

Educators shared countless examples of creativity and innovation as they transformed school grounds into learning spaces for literacy, mathematics, science, physical education, French, and environmental learning.

One teacher shared:

"I took my Grade 7 and 8 French classes outside to complete an adjective scavenger hunt and play cooperative games. They all had a blast!"

Another commented:

"Thanks so much! The kiddos have asked to do this weekly now!"

The continued growth of Take Me Outside demonstrates a growing recognition that meaningful learning can happen anywhere and that outdoor environments can support student engagement, well-being, achievement, and connection.

Take Me Outside Winter Challenge

New this year, DSBN Outdoor Education launched its first Take Me Outside Winter Challenge.

A total of 103 educators and 3,245 students from Kindergarten to Grade 12 participated in outdoor learning experiences throughout February, embracing winter as an opportunity rather than a barrier to learning.

Students explored mathematics, science, physical education, environmental learning, and creative play outdoors while experiencing the benefits of spending time outside during the winter months.



One educator shared:

"This challenge has given me the opportunity to think outside the box and how to utilize simple materials to create in-depth hands-on lessons outside."

Another reflected:

"My students loved the winter challenge. We spent our mornings outside and have continued doing that now that the weather is warmer. We created fraction snow brownies and divided them using a mixture of Jello powder and water to keep it safe. So, thank you again for creating these fun opportunities that push us as educators but also provide rich environments for our students."



The success of the Winter Challenge reinforced an important message for students and educators alike: meaningful outdoor learning can happen in every season.



Our Team

The success of DSBN Outdoor Education is made possible by an exceptional team of Outdoor Education Guides whose passion, expertise, and commitment create meaningful learning experiences for students every day.

While many students and educators know our team through their work at the Adventure Campus and Living Campus, their impact extends far beyond our campuses. Throughout the year, Outdoor Education Guides supported Take Me Outside initiatives, facilitated SHSM certifications, delivered specialized programming, partnered with community organizations, supported Earth Month initiatives, and helped develop and deliver outdoor learning opportunities for thousands of students across Niagara.

Teacher feedback consistently highlighted the positive impact our staff have on student engagement, confidence, and success.



"The facilitators were knowledgeable, friendly, and excellent with the kids. Their enthusiasm for outdoor education was evident and infectious."

Another teacher shared:

"Your staff was incredibly helpful and intuitive with student needs. They all have a passion and do amazing work for our students."



Perhaps the most common theme throughout hundreds of survey responses was the ability of our team to create welcoming, inclusive environments where students feel safe to take risks, try new things, and discover strengths they may not have known they possessed.

As we reflect on another successful year, we are grateful for the dedication of our Outdoor Education team, DSBN trustees, senior leadership team, administrators, school staff, and community partners who continue to make outdoor learning opportunities possible for DSBN students.

Together, we are helping students build confidence, develop skills, strengthen relationships, connect with nature, and deepen their understanding of curriculum through meaningful, hands-on learning experiences. These opportunities inspire curiosity, foster a sense of belonging, and create memories that will last a lifetime.





DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD OF NIAGARA

191 CARLTON ST. ■ ST. CATHARINES, ON ■ L2R 7P4 ■ 905-641-1550 ■ DSBN.ORG

September 11, 2026

Kate Baggott, Chair of the Board
District School Board of Niagara
191 Carlton Street
St. Catharines, ON L2R 7P4

Re: Request to Begin School Naming Process as per Policy A-09

Dear Chair Baggott and Kelly Pisek (Chief Executive Officer and Chief Education Officer),

On behalf of Ontario and Kate S. Durdan Public Schools, I would like to request permission to begin the school naming process, as outlined in Policy A-09: Naming/Renaming of Schools.

The naming process provides an exciting opportunity for students, staff, families, and community members of Ontario and Kate S. Durdan Public Schools to come together as we prepare for the opening of the new school in September 2027. It will be an opportunity for our school communities to help shape the identity and sense of belonging of this new school from the very beginning.

