
Agenda – Education, Policy and Operations Committee Meeting

Wednesday, May 7, 2025

Limestone Education Centre

220 Portsmouth Avenue, Kingston, Ontario

Public Viewing: <https://bit.ly/LDSBEPOCMTGMay725>

Public Meeting – 5:30 p.m.

Land Acknowledgement: “The Limestone District School Board is situated on the traditional territories of the Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee. We acknowledge their enduring presence on this land, as well as the presence of Métis, Inuit, and other First Nations from across Turtle Island. We honour their cultures and celebrate their commitment to this land.”

1. CALL TO ORDER

2. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

3. DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

4. REPORTS FOR ACTION

5. REPORTS FOR INFORMATION

5.1 Workforce Census and Belonging Survey Preliminary Results – Associate Superintendent McKenna (Pages 2-19)

5.2 Policy 15 Update – Director Burra (Pages 20-26)

6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

7. NEW BUSINESS

8. CORRESPONDENCE

9. NEXT MEETING – June 4, 2025

10. ADJOURNMENT

Limestone District School Board

Limestone District School Board is situated on traditional territories of the Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee.

Administrative Report: See Yourself In Limestone - Workforce Census and Belonging Survey Preliminary Results

Education, Policy, and Operations Committee

May 7, 2025

**Purpose and Link to the Strategic Plan/Goal: Improve Responsiveness and Service to Families,
Staff, and Community Partners**

The purpose of this report is to provide Trustees with an update on the *See Yourself in Limestone Workforce Census and Belonging Survey* (WCBS) and to share preliminary results of demographic and identity data collected. The WCBS supports Limestone's work to attract and retain diverse staff, to support staff well-being, to build capacity across the system, and to proactively address personal and/or work-related challenges for staff in service of student learning, achievement and well-being.

Background

In November 2024, the Limestone District School Board (LDSB) invited all staff to participate in a voluntary, anonymous, and confidential census to build on our 2022 survey and assess how our efforts have progressed in the workplace and what further work we need to continue or start.

Similar to the 2022 WCBS implementation, the 2024 WCBS asked questions about identity that included first languages, gender, sexual orientation, religion/creed/fait, ethnicity, race, nationality, disability, socioeconomics, education, job status, role, as well as questions relating to opportunities, sense of belonging, and well-being.

Survey questions were once again reviewed in consultation with interest holders, including senior staff, unions, association partners, administrators, LDSB Research team, LDSB Equity team, and the LDSB Indigenous Team.

The response rate for LDSB staff was 38%, compared to 58% in 2022. The representation of responses by role is similar to the LDSB staff composition for many groups. Some exceptions are noted with an overrepresentation of Elementary Teachers and an underrepresentation of Educational Assistants; Facilities, Maintenance, and Custodial staff; and Lunch and Yard Supervisors, and Emergency Staff.

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See Yourself in Limestone

Current Status

Limestone is committed to advancing equity, diversity, and inclusion for all staff and students. We recognize the importance of trust in the system, and particularly in the areas of equity, diversity, and inclusion. The results from the 2024 WCBS can provide us with comparable data to help us measure our progress, refine our goals, and address those gaps identified in the first WBCS. This information will help us further develop plans and strategies to enhance employee belonging and overall work experience at LDSB.

The WCBS included questions about workforce demographics and identity, such as first languages, age, gender, sexual orientation, religion/creed/faith, ethnicity, race, nationality, disability, role in Limestone, as well as questions relating to opportunities, sense of belonging, safety, and well-being. The data collected cannot be directly connected to existing Human Resources (HR) records, and therefore, questions were asked to gain a better understanding of how different factors impact workplace climate as well as highlight patterns that may identify systemic barriers.

Survey Results

The following is a descriptive summary of results based on the responses of staff who completed the survey. Results for the 2024 WCBS are compared with the 2022 WCBS results to illustrate general trends as we compare these two points in time. These results are an important piece of information for LDSB to identify system needs and must be used alongside additional data and information sources to achieve a comprehensive assessment and action plan.

Please note that for the protection of staff privacy, data is suppressed (SP) when there are fewer than 15 individuals in a group. Exceptions to this rule are “Prefer not to answer” responses.

For a detailed rationale supporting why specific questions were asked, please see Appendix A.

