

AGENDA – EDUCATION, POLICY AND OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

Wednesday, March 6, 2024 – 5:30PM
Limestone Education Centre
220 Portsmouth Avenue, Kingston, ON

Link: <https://bit.ly/LDSBEPOCMTGMar6>

Public Meeting – 5:30 PM

Private Session – Following Adjournment of EPOC. Report to Public session at the March Board Meeting.

Acknowledgement of Territory: “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 AGENDA
3. DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST
4. REPORTS FOR INFORMATION
 - 4.1 2024-2025 Budget Development Schedule – Superintendent Young (Pages 2-3)
 - 4.2 Limestone District School Board Graduation Rate – Superintendent Silver (Pages 4-7)
 - 4.3 Staff/Student Absences – Superintendent McWilliams & Superintendent Gillam
 - 4.4 Use of Mobile Technology and Screens in Limestone Classrooms/Schools – Director Burra, Associate Superintendent Gollgoly, Associate Superintendent Hedderson (Pages 8-12)
5. REPORTS FOR ACTION - None at this time
6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS - None at this time.
7. NEW BUSINESS - None at this time.
8. CORRESPONDENCE – Letter January 2024 to LDSB Re: Screen Time During Meals (Pages 13-18)
9. NEXT MEETING – May 1, 2024
10. ADJOURNMENT

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT: 2024-2025 BUDGET DEVELOPMENT SCHEDULE

EDUCATION, POLICY AND OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING

March 6, 2024

Purpose

To provide information to Trustees on the 2024-2025 budget development schedule.

Background

The Ministry has yet to announce the details of the 2024-2025 Grants for Student Needs (GSN); however, from past experience and current discussions with the Ministry, we understand that they are working towards an announcement that will be made in April.

Last year, the GSN was announced on April 17, 2023, with the specific details and grant calculation forms being made available to school boards on March 31, 2023. The Priority Partnership funding announcements were released on April 17, 2023.

It is expected, based upon prior year reporting timelines, that school boards will be required to submit their approved 2024-2025 Budget Estimates to the Ministry of Education by June 28, 2024.

Current Status

The multi-year enrolment projections prepared last year are predicting a slight increase in enrolment for 2024-2025. It is our practice to have our current enrolment and demographic data reviewed each year. LDSB updates enrolment projections in February, so that school principals and Board staff can review the information in early March to begin the school staffing process for the upcoming school year.

The Budget Survey will be open from March 4 to March 25, 2024. The feedback received helps LDSB make informed budget decisions.

The following budget development schedule has been established to ensure that the Board will be able to submit the 2024-2025 Estimates to the Ministry by the end of June 2024.

Committee of the Whole - Budget Meetings

All meetings to be hybrid with in-person held at
 220 Portsmouth Ave, Kingston, Ontario

Wednesday, April 17, 2024 (7:00 pm) <i>Following SEAC</i>	Review of 2024-2025 Enrolment Projections, Budget Survey Review
Wednesday, May 22, 2024 (7:00 pm) <i>Following SEAC</i>	GSN Overview Preliminary Operating Revenue
Wednesday, June 5, 2024 (7:00 pm) <i>Following EPOC</i>	Preliminary Operating Expenditures/Preliminary Capital Revenue/Expenditures/Consolidated Budget Draft Budget Review
Wednesday, June 12, 2024 (7:00 pm) <i>Following SEAC</i>	<i>Date held if meeting required</i>

As per previous years, the budget development schedule will be provided to all committees of the Board, so that budget issues can be identified and discussed (where applicable).

Recommendations

That this report be received for information purposes.

Prepared by: Paula Carson, Manager of Financial Services

Reviewed by: Craig Young, Superintendent of Business Services
 Krishna Burra, Director of Education

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT: LIMESTONE DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD GRADUATION RATE

EDUCATION, POLICY, AND OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

March 6, 2024

Purpose and Link to the Strategic Plan/Goal: Student Learning, Achievement, & Well-Being (if applicable)

