

Education, Policy and Operations Committee Meeting Minutes – September 3, 2025

PUBLIC MEETING

Roll Call:

Trustees:	Staff:
G. Elliott B. Godkin (Vice-Chair) (regrets) R. Hutcheon T. Lloyd J. Maracle K. McGregor (Chair) J. Morning J. Neill S. Ruttan C. Scott M. Comeau (Student Trustee) (regrets) R. Kolosov (Student Trustee) (regrets) S. Ismail (Student Trustee) (regrets)	K. Burra, Director of Education M. Blackburn, Associate Superintendent of Education S. Gillam, Superintendent of Education C. Young, Superintendent of Business Services A. Grange, Communications Consultant M. Crothers, Communication Consultant
Guests:	Recorder:
Andy Mills, Food Sharing Project Brenda Moore, Food Sharing Project	S. Mitton, Executive Assistant to the Director and Trustee Liaison

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Godkin welcomed everyone to the meeting and called upon Trustee Hutcheon to provide 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

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There were no conflicts declared.

4. PRESENTATION – None at this time.

5. REPORTS FOR ACTION – None at this time.

6. REPORTS FOR INFORMATION

6.1 “See Yourself in Limestone” Communication Strategy 2025-2026

Chair Godkin introduced Communications Consultants Allison Grange and Maddie Crothers to share the communications updates and strategies for the upcoming school year. They emphasized their ongoing commitment to enhancing engagement with families, educators, community partners, and the public.

Communications Consultant Crothers shared some recent projects including the full redesign of all district websites, launched in August 2024, featuring accessible design, built-in translation, mobile optimization, and updated content tailored to diverse audiences. She highlighted that a new change this year is an updated E-newsletter tool where school newsletters will now be hosted directly on school websites. This change will improve accessibility, inclusivity, and consistency as well as being translatable to other preferred languages.

Communications Consultant Grange noted that following the launch of the multi-year strategic plan, the communications team developed branded materials—posters, templates, videos—to embed the plan into daily communications. This strategy will assist with embedding the Strategic Plan into everyday communication and foster a stronger sense of identity and alignment across the system. She noted that this year’s focus is on building awareness and alignment around the strategic theme “See Yourself in Limestone,” with messaging centered on making a positive difference in every student’s life. She highlighted some key areas of focus:

- Student Recruitment and Retention
- Staff Recruitment and Retention
- Expanded Opportunities Programming

Communications Consultant Grange shared an example of a campaign highlight which emphasized the impact of French educators in our system and promotes Limestone DSB as a supportive and rewarding place to teach.

The presentation concluded by sharing how the communications team will work with the Senior Team to develop comprehensive communications plans for the Multi-Year Strategic Plan and support additional

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initiatives and campaigns throughout the year. Included in the strategy is an enhanced approach to evaluation and monitoring which will allow for optimizing resources and better-informed decisions to make the most impact across the system.

Chair Godkin thanks Communications Consultants Grange and Crothers and called upon Trustees for questions.

6.2 Food Sharing Project Update

Superintendent Gilliam opened by affirming that the Food Sharing Project is deeply aligned with Limestone’s strategic goal of improving student well-being and engagement, recognizing that hungry students cannot learn effectively. He shared that the program has been a longstanding initiative in the region, with over 40 years of service and support from the Ontario Student Nutrition Program. Superintendent Gilliam praised the dedication of school nutrition coordinators—often educational assistants or teachers—who ensure food is ordered, prepared, and distributed discreetly and respectfully. He introduced Andy Mills, Executive Director of the Food Sharing Project, and Brenda Moore, Chair of the Board and former Limestone principal to present the program’s scope and impact.

They highlighted that nutritious food is delivered weekly to 88 publicly funded schools across Kingston, Frontenac, and Lennox & Addington, amounting to over 12,000 meals or snacks per week. A new initiative, “Lunch Is Ready,” supported by the National School Food Program, provides complete prepared meals once a week, including fruit and milk, to registered students. Brenda Moore emphasized the growing need, noting that food insecurity in the region has worsened—from one in nine families to one in three over the past few years.

