



*Trustee, Luz del Rosario,
Mississauga Wards 6 & 11,
Chair of the Board*



*Trustee, Bruno Iannicca
Mississauga, Ward 7*

Our DPCDSB **Mission**: Disciples of Christ, nurturing mind, body and soul to the fullness of life.

Our DPCDSB **Vision**: Changing the world through Catholic education.

October 2023

This month's virtue of EMPATHY reminds us of the dignity of all persons, and the ability to recognize it in others. As part of our Catholic identity, we believe the cross is the ultimate sign of compassion and forgiveness. Empathy for ourselves and each other is integral to supporting our students to learn, develop, and grow together in Christ.

Statement from the Board of Trustees – Clarification of Changes to DPCDSB Procedural By-Law

As your partner in the education and well-being of your children, Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board ("DPCDSB") Trustees are committed to sharing important information with students and their families in a timely manner. In this regard, an issue that has been misrepresented by certain individuals and organizations needs to be clarified.

The DPCDSB Procedural By-law governs the meetings of the Board of Trustees and its Committees. The issue requiring clarification relates to a recent change to the Procedural By-Law regarding delegations at meetings.

Specifically, inaccurate information is circulating stating that DPCDSB is censoring delegations at Board of Trustees meetings. This is unequivocally false. What we are doing is requesting that delegations revise parts of their presentation that perpetuate negative stereotypes or express certain views about individuals and groups of individuals who are protected by the *Ontario Human Rights Code* (the "Code").

By way of background, at its September 26 meeting, the Board of Trustees approved an addition to its Procedural By-law that simply reiterates the DPCDSB's legal obligation to comply with the Code, as follows:

"The Chair may rule that the delegation is out of order and end the delegation, if, in the Chair's opinion, either of the following occurs:

- *The information in the delegate's oral speech is significantly different than the written speech provided;*
- *The delegate's speech, notes, and/or other materials contain, or if the Delegate begins to use language that, in the opinion of the Chair, constitutes either of the following:*
 - A. *an invasion of privacy, breach of confidentiality, defamation of character or is obscene; or;*
 - B. *discrimination against an individual, or group of individuals, based on a protected ground under the Ontario Human Rights Code, R.S.O. 1990, c. H. 19, the Chair may rule the delegation out of order and end the delegation. The following are currently the protected grounds:*
 - *age*
 - *Ancestry, colour, race*
 - *Citizenship*
 - *Ethnic origin*
 - *Place of origin*
 - *Creed*
 - *Disability*
 - *Family status*
 - *Marital status (including single status)*
 - *Gender identity, gender expression*
 - *Receipt of public assistance (in housing only)*
 - *Record of offences (in employment only)*
 - *Sex (including pregnancy and breastfeeding)*
 - *Sexual orientation."*

This section of the Procedural By-law simply sets the DPCDSB's legal obligations that have existed for many years. There is nothing new. The inclusion of this language highlights DPCDSB's commitment to ensuring that every staff member and student is able to work and learn in an environment that is free from discrimination, in accordance with the Code.

DPDSB welcomes and encourages delegations. Every delegation's presentation is reviewed in advance to ensure that it complies with the Code. This is our legal obligation.

DPCDSB also has a legal obligation to ensure a safe learning and working environment, including not exposing its staff and students to presentations that include language that has, or may have, the effect of negatively generalizing about an individual or group of individuals in a way that perpetuates negative stereotypes, or constitutes harassment or discrimination, contrary to the Code. The consequence of permitting such delegations would lead to the violation by DPCDSB of its legal obligations. This will be strictly enforced. This is not only our legal obligation; it is also our moral obligation.

While freedom of speech is a constitutional right, the restriction of such right is demonstrably justified when the speech, or portions of the speech, have the consequence of violating ones' human right to work and learn in a discrimination and harassment-free environment.

If it is deemed that a delegation's proposed presentation would have the effect of causing the DPCDSB to violate its legal obligation, we will work with the delegate with a view to ensuring that the delegate's presentation does not violate any applicable laws. Again, it is a matter of ensuring compliance with laws.