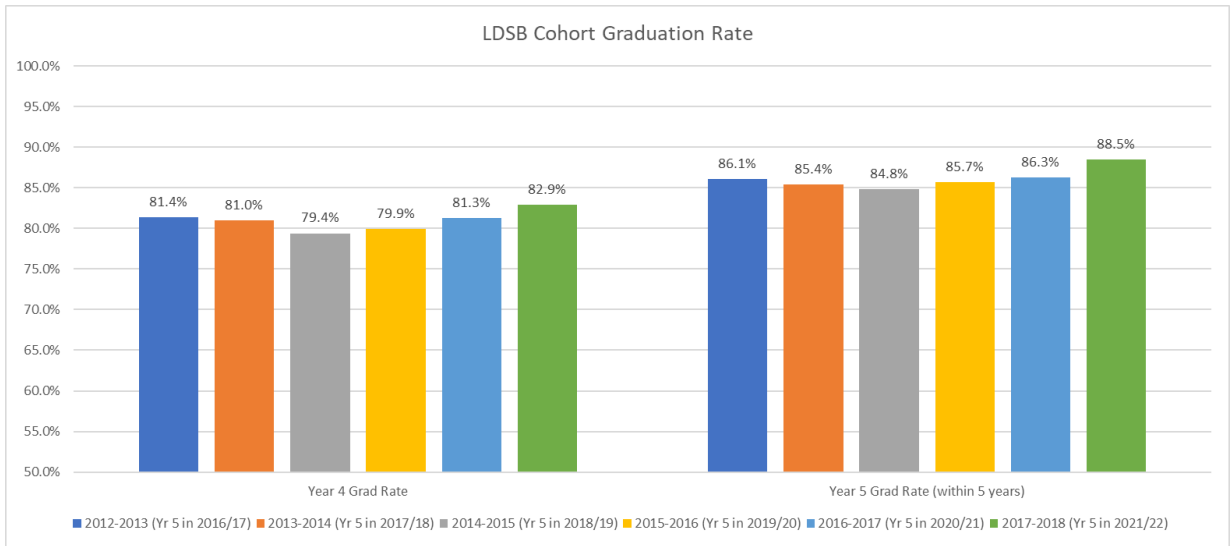
To provide the Board of Trustees with trends on Limestone District School Board (LDSB) four- and five-year graduation rates. Supports Strategic Plan Goal: Improve graduation rates and preparedness for future success for all groups of students.

Background

The Ministry of Education has been monitoring graduation rates using data derived from school boards' OnSIS submissions. This OnSIS information is provided to boards each year, at which point boards review the data, fix any errors which exist for students who graduated from LDSB, and confirm the data with the Ministry. Graduation rates are tracked by student cohort, with each grade representing a different cohort. Students who began Grade 9 in 2017-2018 (referred to as a cohort year) would expect to graduate in 2020-2021 as a four-year graduate, or in 2021-2022 as a five-year graduate.

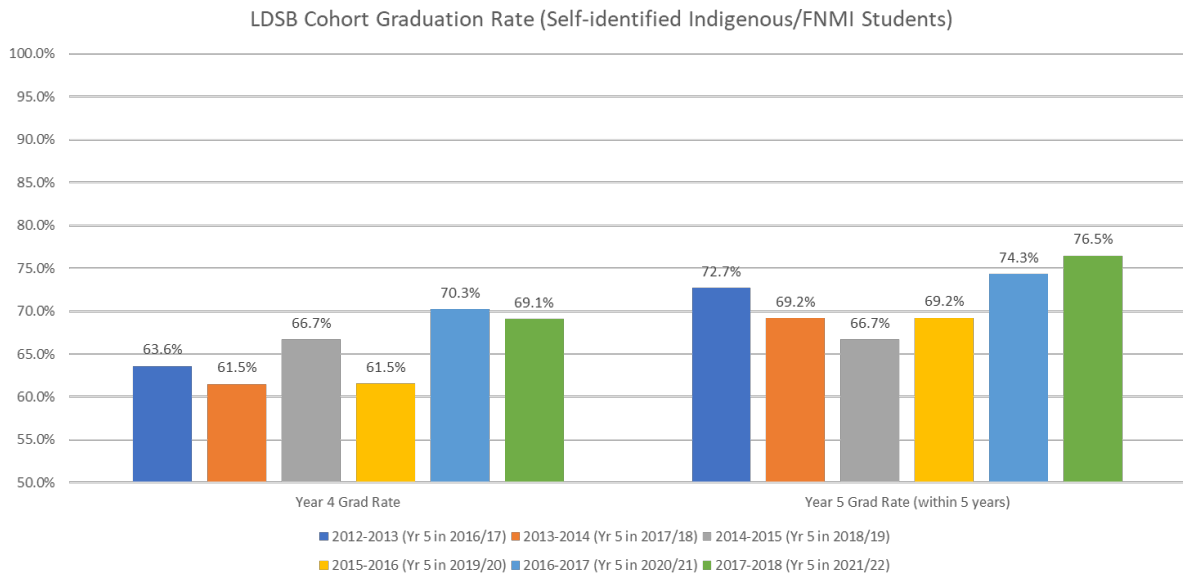
Current Status

The LDSB has approximately 1,500 students per secondary cohort. The four- and five-year graduation rates for LDSB can be found in the graph below.