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Response Rates

Note numbers may not add to 100% due to rounding

Role	Response Rate 2024	Response Rate 2022
Central office support staff (including Education Centre Office and Educational Services Office and ITS) and Yard Supervisors	48% (no lunch supervisor/emergency casual staff) ¹	31%
Custodial/maintenance/facilities staff	21%	32%
Early Childhood Educator	24%	41%
Educational Assistant	16%	45%
Elementary teacher (including consultants and OTs)	49%	64%
Professional student support staff (including SSCs, Social Workers, Clinical Staff, ACWs, Speech Pathologists, CDAs, Attendance Counsellors, ABA, Behaviour/Autism Intervention Assistants)	60%	78%
School administrator	47%	100%
School office support staff (including Library Technicians)	23%	27%
Secondary teacher (including consultants, OTs, and instructors)	40%	59%
Senior staff and managers	35%	100%
Overall response rate	38%	58%

¹ We cannot perform separate calculations for lunch supervisors or emergency casual staff for 2024 due to a technical issue.

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[See Yourself in Limestone](#)

What is your role in Limestone?

To read this table: The “% of survey responses” columns show the percentage of survey respondents belonging to that staff group. The “% of workforce population in 2024” column shows what percentage of the overall workforce belongs to that staff group. The red and blue fonts and directional arrows indicate if a group is over or underrepresented among the survey responses.

For example, Educational Assistants (EAs) make up 18% of the LDSB workforce, but only 8% of the 2024 survey responses. Their row is highlighted in red font with a “down” arrow because they are underrepresented in the survey data. On the other hand, elementary teachers make up 33% of the workforce, but 47% of survey respondents in 2024, meaning that they are overrepresented in the survey data and highlighted with blue font and an “up” arrow. Note that custodial/maintenance/facilities, EAs, and lunch or yard supervisors have been underrepresented in both survey datasets.

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[See Yourself in Limestone](#)

Role and Representation (↓ = Underrepresented in survey results or ↑ = Overrepresented in survey results compared to the overall workforce population; differences greater than 1% are noted)	Count 2024	% of survey responses in 2024	Count 2022	% of survey responses in 2022 ²	% of workforce population in 2024
Central office support staff (including Education Centre Office and Educational Services Office and ITS)	50	4%	64	3%	3%
↓ Custodial/maintenance/facilities staff	51	4%	72	4%	7%
Early Childhood Educator	46	4%	77	4%	5%
↓ Educational Assistant	103	8%	248	13%	18%
↑ Elementary teacher (including consultants and OTs)	577	47%	725	39%	33%
↓ Lunch or yard supervisor/emergency casual staff	12	1%	33	2%	6%
Prefer not to answer	14	1%	30	2%	
Professional student support staff (including SSCs, Social Workers, Clinical Staff, ACWs, Speech Pathologists, CDAs, Attendance Counsellors, ABA, Behaviour/Autism Intervention Assistants)	35	3%	43	2%	2%
School administrator	59	5%	98	5%	4%
↓ School office support staff (including Library Technicians)	37	3%	67	4%	5%
↑ Secondary teacher (including consultants, OTs, and instructors)	248	20%	375	20%	18%
Senior staff and managers	6	0.5%	15	1%	1%
No response	2		2		
Total responses	1240		1849		

² All percentages in this document are the “valid percent” per question. Valid percent refers to the frequency of a given response when non-responses are removed (i.e., the denominator reduces by the number of non-responses to that question and the calculation is redone. For example, in this question, the two non-responses are removed, making the total number of responses to this question 1847 instead of 1849.)

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What is your current employment status with LDSB?

Employment Status	Count 2024	Percent 2024	Count 2022	Percent 2022
Permanent or probationary full-time employee	951	77%	1391	76%
Casual, daily occasional, long-term occasional, temporary or contract employee	233	19%	354	19%
Permanent or probationary part-time employee	25	2%	55	3%
Prefer not to answer	11	1%	21	1%
Other (please specify):	9	1%	19	1%
No response	11		9	
Total responses	1240	1229	1849	1840

How long have you been employed with LDSB?

Length of Employment	Count 2024	Percent 2024	Count 2022	Percent 2022
Less than 5 years	343	28%	447	25%
5-15 years	382	31%	604	33%
16 to 20 years	200	16%	318	18%
More than 20 years	289	24%	419	23%
Prefer not to answer	15	1%	19	1%
No response	11		42	
Total responses	1240	1229	1849	1807

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Identity and Tenure in LDSB

WCBS survey data from 2022 and 2024 indicate that staff hired in the last five years are more diverse. Generally, about half of all staff who identify with a *Code*-protected group began their career in Limestone in the last five years, and most of them also began their education career in the last five years.

