MINUTES

TUESDAY, MAY 27, 2025

Private Session: 6:33 p.m. – 6:48p.m. | Public Session: 7:00 p.m. – 9:20p.m.

ATTENDANCE

BOARD

Kate Baggott, Sue Barnett (Chair), Nancy Beamer, Helga Campbell, Lora Campbell (virtual), Jonathan Fast, Susan Jovanovic, Elizabeth Klassen, Deanne MacIntosh (virtual), Shannon Mitchell

STUDENT TRUSTEES

Audrey Akharoh
Jacklyn Saddler

INDIGENOUS STUDENT TRUSTEE

Clayton Mishibinijima

OFFICIALS

Kelly Pisek (Director of Education), Stacy Veld (Associate Director), Marian Reimer Friesen, Mary Anne Gage, Ann Gilmore, Simon Hancox, Fred Louws, Melanie Sendzik, Neil Sheard, Michael St. John, Darren VanHooydonk, Jennifer Feren, Milica Petkovic, Karen Bellamy

RECORDING SECRETARY

Jennifer Reid

REGRETS

TECHNICAL SUPPORT

Nate Burns, Andrew Latham

A. COMMENCEMENT OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD

1. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF TRADITIONAL TERRITORY

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

2. CALL TO ORDER AND NOTING OF MEMBERS ABSENT

Chair Barnett called the Regular Meeting of the Board to order at 7:00 p.m. and noted that Trustee Lora Campbell and Trustee MacIntosh were attending virtually.

3. DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of conflict of interest.

B. COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (PRIVATE SESSION)

Moved by Nancy Beamer
Seconded by Helga Campbell

"That the Board do now enter Committee of the Whole."
CARRIED

Moved by Kate Baggott
Seconded by Shannon Mitchell

"That the Board return to Open meeting."
CARRIED

The Board returned to open meeting at 6:48 p.m.

C. SINGING OF 'O CANADA'

The Board stood as '*O Canada*' was performed by Burleigh Hill Public School students via video and took a moment of silence to honour the passing of a student.

D. REFLECTIVE READING

Trustee Kate Baggott shared a reflective reading.

E. BUSINESS OF THE BOARD

1. Adoption of the Agenda

Moved by Nancy Beamer
Seconded by Jonathan Fast

"That the Agenda be adopted."
CARRIED

2. Approval of Board Minutes

Moved by Kate Baggott
Seconded by Shannon Mitchell

"That the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the District School Board of Niagara dated April 22, 2025, be confirmed as submitted."
CARRIED

3. Business Arising from the Minutes

There was no business arising from the minutes.

4. Ratification Of Business Conducted in Committee of The Whole (Private Session)

Moved by Lora Campbell
Seconded by Deanne MacIntosh

"That the business transacted in Committee of the Whole be now ratified by the Board."
CARRIED

F. EDUCATIONAL SHOWCASING OR PRESENTATIONS

1. Director's Report and Recognition

a) Director's Recognition for Extraordinary Contributions

Director Pisek recognized Jen Tye, Principal of Marshville Public School for her compassion, commitment, and transformative leadership, culminating in her pivotal role at Marshville Public School where she established core values of respect, integrity, and kindness. Her visionary approach fosters an environment where students thrive, staff feel supported, and families develop a deep sense of belonging, reflecting her legacy of inclusivity and excellence.

Director Pisek recognized Audrey Akharoh for her dedication as a Student Trustee, advocating for equity, inclusion, and meaningful change while ensuring student experiences and needs were thoughtfully considered during Board meetings. As co-leader of the Student Senate and Chair of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion for OSTA-AECO, she fosters a welcoming environment, encourages meaningful conversations, and empowers student voices across Ontario. Audrey's legacy of compassion, optimism, and solution-focused leadership will continue to inspire others in the student community and beyond.