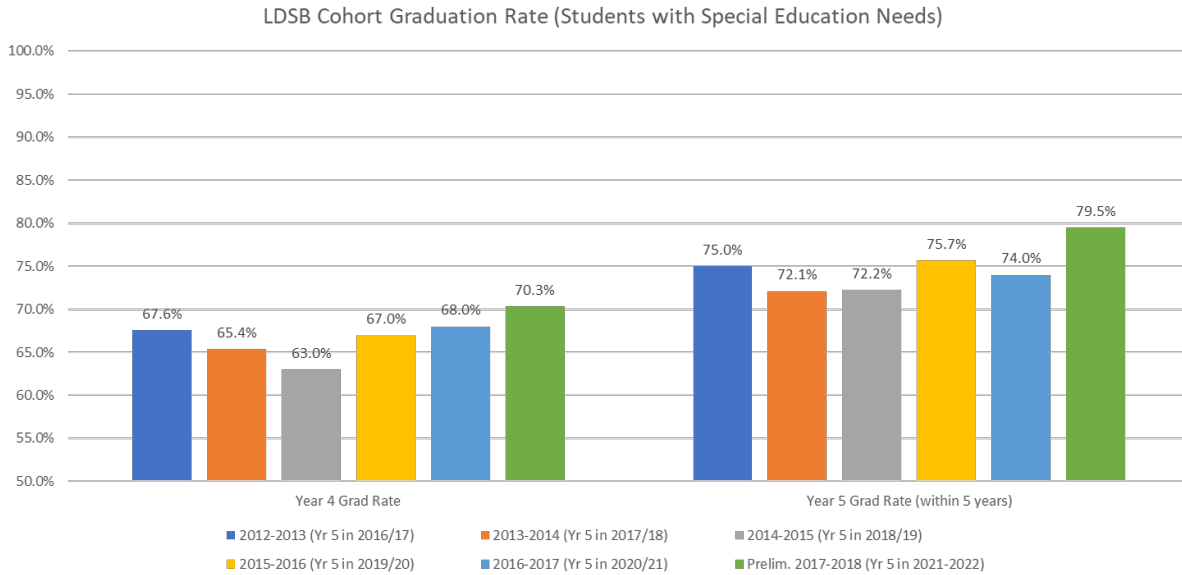


The LDSB is also able to provide cohort graduation rates for subsets of our secondary student population. These subsets represent a much smaller number of students, so there is greater variation in the trend lines over time, as each student represents a much greater percentage of the total cohort.

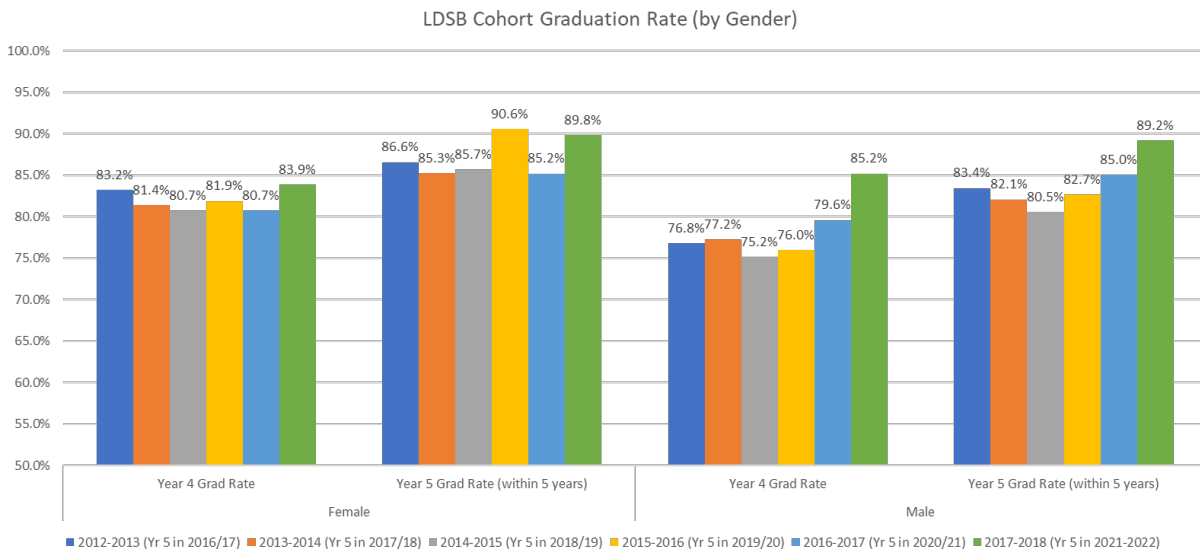
This graph below shows the four- and five-year graduation rate for students who have formally self-identified Indigenous, First Nations, Métis, and/or Inuit:



The graph below shows the four- and five-year graduation rate for students with special education needs:



The graph below shows the four- and five-year graduation rates by gender:



Supporting students to graduation is a focus of school student success teams. Student success teams regularly track student achievement data, support credit rescue and credit recovery attempts, and monitor student completion of graduation requirements to support students to graduation.

Next Steps and Communication Plan

Supporting students to graduation is a focus of school student success teams. Student success teams regularly track student achievement data, support credit rescue and credit recovery attempts, and monitor student completion of graduation requirements to support students to graduation.

Information will be shared on the LDSB website on April 2, 2024, as part of the Student Achievement Plan.

Recommendations

That this report be received for information.

Prepared by: Jessica Silver, K-12 Superintendent of Curriculum & Program Services

Reviewed by: Krishna Burra, Director of Education



ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT: USE OF MOBILE TECHNOLOGY AND SCREENS IN LIMESTONE CLASSROOMS/SCHOOLS

EDUCATION, POLICY, AND OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

March 6, 2024

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

Use of cellphones, other mobile technology, and screen time have received significant attention, including in the media, in recent months. Research continues to emerge regarding the relationship between young people's well-being/wellness and their use of technology, and particularly social media. At the same time, use of technology is critical as a tool to support learning for students. This report will provide an overview of work currently underway in Limestone and moving into the months ahead as it relates to students and the use of technology.

Supports Strategic Plan Goal: Improve student well-being/sense of belonging, participation/engagement in class time, and time focused on learning.

Background

Cellphones and other mobile technology have been a reality in schools for over 15 years. The pivots to remote, virtual learning during the spring of 2020, winter of 2021, and spring of 2021 focused considerable attention on the positive and negative aspects of ubiquitous technology. At this current stage of the pandemic, concerns have been expressed about the addictive nature of social media and the overuse of cellphones, other mobile technology, and screen time in general.

Since November 2019, in Ontario schools, using cellphones and other personal mobile devices during instructional time has been restricted. During the provincial consultation on education reform in fall 2018, over 95% of parents, students and educators indicated that there should be restrictions on the use of cellphones at school. As a result, the provincial code of conduct was updated to restrict the use of cellphones and other mobile devices during instruction time so that students could focus on learning. Limestone Administrative Procedures have had this practice in place for many years.

It should be noted that restrictions during instructional time have been in place in Limestone since the late 2000s when local schools began to see the challenges presented by cellphones and other mobile technology.

Some elementary schools do allow students to watch videos during nutrition or lunch breaks. These videos may be educational at times, but it does increase screen time during what should be social interaction time while students are eating.

Current Status

The Position Statement from the Canadian Pediatric Society (CPS) regarding healthy screen use in school-aged children and adolescents highlights the varying impacts of digital media on cognition, psychosocial function, and physical health, emphasizing that the benefits and risks are nuanced. Additionally, in their Position Statement on screen time and pre-school children, CPS recommends limiting screen time in public places and during family routines, such as mealtime. It should be noted that this recommendation specifically pertains to screen use within the home environment. When screens become a distraction during mealtime, it is important to recognize that internal regulation, which governs hunger/fullness cues and the amount of food consumed, may be the aspect of eating competence most affected.

The purpose or intent of screen time does matter, and students need to become familiar with how to use technology to support their learning, and production of work.

LDSB Administrative Procedures are being updated to reflect the benefits of using technology as an important part of students' learning at school. They also acknowledge our collective responsibility to balance proper use for learning with teaching students about healthy technology use to limit distractions and allow them to focus on learning during different parts of the instructional day, and to limit screen time during non-instructional periods to promote physical and mental health and encourage face-to-face social interactions.