The proportion of staff hired in the last five years for each group is:

- 34% of staff with disabilities,
- 37% of gender non-conforming staff,
- 44% of staff who identify as First Nations, Métis, and Inuit,
- 46% of staff who identify as 2SLGBTQIA+,
- 47% of staff who selected a racialized identity,
- And 67% of staff who belong to a religious minority.

How many years have you been working in the education sector (in Canada and/or internationally)?

Time in Education	Count (2024)	Percent (2024)	Count (2022)	Percent (2022)
Less than 5 years	203	17%	268	15%
5-10 years	176	15%	284	16%
11-15 years	186	15%	257	15%
15-20 years	220	18%	336	19%
More than 20 years	410	34%	585	33%
Prefer not to answer	11	1%	19	1%
No response	34		100	
Total responses	1240	1206	1849	1749

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How old are you?

Age	Count (2024)	Percent (2024)	Count (2022)	Percent (2022)
16-29 years	124	10%	176	10%
30-39 years	275	22%	391	22%
40-49 years	427	35%	617	34%
50 years and older	343	28%	559	31%
50-59 years (2024 only)	274	22%		
60 years or older (2024 only)	69	6%		
Prefer not to answer	54	4%	65	4%
No response	17		41	
Total responses	1240	1223	1849	1808

Other than English, list the languages you speak/read/[or use] well enough to understand.

Language	Count (2024)	Percent (2024)	Count (2022)	Percent (2022)
French	354	29%	495	27%
Spanish	38	3%	60	3%
German	25	2%	33	2%
Italian	SP	SP	19	1%

Responses from the 2022 and 2024 Workforce and Belonging Surveys indicate that Limestone staff speak over 40 different languages. These languages include: Arabic, ASL, Bengali, Cantonese, Chinese, Czech, Dari, Dutch, Farsi, Greek, Gujarati, Hebrew, Hindi, Hungarian, Italian, Japanese, Khmer, Korean, Latin, Malayalam, Malayalam, Marathi, Mohawk, Nepali, Ojibwe, Polish, Portuguese, Punjabi, Romanian, Russian, Swedish, Swiss, Tamil, Telugu, Turkish, Urdu, Vietnamese, and Yoruba.

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Is English your first language?

Is English your first language?	Count (2024)	Percent (2024)	Count (2022)	Percent (2022)
I learned English at the same time as another language(s)	46	4%	59	3%
No	44	4%	73	4%
Prefer not to answer	7	1%	10	1%
Yes	1123	92%	1660	92%
No response	20		47	
Total responses	1240	1220	1849	1802

Were you born in Canada?

Born in Canada	Count (2024)	Percent (2024)	Count (2022)	Percent (2022)
No	93	8%	118	7%
Yes	1118	92%	1670	93%
Prefer not to answer	6	0%	12	1%
No response	23		49	
Total	1240	1217	1849	1800

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Do you identify as First Nations, Métis, and/or Inuit? Please select all that apply.

Indigenous Identities	Count (2024)	Percent (2024)	Count (2022)	Percent (2022)
Not Indigenous	1121	94%	1698	95%
Indigenous	31	3%	46	3%
<i>First Nations</i>	18	2%	22	1%
<i>Métis</i>	SP	SP	18	1%
<i>Inuit</i>	SP	SP	SP	SP
<i>I identify as Indigenous in another way³</i>	SP	SP	SP	SP
Prefer not to answer	39	3%	42	2%
No response	49		63	
Total responses	1240	1191	1849	1786

Listed territories, nations and communities: Akwesasne; Algonquin; Algonquins of Piwakanagan; Chippewas of Georgina Island; Fort William; Manitoba Métis Federation; Métis Nation of Ontario; Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte; Ontario Métis Federation; Pacific Islands; Quebec; Shabot Obaadjiwan; South America; Swan River First Nation, Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory; and White River First Nation.

³ This category includes staff who identified as Indigenous to a place outside of North America (some selected this option but did not offer any information on their home territory).

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Race/racial background: How do you identify? Select all that apply.

The following tables show the number and percentage of individuals who selected a particular response. This was a “select all that apply” question, therefore, percentages will not add to 100.