Andy Mills stressed that school meals are often the best food students receive all day and that the definition of “in need” now includes many middle-income families. The program aims to eliminate stigma and barriers, ensuring every student has access to food.

The presentation concluded with sharing future goals of the program including expanding the “Lunch Is Ready” program and exploring the use of idle cafeterias in Secondary schools. While funding details from the federal program remain unclear, the team is optimistic about infrastructure support and continued collaboration with the school board.

Chair Godkin thanked Superintendent Gillam, Andy Mills, and Brenda Moore for their presentation and called upon Trustees for questions.

6.3 Extreme Weather

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Director Burra began his report, updating Trustees on the significant public health restructuring in Eastern Ontario. Previously, three separate health agencies operated in the region—KFL&A Public Health, Leeds, Grenville & Lanark, and Hastings Prince Edward. These have now been amalgamated into a single health unit covering all of Eastern Ontario outside of Ottawa, the Southeast Health Unit. This consolidation is expected to streamline services and unify public health messaging across the region.

Director Burra addressed changing weather patterns and their impact on school operations. He noted that while extreme cold alerts are less frequent, there has been a noticeable increase in heat and humidity warnings, as well as poor air quality days. These conditions have already affected school activities, such as outdoor sports events, and prompted adjustments to schedules.

In response to these environmental changes, the Southeast Health Unit has shifted its approach. It no longer provides specific temperature thresholds for outdoor activity restrictions and instead, it offers general mitigation strategies. The board now relies on guidance from organizations like the Canadian Pediatric Society, which recommends indoor recess when temperatures or wind chills exceed -27°C. This change reflects a broader trend in public health messaging since the pandemic, with less prescriptive guidance and more emphasis on local decision-making.

Looking ahead, Trustees were informed that there will be an upcoming presentation with an update on the board's 10-year capital plan, with a focus on expanding air conditioning in schools. Rising temperatures have made cooling infrastructure a growing priority. While full implementation will not be achieved quickly, the board is working to gradually increase the number of air-conditioned buildings. This initiative is in response to both media scrutiny and community concerns, particularly during warmer months.

Director Burra touched on occupational health standards. Regulation 851 of the Occupational Health and Safety Act provides guidance for indoor temperatures below 18°C, which applies to schools. However, there is currently no formal threshold for high temperatures. Despite this, the board remains committed to taking reasonable precautions to protect both staff and students during extreme weather.

Trustees were reminded of the importance of site-specific decisions due to significant weather variation across the district. For example, freezing rain in Kingston might coincide with heavy snowfall north of Highway 401. Schools are equipped to respond to these conditions with emergency procedures such as shelter-in-place protocols, which may be triggered by events like gas leaks, environmental spills, or severe storms.

Trustees were encouraged to share this information with constituents, especially given the public interest in how schools manage weather-related challenges.

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Director Burra concluded the presentation with a note on Associate Superintendent Gollogly's temporary medical leave. In her place, retired Superintendent Jess Silver will step in to support during this period.

Chair Godkin thanked Director Burra and called upon Trustees for questions.

7. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None at this time.

8. NEW BUSINESS

8.1 Potential Notice of Motion

Chair Godkin noted the potential motion included in the package. He clarified the process for submitting a notice of motion for the next board meeting, given that the current meeting was not a regular board meeting. It was discussed that, according to board bylaws, a notice of motion is typically introduced at one board meeting and scheduled for discussion at the subsequent meeting. However, to expedite this process and allow for immediate discussion and potential decision at the next meeting, the board may vote to amend the agenda at the beginning of that meeting. This amendment would require a two-thirds majority vote. If approved, the motion would be added to the agenda for full discussion and decision. Trustees agreed to this approach, with no objections raised, and acknowledged that no action was required during the current meeting other than awareness that the notice of motion would be brought forward at the next board meeting.

9. CORRESPONDENCE

None at this time.

10. FUTURE BOARD MEETING SCHEDULE

October 1, 2025

11. ADJOURNMENT AND MOVE INTO PRIVATE SESSION

Moved by Trustee Lloyd that the meeting adjourns. Carried.

The Meeting Adjourned at 6:50 p.m.