Director Pisek recognized Clayton Mishibinijima for being an influential Indigenous Student Trustee, advocating for inclusion and Indigenous perspectives while fostering understanding and reconciliation in education. His leadership and thoughtful contributions have strengthened connections among student leaders and brought greater cultural representation to Board meetings, events, and discussions. Recognized as the Excellence in Education recipient, Clayton's dedication, inclusive spirit, and ability to amplify every voice have left a lasting impact on the students and communities he serves.

b) Director's Highlights

Director Pisek along with members of the senior team provided recent highlights from across the system which included information about:

- DSBN Earns Top Honours at Skills Ontario
- Thorold Secondary School Marks 150 Years
- Kindergarten Open Houses 2025
- E.I. McCulley Shines at DSBN's Heritage Fair
- PIC Empowers Families with Practical Knowledge
- Off the Wall Art Show

2. Educational Showcase

a) STEM Expo, Richmond Street Public School

Superintendent Reimer Friesen introduced Curriculum Support Services Consultant (CSS), Tony Mannella to share information about elementary STEM learning in DSBN, including the STEM Expo event, where students in grades four to eight from 60 schools participated. As a follow up schools hosted their own STEM Expo. Tony highlighted the work of staff and students at Richmond Street Public School and introduced teacher Pauline Farquhar.

Pauline Farquhar shared the transformative impact of STEM education, emphasizing hands-on learning, collaboration among teachers, and the remarkable engagement and inspiration of students. Richmond Street students Emily, Kate, Ryder, and Ethan shared how perseverance, cooperation, and creativity helped them transform STEM challenges into opportunities for innovation and teamwork.

G. STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT REPORT

There were no student achievement reports.

H. DELEGATIONS

1. A. Zammit presented to the Board and shared that she was in favour of the board filling the trustee vacancy by appointing the candidate who placed fifth in the 2022 municipal election as it is the most efficient and fiscally responsible way to proceed.

I. BOARD RECESS

There was no Board recess.

J. OLD BUSINESS

1. Report of the Program and Planning Committee

Moved by Nancy Beamer
Seconded by Kate Baggott

"That the report of the Program and Planning Committee dated May 6, 2025, be received."

"That the Host School for New Thorold East Elementary School report be received; and,

That Kate S Durdan PS be designated the host school for the new Thorold elementary school boundary area."

CARRIED

Trustee Jovanovic shared that the committee received reports on Indigenous Education, Host School for New Thorold East Elementary School, and DSBN Additional Qualifications Programs. Associate Director Veld and Principal Jaime Sinnett presented details of the new Thorold East elementary school boundary, that included the proposal to designate Kate S. Durdan as the temporary host school for students to attend until the new school opens with transportation confirmed by NSTS.

2. Report of the Equity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism Trustee Advisory Committee

Moved by Shannon Mitchell
Seconded by Kate Baggott

"That the report of the Equity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism Trustee Advisory Committee dated May 6, 2025, be received."
CARRIED

Trustee Mitchell shared that the committee received highlights from the recent Equity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism Community Advisory committee meeting. Student Achievement Leaders Pratima Burton and Zakia Hamdani presented community advisory initiatives and Superintendent Gage gave a verbal update on the Community Advisory Committee Reporting Process for the 2025-2026 school year.

3. Report of the Special Education Advisory Committee

Moved by Elizabeth Klassen
Seconded by Shannon Mitchell

"That the report of the Special Education Advisory Committee dated May 8, 2025, be received."
CARRIED

Trustee Mitchell shared that the committee received a presentation from DSBN staff members, Andy Dermatas and Paul Ferrara about Golf Fore All Abilities, a new program offered to secondary specialized program students. SEAC Member, Kathy Bell provided information about programs and services offered through the Niagara Children's Centre for students with complex needs and their family. Superintendent Hancox addressed recent media coverage and union correspondence regarding Special Education support in schools and informed the committee that policy G-41: Service Animals in Schools is being recommended to be revoked as its' content is covered by the Special Education Plan and the Human Rights Policy. A video was presented highlighting a student's successful transition to a specialized program that began in January at Princess Elizabeth Public School.

4. Report of the Supervised Alternative Learning Committee

Moved by Helga Campbell
Seconded by Shannon Mitchell

"That the report of the Supervised Alternative Learning Committee dated May 14, 2025, be received."
CARRIED

Trustee Helga Campbell reported that six new cases were presented and approved for SAL and 37 student cases were reviewed that were brought forward previously. Of the cases reviewed, five cases were discontinued, four due to noncompliance and one moved out of the area.