Race/Racial Background	Count (2024)	Percent (2024)	Count (2022)	Valid Percent (2022)
White	1074	90%	1679	91%
Prefer Not to Answer	62	5%	78	4%
Indigenous	24	2%	37	2%
Race Not Listed	SP	SP	28	2%
South Asian	21	2%	23	1%
East Asian	24	2%	18	1%
All other racial identities	30	3%	35	2%
Black	SP	SP	SP	SP
Latine	SP	SP	SP	SP
Middle Eastern	SP	SP	SP	SP
Southeast Asian	SP	SP	SP	SP
No response	44		1	
Total responses	1240	1196	1849	1848

Race and Racial Background: Aggregated data

Race/Racial Background	Single selection		Multiple selections		Total count		Percent	
	2024	2022	2024	2022	2024	2022	2024	2022
Selected only White	1026	1643					87%	89%
Selected Black, East Asian, Indigenous, Latine, Middle Eastern, South Asian, Southeast Asian, White, and/or A race not listed here	59	78	30	49	89	127	8%	7%
Selected prefer not to answer					62	78	5%	4%
Total responses					1196	1848	1196	1848

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See Yourself in Limestone

What is your religion, faith, creed and/or spiritual affiliation? Please select all that apply.

This is a “Select all that apply,” question; therefore, the sum of individual category responses will exceed the total number of responses, and percentages will exceed 100%.

Religion or faith	Count (2024)	Percent (2024)	Count (2022)	Percent (2022)
Agnostic	166	13%	201	11%
Atheist	150	12%	183	10%
Ba'hai	SP	SP	SP	SP
Buddhist	0	0%	SP	SP
Christian	389	31%	681	38%
Hindu	SP	SP	SP	SP
Indigenous Spirituality	SP	SP	21	1%
Jain	0	0%	0	0%
Jewish	21	2%	16	1%
Muslim	SP	SP	SP	SP
Sikh	SP	SP	SP	SP
Wiccan	SP	SP	SP	SP
Spiritual, but not religious	167	13%	272	15%
No religious or spiritual affiliation	164	13%	286	16%
Religion not listed	19	2%	29	2%
Not sure	29	2%	39	2%
Prefer not to answer	128	10%	168	9%
No response	79		79	
Total responses	1240	1161	1849	1770

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[See Yourself in Limestone](#)

Do you consider yourself to be a person with a disability or disabilities?

Response	Count (2024)	Percent (2024)	Count (2022)	Percent (2022)
No	862	73%	1324	76%
Yes	205	18%	268	15%
Not sure	31	3%	78	4%
Prefer not to answer	76	7%	81	5%
No response	66		98	
Total responses	1240	1174	1849	1751

Which of the following best describes your gender identity? Please select all that apply.

To protect staff privacy, data is presented in aggregate categories, rather than as presented in the original question.⁴

Gender Identity (including transgender identity)	Count (2024)	Percent (2024)	Count (2022)	Percent (2022)
Cisgender	1093	88%	1661	95%
<i>Woman</i>	853	69%	1313	75%
<i>Man</i>	240	19%	348	20%
Transgender, nonbinary, and/or gender fluid	22	2%	23	1%
Prefer not to answer	56	5%	58	3%
No response	69		107	
Total responses	1240	1171	1849	1742

⁴ Note that we would not normally combine data on transgender identity and gender identity: they are separate concepts and, in most cases, would not be analyzed in this way. Due to small numbers in each individual category, they are combined here to protect staff privacy while ensuring that staff are fully represented in the analyses that follow.

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See Yourself in Limestone

Gender expression: How do you think other people at work would describe you?

Gender Expression	Count (2024)	Percent (2024)	Count (2022)	Percent (2022)
Gender conforming	872	74%	1330	75%
Unknown ⁵	270	23%	391	22%
Gender nonconforming	38	3%	58	3%
No response	60		70	
Total responses	1240	1181	1849	1779

Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation? Select all that apply.

To protect staff privacy, data is presented in aggregate categories, rather than as presented in the original question.

Sexual orientation	Count (2024)	Percent (2024)	Count (2022)	Percent (2022)
Straight/heterosexual	930	80%	1430	82%
2SLGBTQ+	111	10%	160	9%
Unknown ⁶	9	1%	12	1%
Prefer not to answer	120	10%	140	8%
No response	70		107	
Total responses	1240	1170	1849	1742

⁵ These are staff who answered either gender identity OR gender expression and could not be grouped.

⁶ This category includes staff who were not sure about their sexual orientation, as well as those who used the text box for purposes other than describing their sexual orientation.

