

Education, Policy and Operations Committee Meeting Minutes – May 7, 2025

PUBLIC MEETING

Roll Call:

Trustees:	Staff:
G. Elliott B. Godkin (Vice-Chair) R. Hutcheon (Chair) T. Lloyd (virtual) J. Maracle (regrets) K. McGregor J. Morning J. Neill S. Ruttan C. Scott A. Bukhari (Student Trustee) R. Kolosov (Student Trustee) (regrets) S. Kumar (Student Trustee) (regrets)	K. Burra, Director of Education T. McKenna, Associate Superintendent J. Silver, Superintendent of Education (virtual) C. Young, Superintendent of Business Services
Guests:	Recorder:
	S. Mitton, Executive Assistant to the Director and Trustee Liaison

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Godkin welcomed everyone to the meeting and provided the 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. On behalf of the School Board, we express our sincere gratitude for sharing this land with us and continue our reconciliation efforts. We honour their cultures and celebrate their commitment to this land.”

2. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

MOVED BY: Trustee McGregor that the agenda be approved. Carried.

3. DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

There were no conflicts declared.

4. REPORTS FOR INFORMATION

Limestone District School Board

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

4.1 Workforce Census and Belonging Survey Preliminary Results

Associate Superintendent McKenna presented information on the preliminary results of the Limestone District School Board Workforce Census and Belonging Survey. She explained that this survey was distributed to staff in an online format in October 2024. The overall response rate was 38% or 1,240 respondents compared to 58% or 1,849 respondents when this survey was completed in 2022. Associate Superintendent McKenna shared that most of the respondents were teachers with 47% elementary and 20% secondary, and noted an underrepresentation of custodial/maintenance, Educational Assistants, lunch or yard supervisors, and school office support staff.

Associate Superintendent McKenna shared some positive findings from the survey questions. This includes:

- 92% Agree with the statement: I get along well with other staff
- 82% Agree with the statement: I feel accepted by staff
- 81% Agree with the statement: If I need support, there is a colleague I feel safe talking to
- 85% Agree with the statement: I am treated with respect by colleagues
- 86% Agree with the statement: I understand what is expected of me at work

Associate Superintendent McKenna shared some of the results where improvement is needed. She shared some examples of the data collected:

- 66% Agree with the statement: If I need support, there is a supervisor that I feel safe talking to
- 61% Agree with the statement: My immediate supervisor supports my mental health
- 78% Disagree with the statement: Limestone has a clear and focused vision for staff mental health
- 73% Disagree with the statement: I believe Limestone senior leadership demonstrates a commitment to supporting staff mental health

As a result of the preliminary data, key areas of focus and action emerged. Focus groups were engaged and feedback was collected from Staff Affinity groups to ensure that action is tied to survey results. Associate Superintendent McKenna shared the areas of focus, and the action tied to supporting these areas:

1. Actively increase representation of diverse identities within the LDSB workforce.

- Actively recruit from multiple job boards and attend various job fairs to widen the pool of applicants.

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- Partnership with Queens: Collaborate 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.
- Partnerships with St. Lawrence College: Support student placements in LDSB schools and the Education Centre.

2. Invest in practices that will support human rights and equity, employee sense of belonging, and inclusion in the LDSB community.

- Provide human rights training to staff.
- Review policies, procedures, and guidelines to remove discriminatory biases. Create new policies where needed to ensure a discrimination-free environment.
- Survey and/or interview staff upon hiring and departure to learn about their experiences within the board.
- Collaborate with the staff affinity group on priorities and strategies regarding equity and human rights.

3. Work to support staff well-being.

- Promote Employee Assistance Program to support staff well-being.
- 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 Survey.
- Include worksite information in future workplace climate surveys to provide more precise support for staff.

Chair Godkin thanked Associate Superintendent McKenna for her presentation and called upon Trustees for questions.

5. REPORTS FOR ACTION

5.1 Policy 15 Update

Chair Godkin introduced Director Burra to present his report. He noted that there is a recommendation included within the report so this presentation should be moved to a 'Report for Action'. Director Burra began by reviewing the background related to the proposed updates to Policy 15, Electronic Meetings and Participation of Board Members. He made reference to Bill 98: The Better Schools and Student Outcomes Act, 2023, Ontario Regulation 463/97: Electronic Meetings and Meeting Attendance, and pre-existing Section 228 of the Education Act. He reminded Trustees that a preliminary discussion took place at the Education, Policy and Operations Committee (EPOC) meeting in December 2024.

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Director Burra reviewed the purpose for the changes which are to provide some flexibility for clear gaps in regulation 463/97. He highlighted that in section 2.3.0 and 2.4.0 there are some proposed changes to allow for shared “Board” decision-making and flexibility.

Director Burra provided some other potential changes for consideration which include moving away from the current structure and dismantling the EPOC meetings into two or three smaller committees. By restructuring the EPOC meeting from a committee of the whole into smaller groups, Regulation 463/97 would no longer be applicable.

Chair Godkin opened the floor for comments and questions. The following motion was put forward:

MOVED BY: Trustee Ruttan that the Board of Trustees discuss the edited policy that the Director has provided, but not make a decision tonight, and take the decision to the next EPOC (June 4, 2025) meeting once everyone has had a chance to review. Carried.

Chair Godkin thanked Director Burra and opened the floor for discussion.

6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None at this time.

7. NEW BUSINESS

None at this time.

8. CORRESPONDENCE

None at this time.

9. FUTURE BOARD MEETING SCHEDULE

June 4, 2025

10. ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Trustee Neill that the meeting adjourns. Carried.

The Meeting Adjourned at 7:06 p.m.