5. Report of the Finance Committee

Moved by Jonathan Fast
Seconded by Kate Baggott

"That the report of the Finance Committee dated May 14, 2025, be received."

"That Policy A-07 Expense Allowance for Members of Board Advisory Committees be approved."

"That the Multi-Year Capital Plan be received, and staff be authorized to proceed with all identified projects up to and including the 2025-26 year, subject to confirmation of necessary Ministry of Education approvals."

"That the 2025-26 Budget Update Report be received."
CARRIED

Associate Director Veld reported that three agenda items were presented to the committee. These included: revisions to Policy A-07: Expense Allowance for Members of Board Advisory, the 2025-2026 Multi-Year Capital Plan, with over $69 million allocated for various projects was presented, and the 2025-2026 budget process was shared. A draft budget will be presented at the June Finance Committee meeting.

6. Report of the Policy Committee

Moved by Kate Baggott
Seconded by Helga Campbell

"That the report of the Policy Committee dated May 14, 2025, be received."

"That Policy A-09: Naming/Renaming of Schools be approved as amended and adopted."

"That Policy D-02: Selection, Approval and Review of Educational Resources be approved as received and adopted."

"That Policy C-02: Adult & Community Education Operational Framework be revoked as recommended."

"That Policy F-06: Video Security Surveillance be approved as received and adopted."

"That Policy G-24: On-site/Off-Site Evacuations be deferred to 2025-2026."

"That Policy G-36: Concussions be approved as received and adopted."

"That Policy G-41: Service Animals be revoked as recommended."

"That Policy E-02: Conflict of Interest be approved as received and adopted."

"That the newly revised Policy G-06: Criminal Record Check, which is a consolidation of Policy E-06: Police Criminal Record Check/Police Vulnerable Sector Check and Offence Declarations for New and Existing Employees, and E-14: Police Vulnerable Sector Check for Service Providers be approved as received and adopted."
CARRIED

General Counsel Feren reported that a total of 10 policies were reviewed, and highlighted the following changes, current naming conventions was incorporated into Policy A-09: Naming/Renaming of Schools as well as emphasis on community engagement, policies C-02: Adult & Community Education Operational Framework and G-41: Services Animals were presented with a recommendation to revoke as the content can be found under other DSBN polices, policy G-24: On-site/Off-Site Evacuations was deferred to 2025-26, and new policy, G-06: Criminal Record Check was created to amalgamate policies E-06: Criminal Record Check -Police Vulnerable Sector Check & Offence Declaration and E-14: Police Vulnerable Sector Check for Service Providers.

7. Report of the Parent Involvement Committee

Moved by Susan Jovanovic
Seconded by Shannon Mitchell

"That the report of the Parent Involvement Committee dated May 21, 2025, be received."
CARRIED

Trustee Jovanovic reported that the committee reviewed the budget and allocated the remaining funds. Chair Lofquist highlighted the successes of the committee which included strategies to increase parent engagement and involvement, broadening membership to be more equitable and inclusive, a highly attended conference that focused on well-being, and advocating for improved communication with School Council Chairs through the creation of a DSBN email account. In addition, the committee continued to plan for the School Council Chair event that will be held on October 29th, 2025.

K. QUESTIONS ASKED OF AND BY BOARD MEMBERS

A Trustee inquired about the legal ramifications of tragic events like the tragic accident involving a teacher and four students in another school board. General Counsel Feren explained that there is a framework in place to work through tragedies, which would include working with the Board's insurer.

L. NEW BUSINESS

1. Board By-laws and Rules of Order

Moved by Shannon Mitchell
Seconded by Jonathan Fast

"That the recommended amendments to the Board By-Laws and Rules of Order that follow in the table below be approved, and such amendments to the Board By-laws and Rules of Order to take effect on September 1, 2025."