Digital devices such as laptops, Chromebooks, iPads/tablets, and smartphones (personal) are ubiquitous in society and across K-12 schools. Currently, we have a device-to-student ratio of 1:1 in secondary schools where Grades 9 and 10 students have their own designated/priority access device and Grades 11 and 12 students use a shared model (with enough for one per student). We have a device-to-student ratio of 1:1.3 in elementary schools.

The availability of mobile technology in LDSB learning spaces helps promote learning and future success through the following:

- 1) Equitable Access and Inclusion: Students benefit from mobile technology integration in learning spaces. It can lead to a more equitable educational experience and give students the necessary tools

to succeed today and into the future. When more, if not all, students have access to a device in class, it avoids singling out students who have other important reasons for needing one. When the Board provides mobile devices in learning spaces, they are configured for learning with fewer distractions than personal devices (e.g. social media access).

2) Personalized Learning: Mobile devices allow for personalized learning experiences using an LMS (Learning Management System such as Minds Online, Google Classroom, Microsoft Teams) or digital tools (e.g., Edwin, Knowledgehook, Lexia). Students can access content as needed, revisit concepts, and receive tailored feedback from other students, the teacher, or the use of artificial intelligence. This individualization supports diverse learning needs and further promotes inclusion.

3) Active Engagement: Mobile technology and apps encourage active participation in classroom learning experiences. Interactive features like quizzes/polls, simulations, and games promote engagement and help to deepen students' understanding. Engaged students are more likely to retain and apply information effectively in unfamiliar contexts.

4) Collaboration and Communication: Mobile devices are key to promoting collaborative learning and providing a mechanism for students to communicate safely in project-based learning and other collaborative assignments during and outside of school hours, as required. In addition, translation tools (i.e., Google Translate) facilitate more seamless communication for individuals learning English. Access to safe digital communication tools provides more opportunities for feedback (student and teacher) than may have existed before, clarifying learning goals and success criteria, and contributing to growth in learning and achievement.

5) Digital Literacy, Citizenship, and 21st-Century Skills: Mobile devices help students develop digital literacy and digital citizenship skills. Students learn to navigate apps, evaluate information, consider security, privacy, and reputational risks, and learn to use technology safely and responsibly.

6) Future Skills and Learning Formats: Secondary students must complete two online courses as a graduation requirement. Through online course options within LDSB and throughout the province, students have much greater access to a variety of courses that may not be available in a specific school, or within LDSB schools in general. Experience with online learning is critical for students as they progress through the K-12 system, as post-secondary institutions and many employers utilize online learning management systems to provide learning and training to students/employees.

7) Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Generative Tools: Since the release of ChatGPT in the fall of 2022, AI tools have expanded and become more widely available for use. Significant work needs to occur in the coming months and years to ensure this technology is being harnessed effectively and used appropriately to support learning. The power of these tools is a reality and students will need exposure and opportunities to utilize them as part of their education.

Increasingly, it is important to distinguish between positive use of technology and screen time for

learning, with those activities where technology and screen time is not focused on learning. At some elementary schools, screen time at nutrition/lunch breaks is not being used as an instructional tool but to entertain students while they are eating. Concerns have come forward from the community related to the use of screens as an alternative or supplement to supervision. In terms of elementary school supervision during nutrition/lunch breaks, supervision is generally provided by a combination of teachers, educational assistants, and lunch yard supervisors.

What is outlined below would be a common scenario across school boards in Ontario. In terms of staff to classroom ratios, Kindergarten classrooms have one adult present during nutrition break periods. Primary classes generally have at least one adult per every two classes for supervision purposes, whereas junior and intermediate classes have one adult per every three, and sometimes four classes. This variation is based on school size and the number of employees available to provide supervision.

It is important to note that in some instances, the number of Educational Assistants available to supervise during nutrition breaks is impacted by the need to provide 1:1 supervision of students with high needs during this time. In other words, there are classrooms with adults always present during nutrition breaks, however collective agreement requirements for lunch breaks render it challenging to have one adult in every classroom. Within this model of in-area supervision, additional staff are always available if there is an emergency. It should be noted that a few of the elementary schools have historically utilized senior elementary students to help support students and supervisors during these breaks. Although there are no provincial regulations stipulating required ratios for indoor supervision, there is a legal duty of care to maintain safe environments during this less structured time, which is typically 20-30 minutes in duration.