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Next Steps and Communication Plan

The Limestone District School Board remains committed to collaboration to ensure all staff and students feel a deep sense of belonging and see themselves reflected in the Limestone community. To this end, several initiatives have been implemented in recent years in response to key areas of need identified by staff focusing on equity, diversity, and inclusion, and staff well-being. As next steps, we will continue to:

- Provide Human Rights training to staff.
- Review policies, procedures and guidelines to remove discriminatory biases, and create new ones where needed to ensure a discrimination-free environment.
- Survey and/or interview staff upon hiring and departure to learn about their experience in the board.
- Recruit from multiple job boards and at multiple job fairs to widen the pool of applicants.
- Partner with Queen's University through the Internationally Trained Teachers Program and the French, Technology, and Indigenous teacher training programs to encourage placements at Limestone schools and recruit new teachers.
- Partner with St. Lawrence College to support student placements in LDSB schools and the Education Centre.
- Collaborate with the Staff Affinity group on priorities and strategies regarding equity and human rights.
- Promote the Employee Assistance Program.
- Promote staff well-being through mental health literacy training at all levels of the organization.
- Continue to collect staff voice in future WCBS and Corporate Services' Surveys.

In the future, we hope to include worksite information as part of our workplace climate surveys to allow for more targeted support for staff.

An expanded copy of this report that includes workplace climate data has been shared with all Limestone staff. In the coming weeks and months, additional analyses focusing on the intersections between identity and workplace climate and experience will be conducted to inform ongoing initiatives.

Recommendations

That this report be received for information purposes.

Prepared by: Talya McKenna, Associate Superintendent Human Resources

Reviewed by: Krishna Burra, Director of Education

Attachments

Appendix A: Detailed rationale for Workforce Census and Belonging Survey questions

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APPENDIX A

Detailed rationale for Workforce Census and Belonging Survey questions

Demographic Questions

What is your current employment status with LDSB?

Why did we ask this question? Employment status and security can affect perception of workplace belonging, satisfaction, and safety. Because this survey is anonymous and cannot be connected to existing HR records, we need to ask it here so we can better understand how employment status affects workplace climate. We also want to see if there are any patterns in the demography of various groups of employees to identify any systemic barriers to stable employment.

How long have you been employed with LDSB?

Why did we ask this question: Employment tenure may be a source of variation in responses: staff perceptions will vary based on how long they have been working for Limestone. Because this survey is anonymous and cannot be connected to existing HR records, we are asking it here so we can better understand how tenure affects workplace climate. We also want to see if there are any patterns in the demography of various groups of employees to identify any systemic barriers to stable employment.

How many years have you been working in education?

Why did we ask this question? This question will help us contextualize staff experience relative to their entire careers, rather than just their experience in Limestone. The in-school environment for experienced staff may be significantly different than newer staff, regardless of where they have spent most of their career.

Identity Questions

Why these questions: Under the Ontario Human Rights Code (OHRC), all employees have the right to live free from discrimination based on age, ancestry, colour, race, citizenship, ethnic origin, place of origin, creed, disability, family status, marital status (including single status), gender identity, gender expression, sex, and sexual orientation. These areas are called Code grounds. The following questions ask about various code grounds to help understand how individual identities and work experiences intersect. The Research Team can pair responses to these questions with others related to the workplace climate to identify any systemic and interpersonal biases related to Code grounds. Staff identity-based data can also be compared to Student Census responses to understand how reflective the staff complement is of the student body.

How old are you?

Why this question: Freedom from discrimination based on age is a protected human right in the *Code*. By pairing this response with other answers, we can investigate any potential systemic or interpersonal bias toward staff based on their age.

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Other than English, list the languages you speak or read [or use] well enough to understand.

Why this question: Like the question on international education, information about languages spoken by staff in Limestone has not been aggregated in any other location. Knowing that there are 74 languages spoken by Limestone students, it is important to understand the extent to which our staff complement is reflective of students' linguistic diversity and how to possibly apply those skills in the service of students and families.

Is English your first language?

Why this question: Like internationally educated professionals, those who speak English as a second language are often shut out of equitable employment opportunities due to (real or perceived) language barriers. This question will help us understand the proportion of the workforce who speak English as a second language and can be paired with their employment status, education level and income to determine any systemic barriers to securing employment that is reflective of their skills and training.

Were you born in Canada?

Why these questions: Citizenship is a protected ground under the OHRC. Paired with other responses on employment status, education level, location of education, and English as a Second Language status, we can identify any systemic barriers to equitable employment opportunities. The results of this analysis can help inform our work as part of the Workplace Inclusion Charter with KEYS to find ways to recruit and retain more recently arrived professionals. Data from this question can also be compared with Student Census responses to determine how reflective the staff complement is of the student population regarding birthplace and citizenship.