CARRIED

		Ad Hoc Governance Committee Mandate Topic Reference
F – 5	The Secretary shall name two scrutineers appointed for the election of the Chair and Vice-Chair. At the request of a Trustee, or in response to a public invitation to apply, the Board may by majority vote, also approve the appointment of a disinterested external community member to serve as a third scrutineer for the election of Chair and/or Vice-Chair. Where more than one external community member candidate submits or is submitted for the position of the third scrutineer, a candidate for third scrutineer will be chosen by lot. All scrutineers must confirm that they will maintain the secrecy of the vote.	**(f) Scrutineers**
L – 4 and L – 5	**L – 1** Trustees are elected to a four (4) year term of office on the Board. At the start of the term and approximately two (2) years into the term of office there will be opportunities to change Trustee membership on Standing and Statutory Committees, save and except for the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) ~~and the **Ad Hoc** Code of Conduct Investigation Committee~~, which ~~both~~ requires a four (4) year term commitment. (a) At the Organization Meeting in an election year the Trustees will	**(g) Committee Selection**

	submit their committee preferences to the Director's Office and, thereafter, the Director-**and the Nominating Committee (as set out in By-Law L-4)** of the Board will meet to consider the preferences submitted and then to assign Trustees to serve on Standing and Statutory and **Ad Hoc** Committees. The selection of Committee Chairs will occur in accordance with By-Laws O - 23 and O - 24. (b) Nineteen (19) months after the newly elected Trustees take office, the Trustees shall again submit their committee preferences to the Director's Office by the first Board meeting in June and, thereafter, the Director **and the Nominating Committee (as set out in By-Law L-4)** of the Board will meet to consider the preferences submitted and then to assign, in draft, the Trustees to serve on Standing and Statutory and **Ad Hoc** Committees effective September 1st of that same year. The Nominating Committee shall circulate a draft of the Committee assignments prior to Nominating Committee's final approval of committee assignments. The selection of Committee Chairs will occur in accordance with By-Laws O-23 and O - 24. (c) All Trustees will be notified of the date and time of and are invited to attend the meeting of the Nominating Committee. **L - 4** The membership of the Nominating Committee shall be comprised of the Chair, the Vice-Chair and two Board members selected at large by the Chair. The mandate of the Nominating Committee is to receive each Board member's preference for committees, preferably electronically, and subsequently **assign the Trustees to committees as set out in By-Law L-1**. **L - 5** In assigning Board members to committees, the Nominating Committee shall have due regard for such things as: • the need for continuity of representation from year to year; • the legal requirements for Statutory Committees; • the balance of workload and time commitments; and • the experience and preferences of the Board members.	
L – 2 and L – 6	L – 2 Statutory Committees are committees prescribed by provincial legislation and include: Audit Committee, Director's Performance Appraisal Committee, Special Education Advisory Committee, Supervised Alternative Learning Committee, and Parent Involvement Committee. L – 6 There shall be the following committees of the Board with each Board member required to sit on two (2) Standing or Statutory Committees.	**Director's Performance Appraisal Committee**

Statutory (s. 253.1 & Reg. 361/10)	• Audit Committee.....	3 Board Members

Statutory (Reg 83/24)	• Director's Performance Appraisal Committee (DPAC)	5 Board Members
Statutory (s. & Reg. 464/97)	• Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)…….	2 Board Members plus 2 appointed Board Member Alternates (this is a legislated four (4) year term)
Statutory (Reg 374/10)	• Supervised Alternative Learning Committee (SAL)…….	1 Board Member
Statutory (Reg. 674/20)	• Parent Involvement Committee….. ……..	2 Board Members
Standing	• Policy Advisory Committee….. ……. ……	5 Board Members
Standing	• Program and Planning Committee….. ……. ..	5 Board Members
Standing	• Finance Committee….. ……. ……. ..	4 Board Members
~~Standing~~	~~• Equity, Inclusion and~~	~~5 Board Members~~