There is absolutely no intention to limit anyone delegating the Board of Trustees about Catholic doctrine and this has always been the case. We will, however, be vigilant of language that perpetuates negative stereotypes or that constitutes hate speech, or may be perceived as hate speech, as defined by the Ontario Human Rights Commission:

"Hate speech is the use of extreme language or a form of communication that expresses detestation for or vilifies an individual or group of individuals based on colour, ethnicity, place of origin, race, creed, gender, or sexual orientation, among other grounds of discrimination under Ontario's Human Rights Code. Hatred is often rooted in anti-Black, anti-Asian and anti-Indigenous racism, misogyny, homophobia, transphobia, antisemitism, Islamophobia and white supremacy." (From: [Taking action to build awareness and challenge hate in Ontario | Ontario Human Rights Commission \(ohrc.on.ca\)](https://www.ohrc.on.ca/))

We value parents and guardians as important partners in the education of children, and we strive to create and maintain working and learning environments that are welcoming, safe, caring, and inclusive for all. We teach the Ontario curriculum infused with Catholic teachings and values as articulated by the Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario (ACBO) and the Institute for Catholic Education (ICE).

We thank you for your attention to this important information and we trust this provides parents, guardians, and community members with clarity on the issue.

Treasury Report Update – Ontario Regulation (O. Reg.) 41/10 Board Borrowing, Investing and Other Financial Matters, under the Education Act, requires a school board to bring forward investment information to the Board of Trustees. During the 2022-2023 fiscal year, DPCDSB continued to borrow money to meet operating expenditure obligations. DPCDSB has borrowing resolutions for operating and capital needs approved by the Board of Trustees.

Facilities Renewal Project Updates – Each year, based on available school renewal funding from the Ministry of Education, DPCDSB's Facilities Department undertakes various projects to keep schools in a state of good repair and ensure that all school facilities are well-positioned to support healthy and safe learning and working environments. Based on the most recent estimate, conducted in 2020 by a third-party firm contracted by the Ministry of Education, DPCDSB had a 5-year school renewal backlog of approximately \$345 million. However, it would be reasonable to estimate that the current 5-year school

renewal backlog, based on the aging of facilities, is actually higher. For context, the Ministry of Education has allocated almost \$33 million in funding for the 2023-2024 school year to DPCDSB to address school renewal needs through the School Renewal Allocation (\$9.7 million) and the School Condition Improvement Grant (\$23.2 million). The renewal funding that DPCDSB receives on an annual basis represents less than 10% of the estimated 5-year school renewal backlog.

Since 2020, a marked increase in the cost of projects due to higher prices for equipment and materials, as well as longer supply chain lead times, combined with the limited time available to undertake major renewal projects when schools are unoccupied, some projects have been deferred to Fall 2023 or Summer 2024. Additional information about the work to address school renewal needs, such as the criteria incorporated into the determination of the prioritization of projects, was included in the *Long-Term Facilities Master Plan – Facilities (LTFMP) Update* report which was presented at the May 2, 2023 Board of Trustees' - Administration and Finance Committee Meeting.

Chipmunk App – Student Transportation of Peel Region (STOPR) continues to pilot the new transportation tool, Chipmunk School Bus Tracking App this fall with select schools that participated in last spring's pilot program. Chipmunk utilizes GPS (Global

DPCDSB Board of Trustees' Meetings

For all DPCDSB Board and Committee agendas, please visit the [Board and Committee Meeting webpage](#).

Positioning System) data transmitted from the school bus to display the real-time location and travel direction of your child(ren)'s bus on a "live map" and provides parents/guardians with a dynamic estimated time of arrival (ETA) to your child's bus stop. The goal is to continue to improve the user experience and enhance the application towards a full roll out of the Chipmunk App later this year. More information is available on the Chipmunk support page website: www.stopr.ca/chipmunk

Courtesy Ridership – Last year, STOPR launched an effective pilot program to implement courtesy transportation requests one week earlier than in previous years. In the trial, schools were able to approve and identify courtesy students in the third week of September; a week earlier than usual. STOPR was then able to assign courtesy students to buses, where possible, beginning one week later. STOPR has advised that it will be implementing this new schedule annually moving forward.

Secondary Student Activity Fees – The collection of the activity fees, while considered optional, is important to schools because it provides the funds to achieve many of the activities/events that are cherished by students/families, including yearbooks, special event days and helps to support students/families that are in need.

A workgroup was established in June, 2023 to start discussions on reviewing the Activity Fee process and to re-imagine the path forward. This workgroup has started to analyze components of the Activity Fee structure and to consider concerns that have been raised by students and parents/guardians. The Activity Fees established by schools for this 2023-24 school year will remain as is, as the collection of those fees started in the Fall 2022 and Spring 2023. Any proposed changes recommended by the workgroup will relate to the 2024-2025 year.

Secondary Cafeteria Services – All 25 secondary school cafeterias were open for the first day of school. A few issues that occurred during the start-ups were addressed quickly and resolved. DPCDSB staff have

been conducting on-site visits to ensure cafeteria services are being provided as expected and building engagement between all parties.