Do you identify as First Nations, Métis, and/or Inuit? Please select all that apply.

Why this question: Limestone is committed to prioritizing First Nation, Métis, and Inuit self-identification processes, truth and reconciliation in education, and Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing. This reflects a broader commitment to embedding reconciliatory practices in all policies and procedures. This effort is crucial to creating spaces where Indigenous staff feel supported, valued, and safe. Central to this commitment is the responsibility of the board to identify, address, and eliminate patterns of racism, harassment, and discrimination in the workplace, and to repair any harm caused by such systems.

Pairing Indigenous self-identity with other responses helps to identify where systemic and interpersonal biases exist, providing valuable insights that can guide policy adjustments aimed at eliminating these biases. This question was developed in collaboration with the Indigenous Education Team and is framed with language that aligns with the Ministry of Education mandated student self-identification form. It underscores the critical understanding that freedom from discrimination based on Indigenous identity is a protected ground under the Ontario Human Rights Code, related to race, ancestry, colour, citizenship, ethnic origin, place of origin, and creed.

In tandem with these efforts, it is equally important to address recruitment and hiring practices. The organization must actively work to ensure that these practices are inclusive and reflective of Indigenous

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communities. Changing recruitment and hiring strategies to attract, retain, and promote Indigenous talent can further demonstrate a genuine commitment to reconciliation. This includes not only ensuring that Indigenous candidates feel welcomed and supported throughout the hiring process but also making sure that there are pathways for advancement and leadership opportunities within the organization. By making these systemic changes, Limestone can better reflect its commitment to truth, reconciliation, and the ongoing efforts to create a more just and inclusive environment for Indigenous staff.

Gender expression: How do you think other people at work would describe you?

The following paragraph was shared in the survey itself.

Why this question: An emerging body of research is showing that gender identity and sexual orientation (i.e., internal aspects of the self that are not necessarily known to others) may have little bearing on whether someone experiences gender-based harassment motivated by homophobia and transphobia. Rather, one's gender expression and degree of conformity with gender norms have been shown to be correlated with experiences of the same, regardless of gender identity or sexual orientation. It is all too easy to ignore how gender expression and its interpretation by others can place cisgender and heterosexual people at risk (Airton, 2019). The responses to this question are not analyzed in isolation. Rather, they are associated with respondents' answers to the gender identity question to create the categories gender conforming and gender nonconforming.⁷ This measurement has been validated by prior research (see Klemmer et al, 2019). These categories will be examined alongside staff experiences to build an understanding of how gender expression is treated in Limestone. A similar analysis is underway for Student Census data.

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[See Yourself in Limestone](#)

Administrative Report: Policy 15 Update

Education, Policy and Operations Committee Meeting

May 7, 2025

Purpose and Link to the Strategic Plan/Goal: Student Learning, Achievement and Well-Being

To update current Policy 15 (Trustee Attendance, Electronic Meetings and Participation of Board Members) to ensure compliance with Bill 98 and associated regulations (463/97).

Background

Bill 98, the Better Schools and Student Outcomes Act, 2023, and resulting regulations have led to necessary changes to Policy 15, particularly related to trustee attendance at board meetings and committee of the whole meetings. It should be noted that some of these changes will be phased-in until full implementation in September 2025. In December 2024 at EPOC, a preliminary report with necessary policy changes to ensure compliance for September 2025 was shared with trustees. Trustees wanted further edits to ensure compliance, with some flexibility to accommodate unforeseen circumstances, preventing a trustee from being physically present at a meeting.

Ontario Regulation 463/97: Electronic Meetings and Meeting Attendance requires that all trustees be physically present in the meeting room for regular Board or Committee of the Whole meetings unless the Chair approves the trustee participating by electronic means. This regulation, together with s.228(1)(e) of the Education Act, means that missing one regular Board or Committee of the Whole meeting, public or private, would result in a trustee vacating their seat if the trustee fails to be physically present and has not been approved to participate by electronic means, or fails to participate by electronic means if approved to do so.

Under s.228(1)(b) of the Education Act, a trustee's seat is automatically vacated if the trustee is absent from three consecutive regular meetings of the board during each twelve-month period, unless the absence is authorized by the board of trustees.

Limestone District School Board

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While Regulation 463/97 and Section 228(1)(b) appear to conflict, the revised Regulation includes a process for a Trustee with sufficient notice, or in rare, unforeseen circumstances to be absent from a meeting without vacating their seat.