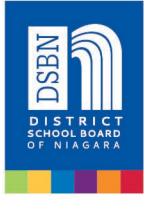
We look forward to beginning this exciting journey with our students and school communities and to hearing the thoughtful ideas and suggestions that emerge throughout the naming process.

Sincerely,

Jaime Sinnett
Superintendent of Student Achievement & Well-Being

CC Nancy Beamer (Trustee for New School)
Shannon Mitchell (Trustee for Kate S. Durdan)
Helga Campbell (Trustee for Kate S. Durdan)





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September 11, 2026

Kate Baggott, Chair of the Board
District School Board of Niagara
191 Carlton Street
St. Catharines, ON L2R 7P4

Re: Request to Begin School Naming Process as per Policy A-09

Dear Chair Baggott and Kelly Pisek (Chief Executive Officer and Chief Education Officer),

On behalf of Quaker Road and Glendale Public Schools, I would like to request permission to begin the school naming process, as outlined in Policy A-09: Naming/Renaming of Schools.

The naming process provides an exciting opportunity for students, staff, families, and community members of Quaker Road and Glendale Public Schools to come together as we prepare for the opening of the new school in September 2027. It will be an opportunity for our school communities to help shape the identity and sense of belonging of this new school from the very beginning.

We look forward to beginning this exciting journey with our students and school communities and to hearing the thoughtful ideas and suggestions that emerge throughout the naming process.

Sincerely,

Jaime Sinnett
Superintendent of Student Achievement & Well-Being

CC Sue Barnett, Nancy Beamer





DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD OF NIAGARA

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September 11, 2026

Kate Baggott, Chair of the Board
District School Board of Niagara
191 Carlton Street
St. Catharines, ON L2R 7P4

Re: Request to Begin School Naming Process as per Policy A-09

Dear Chair Baggott and Kelly Pisek (Chief Executive Officer and Chief Education Officer),

On behalf of McKay Public School, I would like to request permission to begin the school naming process, as outlined in Policy A-09: Naming/Renaming of Schools.

The naming process provides an exciting opportunity for students, staff, families, and community members of McKay Public School to come together as we prepare for the opening of the new school in September 2027. It will be an opportunity for our school community to help shape the identity and sense of belonging of this new school from the very beginning.

We look forward to beginning this exciting journey with our students and school community and to hearing the thoughtful ideas and suggestions that emerge throughout the naming process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Jaime Sinnett'.

Jaime Sinnett
Superintendent of Student Achievement & Well-Being

CC Sue Barnett (Trustee for New School)
Owen Riel (Trustee for McKay School)



September 10, 2026

Kelly Pisek
Chief Executive Officer
District School Board of Niagara
Kelly.Pisek@dsbn.org

Dear Kelly,

On behalf of the City of St. Catharines, I would like to extend our heartfelt appreciation for your support and assistance during the recent flooding in our community.

In a time of uncertainty and disruption, you and the team at District School Board of Niagara stepped up to help. Your generosity, cooperation, and willingness to support our recovery efforts made a meaningful difference to residents, businesses, City staff, and others affected by the flooding.

Moments like these remind us of what makes St. Catharines such a strong and caring community. When challenges arise, people come together—and your support was a powerful example of that community spirit. Your contribution helped strengthen the City's response and recovery efforts and demonstrated your commitment to helping our community move forward.

We also recognize that your assistance came at a time when many individuals, businesses, and organizations were facing significant demands and disruptions of their own. The fact that you made the effort to help others during such a challenging period makes your support all the more meaningful.

Thank you for standing alongside our community when it needed it most. Your partnership, compassion, and generosity helped make a difficult situation a little easier for those affected.

Thank you for being there for St. Catharines. Your support truly matters.

Sincerely,



Mat Siscoe
Mayor



David Oakes
Chief Administrative Officer