Cafeteria providers will conduct a survey of students within this first year to measure customer's (students and staff) opinions on menu selections, pricing, food quality, service, etc. In addition, cafeteria providers have been encouraged to gather real-time feedback by informal discussions and surveys of the student population. This will provide insight into the cafeteria services and menu items supported by the students and where there may be opportunities for improvement.

Before and After School Based Childcare Programs – Under the Education Act, school boards have direct responsibility for Extended Day Programs (Before and After School Programs) and school-age childcare programs and must deliver these services themselves or retain a third-party to deliver them on behalf of the board. These licensed childcare programs must operate on school days at all elementary schools where sufficient demand has been established. It is the DPCDSB policy that a third-party program be used to deliver all Extended Day and School-Aged Child Care Programs.

DPCDSB currently uses PLASP, YMCA and Family Day as the providers of almost all such school-based programs. While the vast majority of these programs are operating with adequate staffing levels, a few sites have reported challenges with recruiting and retaining staff. Providers have attempted to fill gaps by bringing in staff from other locations, however, at some sites, these have only been temporary solutions. Furthermore, while providers have typically been able to meet any additional demand for programs from students on waitlists, they are generally experiencing challenges in opening up additional classes due to the general labour market shortage.

DPCDSB staff continues to engage with all providers about their staffing challenges and the potential implications of not being able to meet the demand for services and the expectations of DPCDSB school communities and families. Further updates will be provided as required.

Professional Activities Days (PA Days) – PA Days are designated for professional development for school board educators and staff, evaluation of student progress, consultation with parents/guardians, curriculum and program evaluation and development. On July 28, 2023, the Ministry of Education introduced changes to Regulation 304 - School Year Calendar, Professional Activity Days. The changes are intended to provide greater transparency to parents/guardians around the focus and delivery of all Professional Activity Days. DPCDSB will be providing families with more information pertaining to the PA Days throughout the 2023-2024 school year.

Elementary PA Days

October 6, 2023:	New Language Curriculum 1-8 Student Mental Health and Well-being
November 24, 2023:	Mathematics and high impact instructional approaches Anti-sex trafficking and Student Safety and Violent Incident Prevention
January 22, 2024:	Student Assessment and Evaluation and Report Card Preparation
February 16, 2024:	Reporting to Parents
May 3, 2024*	(*St. Sofia ONLY) Faith Development (note: staff and students will be observing Good Friday in the Byzantine Rite)
May, 17, 2024:	Indigenous-focused revisions to Social Studies, Grades 1-3 New learning on Holocaust Education in Social Studies, Grade 6 Continued professional learning in Mathematics, Science and Technology

June 10, 2024: Student Assessment and Evaluation and Report Card Preparation

Secondary PA Days

October 6, 2023 Grade 9 De-Streamed English Curriculum/Literacy Across the Curriculum | Student Mental Health and Well-being
November 24, 2023: Mathematics and high impact instructional approaches | Anti-sex trafficking and Student Safety and Violent Incident Prevention
February 1, 2024: Transition Planning and Implementation – Curriculum and Assessment
May, 17, 2024: De-Streamed Grade 9 English Curriculum | Grade 10 Computer Studies – Digital Technology and Innovations in the Changing World | Connections to Skilled Trades and Apprenticeship | Continued Professional Learning in Mathematics, Science and Technology
June 26, 27, 28 2024: Transition Planning and Implementation – Curriculum and Assessment

Flu Prevention – Flu Prevention Week is held during the month of October. Some of the symptoms of COVID-19 are similar to influenza (flu) and it may be difficult to tell the difference based on symptoms alone. You may need a COVID-19 test to help confirm a diagnosis. Together, we can help protect the health of our children and ensure healthier school environments. To prevent getting and/or spreading the flu, please remember:

- Flu shot vaccination is the best defense against the influenza virus.
- Keep children home when they are sick or showing flu-like symptoms (e.g., fever, vomiting or diarrhea).
- Wash hands frequently. Cover your cough or sneeze. The flu can also spread up to six feet away.

For more information, please visit: www.peelregion.ca/flu or call Peel Public Health at 905-799-7700, or you can call Telehealth at 1-866-797-0000 to speak with a Registered Nurse 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Wishing our students, families, and staff a blessed time of worship and Thanksgiving with loved ones and friends.

May God bless you in your journey of learning and faith formation.

Take care and God bless.

Your Trustees,

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