	~~Anti-Racism Trustee Advisory Committee..... ....~~		
~~Ad Hoc~~	~~• Ad Hoc Code of Conduct Investigation Committee....~~	~~4 Board Members (Chair, Vice-Chair plus 3 appointed Board Member Alternates) - this is a four (4) year term~~	
Ad Hoc	• Ad Hoc Student Discipline Committee.....	3 Board Members (legislated minimum)	
Ad Hoc	• Ad Hoc Properties Disposal Committee.....	3 Board Members (Chair of Program and Planning Committee, Chair of Finance Committee, and Chair of the Board, or designate)	
	Other Ad Hoc Committees will be established as required.		
~~(s. 55 & Reg. 7/07)~~	• Student Trustee Senate.....	3 Student Trustees (one of which shall be an Indigenous Student Trustee)	
G – 1 **G – 3** **J – 1** **and** **G- 10**	**G - 1** The regular meetings of the Board shall be held on the fourth Tuesday of each month between September and June, save and except for: • the month of November when the regular Board meeting will be held on the third Tuesday of the month; and • the month of December when the regular Board meeting will be held		

on the first Tuesday of the month.
Should any Tuesday fall on a statutory or civic holiday, the Board shall meet on the evening of the following day at the same hour, or as otherwise decided by the Board. The regular Board meeting, public session, shall commence at 6:00 p.m. and where Committee of the Whole, private session is required, it shall commence immediately after the conclusion of the business of the regular Board meeting.

G - 3 In the event of weather conditions which, in the judgment of the Chair, preclude the regular meeting of the Board, the meeting will be held on the next following Tuesday, with the regular Board meeting, public session, commencing at 6:00 p.m. and where Committee of the Whole, private session is required, it shall commence immediately after the conclusion of the business of the regular Board meeting.

J - 1 In each municipal election year, at the November Board meeting, the following meetings will be held:

(i) **Organization Meeting** at 6:00 p.m. – for order of business as set out in By-Law F-1 and the Declaration of Office
(ii) **Inaugural Meeting of the Board** at 6:30 p.m. – for the regular Board meeting, public session,
(iii) **Committee of the Whole**, private session, where required, will commence immediately after the conclusion of the business of the regular Board meeting

unless otherwise determined by Board motion.

[New Order of Business Follows Replacing Current Order of Business]

G - 10 The order of business for regular meetings of the Board shall be:

A. Commencement of the Meeting of the Board
   1. Acknowledgement of Traditional Territory
   2. Call to Order and Noting of Members Absent
   3. Declaration of Conflict of Interest
B. Singing of "O Canada"
C. Opening Prayer or Reflective Reading
D. Business of the Board
   1. Adoption of Agenda
   2. Approval of Board Minutes
   3. Business Arising from the Minutes
E. Educational Showcasing or Presentations
F. Student Achievement Reports
G. Delegations
H. Board Recess (Optional)
I. Old Business
J. Questions Asked of and by Board Members
K. New Business
L. Information and Proposals
   1. Staff Reports
   2. Trustee Information Sessions
   3. Correspondence and Communications
   4. Trustee, Student Trustee and Indigenous Student Trustee Communications and School Liaison
   5. OPSBA Reports
   6. OSTA-AECO Report

	7. Future Meetings M. Committee of the Whole (only where required) 1. Motion to Move to Committee of the Whole (Private Session) 2. Motion to Return to Open board (Public Meeting) N. Ratification of Business Conducted in Committee of the Whole (only where Committee of the Whole met) O. Ratification of Business Conducted in this Regular Meeting P. Adjournment	

2. **Change of June Board Meeting Date**

Moved by Kate Baggott
Seconded by Jonathan Fast

"That the Regular Meeting of the District School Board of Niagara scheduled for June 24, 2025, be changed to June 23, 2025.

CARRIED

3. **Director's Performance Appraisal Committee**

Moved by Kate Baggott
Seconded by Susan Jovanovic

"That the current Director's Performance Appraisal Committee members remain for the 2025-2026 evaluation cycle."

CARRIED

The Board confirmed committee membership for the 2025-2026 interim evaluation cycle.

M. INFORMATION AND PROPOSALS

1. Staff Reports

a) Trustee Vacancy Appointment Process

Moved by Susan Jovanovic
Seconded by Shannon Mitchell

"That one of the Board of Trustees' seats is declared vacant."

"That the District School Board of Niagara proceed to fill the Trustee Vacancy through the appointment of a qualified person."