Next Steps and Communication Plan

Associate Superintendent Gollogly and Human Resources will organize an elementary lunch/break supervision working group to look at best practices around supervision and reducing screen time. This group will also work with KFL&A Public Health to develop resources and recommendations for healthy eating during nutrition time at school.

Future Director's messages to families and staff will emphasize the importance of instructional time and reinforce messaging regarding cellphone/mobile technology expectations at school.

Guidelines and expectations regarding use of AI will be further developed and finalized. This will be provided to schools and families later in 2024.

Potential overuse of cellphones and social media will be incorporated into the next iteration of the Student Mental Health Strategy.

Associate Superintendents Gollogly and Hedderson, with the support of the Communications Department, will develop classroom resources emphasizing the importance of instructional time and putting cellphones away while learning.

Recommendations

That this report be received for information purposes.

Prepared by: Associate Superintendents Patty Gollogly and Steve Hedderson, and Director Krishna Burra

Reviewed by: Krishna Burra, Director of Education

From: Marie Bencze

Subject: Screen Time During Meals

Dear members of the Board of Trustees at LDSB,

Please accept this email as an addendum to the group-signed letter entitled “Letter to LDSB Re: Screen Time During Meals” (attached). I would like to clarify some things that have emerged since I wrote that letter. I had many parents sign on to the original version, so I didn’t want to make changes to that document itself. I have had further conversations with other parents but I am just writing this addendum without any extra signatures as I had originally told people that I would send the letter on January 31st, so I’m sticking with my timeline and doing so.

The first thing I’d like to say is that a few other parents of children at Rideau Public School and I have now talked to our children’s teachers as well as to the principal, Valerie Arsenault, and we have had wonderful, positive exchanges. This issue is not specific to Rideau P.S., but rather a systemic issue, with teachers and schools making difficult decisions with limited resources. Mme Arsenault said in a meeting on January 29th, “my dream is to have one adult per class all day every day”, and shared that the amount of supervisory time available is insufficient. We have had productive conversations about ways to mitigate insufficient meal time supervision capacity, such as mixed-grade buddy-system supports, and other useful brainstorm. Both my own child’s teachers and the school principal have been lovely and receptive to those conversations.

I also would like to clarify that I work for Loving Spoonful and I participated in facilitating GROW (food literacy) workshops throughout the fall in many different schools; some of the other parents I have spoken to are emergency Educational Assistants, so what we are seeing and responding to has been in a variety of LDSB schools and it is not specific to Rideau PS (but rather, it just so happens that parents of children at Rideau are the ones who started talking to one another about it so the signatures on that letter are over-represented by our children's school). There are other parents who signed the letter who I don’t know personally and presumably many signed on with their only point of contact to LDSB being through their own child’s classroom.

I have also learned from my son's teachers and Mme Arsenault that the amount of screen time has increased tremendously since the beginning of the Covid 19 pandemic, and I’m concerned that policies and guidelines have not caught up to deal with the current practices around screen times but rather, the amount of screen time has continuously grown, and is creating new cultural norms in our schools, unchecked.

Some questions have come up for me in conversations with other parents and Mme Arsenault since writing the original letter and I’d like to ask the Board of Trustees:

- What is considered the safe ratio of adults to children while children are eating?
- I know the ratio for outdoors/recess is 1:100. Presumably the number should be much smaller when there are choking hazards and allergic reactions to consider.

I attended the meeting with Mme Arsenault initially worried about screen time, socialization and mindful eating, etc., and came away worried about safety.

- What is considered “screen time” at school? I would personally consider the use of the smart board with slides, etc. not to be screen time but videos such as dance, yoga, as well as television shows or movies to be screen time but that definition is unclear to me from LDSB's perspective.
- Once screentime is defined, how many hours of screen time are allowed per day in LDSB? How does that number align with the Canadian Paediatric Society's guidelines?

I look forward to hearing back from you.

Thank you,
Marie Bencze

January 2024

**Board of Trustees
Limestone District School Board**

Dear members of the Board of Trustees at LDSB,

We are writing to share our concern about the amount of screen time utilized in our children's classrooms and specifically on the use of screens during meal time. While the use of screens can have positive educational and informational outcomes in school contexts, we are concerned that the long-term implications of this practice are detrimental to our children's relationship to food, and cultural narrative around meals.