Current Status

Significant edits have been made to Policy 15 to ensure regulatory compliance with Regulation 463/97. Appendix A is a copy of the existing Policy 15. Appendix B is a copy of Policy 15 with recommended, updated edits to align with language set out in Regulation 463/97. The recommended edits provide further support for some flexibility to take into account unforeseen circumstances preventing a trustee from attending and/or providing notice in advance of the meeting.

Trustees may also want to consider the current structure of some committees. The provisions of Regulation 463/97 apply to Board Meetings and Committees of the Whole. One option for consideration would be to restructure the current committee of the whole: Education, Policy, and Operations (EPOC). As an example, several years ago, LDSB had three committees (a) Education and Human Resources, and (b) Property and Operations, and (c) Policy. Consequently, another option would be to eliminate EPOC and revert back to a few smaller committees with only some trustees serving on each.

Next Steps and Recommendations

Trustees approve the recommended changes to Policy 15 with, or without, additional edits:

- (a) Approval of changes to Policy 15 with, or without, edits as outlined in Appendix B.
- (b) Provide direction regarding potential changes to the structure of some LDSB committees.

Prepared and reviewed by: Krishna Burra, Director of Education

Appendices

- a. Current Policy 15
- b. Policy 15 with edits to ensure compliance for September 2025

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ELECTRONIC MEETINGS AND PARTICIPATION OF BOARD MEMBERS

A. ELECTRONIC MEETINGS

1.0.0 Provision of Electronic Systems

Limestone District School Board shall provide for the use of electronic systems to allow members of the Board to take part in meetings of the Board and its committees, including a Committee of the Whole Board, from remote sites. In addition, the Board shall make public access to meetings available by streaming Board Meetings, Board Committees, and Committee of the Whole Board (EPOC).

2.0.0 Attendance at Meetings

2.1.0 The following persons shall be present at each meeting of the Board or Committee of the Whole Board:

- i) The Chair of the Board or their delegate;
- ii) At least one additional member of the Board;
- iii) The Director of Education of the Board or their delegate.

2.2.0 The following persons shall be present at each meeting of a committee of the Board:

- i) The Chair of the committee of the Board or their designate;
- ii) The Director of Education of the Board or their designate.

2.3.0 At the request of any Board member, the Board shall provide the member with electronic means of participating in one or more duly constituted meetings of the Board or its committees.

The request for making electronic means available to Board members for duly constituted meetings of the Board or its committees must be made at least 24 hours before the scheduled meeting.

- 2.4.0 A member of the Board who participates in a meeting through electronic means shall be deemed to be present at the meeting.

B. PARTICIPATION OF BOARD MEMBERS

- 1.0.0 The electronic means used for these meetings shall permit the member to hear and be heard by all other participants in the meeting.

- 1.1.0 Pupil representatives to the Board who are participating through electronic means shall not participate in any proceedings which are closed to the public.

- 1.2.0 The electronic means shall be provided in such a way that the rules governing conflict of interest of members are complied with.

2.0.0 Public Participation in Board Meetings

- 2.1.0 The Board shall make public access to meetings available by streaming Board Meetings, Board Committees, and Committee of the Whole Board (EPOC).

- 2.2.0 Such participation shall be in accordance with Board Policies

Revised: July 2021



TRUSTEE ATTENDANCE, ELECTRONIC MEETINGS AND PARTICIPATION OF BOARD MEMBERS

1.0.0 Attendance at Meetings

1.1.0 The following persons shall be present at each meeting of the Board or Committee of the Whole Board (EPOC):

- i) The Chair of the Board or their delegate;
- ii) At least one additional member of the Board;
- iii) The Director of Education of the Board or their delegate.

2.0.0 Trustee Attendance

2.1.0 In-person attendance requirements effective until August 31, 2025 [to be revoked September 1, 2025]:

- i) The Chair of the Board or designate shall be physically present in the meeting room of the board for at least half of the meetings of the Board during each 12-month period beginning November 15, 2022, and,
- ii) A Trustee shall be physically present in the meeting room of the Board for at least three regular meetings of the Board during each 12-month period beginning November 15, 2022.