CARRIED

General Counsel Jennifer Feren noted that the Board of Trustees have two options to fill the current board vacancy: through a by-election or by appointment. Under the Education Act by-elections are mandatory in specific circumstances, however the current trustee vacancy does not require a by-election and considering the financial implications, staff recommend filling the vacancy through an appointment process.

General Counsel Jennifer Feren presented the board with two options for an appointment process to consider that would meet the 90-day requirement as set out in the Education Act. One of the options is to appoint an eligible person who applies for the position in response to an open call for applications and the other option is to enquire if the runner up from the 2022 election would be agreeable to the appointment and if they remained eligible under the legislative requirements.

After a thorough discussion, Trustees confirmed their preference for option two to enquire of the runner up from the 2022 election and requested that the Board develop a policy for Trustee Vacancies during the 2025-2026 school year.

Moved by Kate Baggott
Seconded by Helga Campbell

"That the District School Board of Niagara fill the current Trustee Vacancy through the process outlined in the recommended motion for option two – Appointment of a Runner-up from prior election."

"That staff be directed to contact the unsuccessful trustee candidate from the 2022 municipal election in the vacated electoral area who finished fifth to determine if the candidate remains interested and remains a qualified person as defined under the *Education Act* and the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*."

"That should the said unsuccessful trustee candidate from the 2022 municipal election remain interested and provide proof of eligibility under the *Education Act* and the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* no later than June 2, 2025, the Board shall appoint them to fill the vacancy on the Board of Trustees at the Board meeting to be held on June 23, 2025."

"That should the said unsuccessful trustee candidate from the 2022 municipal election no longer remain interested or no longer meets the eligibility requirements or fail to provide proof of eligibility under the *Education Act* and the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* by June 2, 2025, staff be directed to post a Call for Applicants on June 3, 2025 requesting applications for the position of Public School Board Trustee from candidates that meet the eligibility requirements under the *Education Act* and *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* and be directed to schedule a Special Meeting on June 23, 2025 for the purpose the consideration and election of the Public School Board Trustee from the eligible candidates."

"And that the Board commit to developing a fulsome policy for Trustee Vacancies in the 2025-2026 school year."
CARRIED

2. Trustee Information Session

There was no trustee information session.

3. Correspondence And Communication

Chair Barnett shared that a letter was received from the Ontario Public School Boards' Association regarding the passing of Trustee Alex Bradnam.

Deanne MacIntosh left the meeting at 9:08.

4. Student Trustee, Indigenous Student Trustee, Trustee Communications and School Liaison

Student Trustee Akharoh and Saddler provided highlights from the final Student Senate meeting of the school year which focused on Artificial Intelligence (AI) and reflections on the past year. Senators engaged in a series of interactive activities to discuss AI's role in education, share their experiences, and provoke a meaningful discussion that set the tone for critical thinking about AI's growing presence in classrooms. Next year's Senate team will be finalized in June for the 2025-2026 school year.

Indigenous Student Trustee Mishibinijima shared that Indigenous grade 7 and 8 students attended a symposium organized by Niagara College Indigenous Education and DSBN Indigenous Education to learn about the transition to secondary school, Indigenous-specific support and cultural learning. Students heard from various Indigenous student representatives and had the opportunity to participate in various cultural activities. As well, Indigenous student representatives heard inspiring stories from former NHL coach Ted Nolan and his sons, emphasizing resilience and cultural strength, and inspired students to stay connected to their identity, pursue their goals and uplift others.

5. Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA) Report

Trustee Baggott reported on the most recent OPSBA meeting.

6. Ontario Student Trustees' Association Report

Student Trustees shared highlights from OSTA-AECO's Annual General Meeting that was held in May.

7. Future Meetings

a) The June 2025 meeting calendar was provided.
b) The June Days of Significance calendar was provided.

N. RATIFICATION OF BUSINESS CONDUCTED IN THIS REGULAR MEETING

Moved by Kate Baggott
Seconded by Shannon Mitchell

"That the business transacted by the Board of Trustees at its meeting held on May 27, 2025, 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

O. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

_____	_____
SUE BARNETT	**KELLY PISEK**
Chair	Director of Education and Secretary