Under the Education Act, trustees are responsible for promoting student achievement and well-being while delivering effective and appropriate educational programs, among other responsibilities. We believe that current practices around the use of screen time during meals contribute to *lowering* potential achievement and well-being of students and that these practices are *inappropriate* in school contexts.

In particular, we think that the loss of opportunities for social learning and social practice during meal times is problematic. If students don't have the opportunity during meals to talk to one another, deepen their relationships with their peers, learn problem-solving in social situations and so on, it substantially decreases the amount of unstructured time in their school day for them to practice these skills. We also know that people's relationship to food changes when there is a screen present. Children can not practice mindful eating, observe their hunger cues properly, and relate to their food if they are distracted by a screen. Finally, we are concerned that the cultural narrative around meals will change for our children if they get used to having screens on while they eat. We don't want our children to learn to eat in front of the television, as this pattern can become deep-rooted and create a long-lasting routine for them.

The [Canadian Paediatric Society](#), among others, recommends limiting screen time, and removing it from meal times. We would like our schools to follow this recommendation, and we are starting this conversation with you, the Board of Trustees. Please let us know what next steps we can participate in to eliminate this harmful practice in our children's schools.

Sincerely,

Marie Bencze (Rideau Public School)

Chrissy Soares (Rideau Public School)

Eloisa Oliveira (Rideau Public School)

Wanda Praamsma (Rideau Public School)

Alise Hansen (Truedell Public School)

Malaya Sagada (Rideau Public School)

Susannah Ireland (Rideau Public School)

Isla Milne (Rideau Public School)

Cat London (Rideau Public School)

Dr. Matt Wonnacott (Rideau Public School)

Zoe Sweet and Michael Wheeler (Rideau Public School)

Anna Bona (Rideau Public School)

Melissa Boilard (Rideau Public School)

Alice Ryan (Rideau Public School)

Brenda Leifso (Rideau Public School)

Stacey Reed (Rideau Public School)

Alex Bien and Nava Dabby (Rideau Public School)

Anja Wilke (Rideau Public School)

Danielle Lennon (Rideau Public School)

Harold Card (Rideau Public School)

Dr. April Kinghorn (Rideau Public School)

Dr. Mary Rowland (Module Vanier)

Zachary Hawes (Central Public School)

Aaron Yachnins (Rideau Public School)

Michelle Girouard (Rideau Public School)

Bridget Glassco (Central Public School)

Amanda Shand (Ecole Maple)

Becky Thomlinson (Joyceville Public School)

Leyna Ramsahoye (Polson Park Public School)

Erika McConnell (Fairfield Elementary)

Jennifer Howting (Fairfield Elementary)

Dr. Kieva Hbranchuk (Rideau Public School)

Lindsay Richardson (Joyceville PS)

Alana Staniforth (Joyceville PS)

Dr. Daniel Glatt (Polson Park PS)

Adira Winegust (Polson Park PS)

Erica Silver (R.G. Sinclair)

Dr. Samuel Silver (R.G. Sinclair)

Supportive Research

Canadian Pediatric Association Position Statement: Digital media: Promoting healthy screen use in school-aged children and adolescents, June 2023

Börnhorst C, Wijnhoven TM, Kunešová M, et al. WHO European Childhood Obesity Surveillance Initiative: Associations between sleep duration, screen time and food consumption frequencies. BMC Public Health 2015;15:442.

MacDonnell N, Hancox RJ. Childhood and Adolescent Television Viewing and Metabolic Syndrome in Mid-Adulthood. Pediatrics 2023; 152 (2)

Pearson N, Biddle SJ. Sedentary behavior and dietary intake in children, adolescents and adults: A systematic review. Am J Prev Med 2011;41(2):178-88.

Pérez-Farinós N, Villar-Villalba C, López Sobaler AM, et al. The relationship between hours of sleep, screen time and frequency of food and drink consumption in Spain in the 2011 and 2013 ALADINO: A cross-sectional study. *BMC Public Health* 2017;17(1):33.

Robinson TN, Banda JA, Hale L, et al. Screen media exposure and obesity in children and adolescents. *Pediatrics* 2017;140(Suppl 2):S97-101.

Stiglic N, Viner RM. Effects of screentime on the health and well-being of children and adolescents: A systematic review of reviews. *BMJ Open* 2019;9:e023191.

Wetherington H, Pan L, Sherry B. The association of screen time, television in the bedroom and obesity among school-aged youth: 2007 National Survey of Children's Health. *J Sch Health* 2013;83(8):573-81.