2.2.0 In-person attendance requirements effective September 1, 2025:

- i) All Trustees must be present in person for all Regular and Special Meetings of the Board, and all Committee of the Whole Board Meetings unless authorized to attend via electronic means as outlined in section 3.3.0, or unless the absence has been approved by board motion in alignment with section 228 of the Education Act.
- ii) Failure to attend a meeting in-person, or by electronic means when approved, or as authorized by Board motion, may result in the Trustee vacating their seat.
- iii) In-person attendance requirements do not apply to Student Trustees. Student Trustees may participate in any Board meeting or committee meeting via electronic means and permission to do so is not required.

- iv) The only exception for in-person Trustee attendance for all Trustees is if all schools of the board are closed under an order made in accordance with Ontario Regulation 463/97. In these cases, all Trustees and staff may attend a meeting electronically and the physical meeting space will not be open to permit in-person attendance by members of the public.

2.3.0 At the start of each Board Meeting, a motion to accept Regrets from the previous Board Meeting or Committee of the Whole meeting as an approved absence will be moved by the Vice-Chair before approval of the agenda: "I move to approve Trustee Regrets as approved absences?"

2.4.0 In the very rare circumstance that a Trustee is unable to provide regrets to the Chair, Vice-Chair, Director, or Recording Secretary before a Board meeting or Committee of the Whole meeting, the trustee may make a motion to accept their absence before approval of the minutes at the next Board Meeting. If approved by a majority of Trustees present, the trustee would be marked "Absent by approved motion" in the Minutes for the meeting approved in the motion.

3.0.0 Electronic Attendance Requirements

3.1.0 If a Trustee proposes to participate in a meeting described in section 2.2.0 by electronic means, the Trustee shall submit a request in writing and the reasons for the request to the Chair of the Board before the meeting begins.

3.2.0 If the Trustee making a request for participation by electronic means is the Chair of the Board, the Chair shall submit a request in writing and reasons to the Vice-Chair of the Board.

3.3.0 The Chair or Vice-Chair: if it is the Chair making the request, may approve a request if they are satisfied that one or more of the circumstances identified below exist(s):

- i) The distance from the Trustee's primary place of residence within the area of jurisdiction of the board to the meeting location is 125 kilometres or more;ii) weather conditions do not allow the Trustee to travel to the meeting location safely;
- ii) the Trustee cannot be physically present at a meeting due to health-related issues;
- iv) The Trustee has a disability that makes it challenging to be physically present at a meeting; or
- v) the Trustee cannot be physically present due to family responsibilities in respect of one or more of the following: the Trustee's spouse; a parent, step-parent, or foster parent of the Trustee or the Trustee's spouse; a child, step-child, foster child, or child who is under legal guardianship of the Trustee or the Trustee's spouse; a relative of the Trustee who is dependent on the Trustee for care or assistance; or a person who is dependent on the Trustee for care or assistance and who considers the Trustee to be like a family member.

3.4.0 The Chair shall not approve a request for a Trustee to participate by electronic

means in a Board Meeting or Committee of the Whole Meeting if the request would result in fewer than one Trustee of the Board, in addition to the Chair of the Board or their designate, being physically present in the meeting room. The same applies for the Vice-Chair approving a request from the Chair.

3.5.0 A member of the Board who participates in a meeting through electronic means shall be deemed to be present at the meeting if approved in advance of the meeting as outlined in section 3.3.0.

4.0.0 Provision of Electronic Systems

4.1.0 At the request of any Board member whose absence has been approved prior to the meeting as outlined in section 3.3.0, the Board shall provide the member with electronic means of participating in one or more duly constituted meetings of the Board or its committees.

4.2.0 The Board shall make public access to meetings available by streaming Board Meetings, Board committees, and Committee of the Whole Board

5.0.0 Participation of Board Members

5.1.0 The electronic means used for these meetings shall permit the Board member to hear and be heard by all other participants in the meeting.

5.2.0 Student Trustees who are participating through electronic means shall not participate in any proceedings which are closed to the public.

5.3.0 The electronic means shall be provided in such a way that the rules governing conflict of interest of members are complied with.

6.0.0 Public Participation in Board Meetings

6.1.0 The Board shall make public access to meetings available by streaming Board Meetings, Board Committees, and Committee of the Whole Board.

6.2.0 Such participation shall be in accordance with Board Policies.

6.3.0 Unless attending as part of an approved delegation, members of the public are not participants in Board Meetings or Committee of the Whole Meetings, and there is no requirement for the provision of two-way communication via electronic means.

Revised: May 2025

References:

Education Act, Section 228

Ontario Regulation 463/97 Electronic Meetings and Meeting Attendance

OPSBA Guide to Good Governance