

## Education, Policy and Operations Committee Meeting Minutes – February 4, 2026

### PUBLIC MEETING

#### Roll Call:

<b>Trustees:</b>  G. Elliott B. Godkin R. Hutcheon T. Lloyd (Vice-Chair) J. Maracle K. McGregor (Chair) J. Morning J. Neill (approved regrets at the February 18 Board Meeting) S. Ruttan C. Scott M. Comeau (Student Trustee) R. Kolosov (Student Trustee) (regrets) S. Ismail (Student Trustee)	<b>Staff:</b>  K. Burra, Director of Education M. Blackburn, Associate Superintendent of Education S. Gillam, Superintendent of Education P. Gollogly, Associate Superintendent of Education A. Grange, Communications Consultant
<b>Guests:</b>  L. Conboy, Mental Health Lead M. West, Special Education Program Coordinator - Elementary	<b>Recorder:</b>  S. Mitton, Executive Assistant to the Director and Trustee Liaison

### 1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Lloyd welcomed everyone to the meeting and provided the Land Acknowledgement: “The Limestone District School Board is situated on the traditional territories of the Anishinaabek 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, as presented, be approved. Carried.*

### 3. DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

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There were no conflicts declared.

#### **4. REPORTS FOR ACTION – None at this time.**

### **5. REPORTS FOR INFORMATION**

#### **5.1 Mental Health, Substance Use, and Addictions Strategy 2025-2028**

Chair Lloyd welcomed Superintendent Gillam, who introduced Mental Health Lead Laura Conboy and Special Education Program Coordinator Melissa West. Ms. Conboy presented the 2025–2028 Mental Health, Substance Use, and Addictions Strategy, noting its alignment with the Board’s Strategic Plan, special education review, and equity action plan. The strategy is guided by PPM 160 and relevant elements of PPM 169, and is informed by existing data sources, including school climate surveys, student census results, internal monitoring, and community partner reports.

A visual framework highlighted the strategy’s focus on students, grounded in commitments to equity, truth and reconciliation, evidence-based practice, and trauma-informed approaches. The board has streamlined its work to five key areas with corresponding actions outlined in the publicly available one-year action plan.

The first focus area, student mental health, substance use, and addiction support includes updated board practices allowing students aged 12 and older to independently consent to mental health services. While caregiver involvement remains preferred, this change ensures safe and timely access for students who may not be able to involve their families. Ms. Conboy also noted continued implementation of mental health and substance-use curriculum modules.

Ms. West outlined two Grade 6 modules aligned with Language and Health curriculum expectations: one promoting safe, healthy digital media use, and another addressing substance use, decision-making, and refusal skills.

Ms. Conboy then spoke to engagement and collaboration, emphasizing strengthened partnerships with community agencies, enhanced student collaboration, and improved caregiver engagement. Initiatives included partnering with Southeast Public Health to distribute By Your Side mental health resources to more than 30 primary care providers, and hosting two fall symposiums for secondary students to build mental health literacy and support student-led initiatives.

Ms. West reported that all secondary schools participated in the symposiums. Students reviewed school-specific data, planned mental health initiatives, and accessed resources from Southeast Public

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Health. Students expressed increased confidence in supporting peers and a desire to reduce stigma within their schools. Planning is underway for a potential spring symposium for Grades 7 and 8.

Ms. Conboy highlighted work on evidence-informed brief interventions and standardized measurement tools. Staff have received training on non-diagnostic screening tools for substance use, anxiety, and mood concerns to help students understand their needs and track progress. She also reaffirmed the board's ongoing commitment to its publicly available suicide response protocol and noted the introduction of a new life-promotion and suicide-prevention workshop.

Ms. West described Prepare, Prevent, Respond, a new School Mental Health Ontario training replacing SafeTALK. Four sessions have been offered to date, including for Intensive Support Teachers and 80 Educational Assistants. The training supports staff in recognizing concerns, promoting wellness, and responding safely to student disclosures. Trauma-informed learning also remains a priority, supported through board partnerships, including with Kingston Community Health Centres, and role-specific professional learning.

Additional professional learning includes School Mental Health Ontario's mental health literacy courses for guidance, special education, and care-and-treatment educators. Educational Services leadership staff are also completing the training collaboratively.

Ms. West provided an update on the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) pilot in the Bayridge and Sydenham families of schools. The ASQ, a developmental screening tool for children up to age six, helps identify early learners who may require additional support. Trained staff can share results with family physicians or caregivers to assist in accessing community services.

The final focus area, identity-affirming practices, remains central to the board's mental health work. Initiatives include whole-classroom programs promoting positive relationships and supporting safe, inclusive school environments. A key project is the introduction of the school-based Stop Now and Plan (SNAP) program in approximately 11 schools, aimed at Grades 3 to 4. The program builds regulation, problem-solving, and relationship skills, and helps identify students who may benefit from the clinical version of SNAP. Caregiver resources accompany classroom lessons, and data collection will inform future planning.

The presentation concluded by underscoring the board's commitment to data-informed decision-making. Information from school climate surveys, the student census, and mental health service data guides professional learning to ensure staff can support neurodiverse, racialized, gender-diverse, and all other student identity groups within Limestone schools.

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Chair Lloyd thanked Ms. Conboy and Ms. West for their presentation and called upon Trustees for questions.

## **5.2 School Year Calendar Process for 2026-2027**

Associate Superintendent Gollogly provided an update on the four proposed school year calendar options and the ongoing consultation process which has generated nearly 3,000 survey responses to date.. Respondents consist primarily of parents and caregivers, with representation from staff and a small number of community agencies. It should be noted that the survey closes on Monday, February 9 at noon.

Associate Superintendent Gollogly reviewed some of the results to date. Option 1, which proposes a start date of August 31, is presently the most preferred, though it may carry financial implications for certain union groups. Options 2 and 3 remain competitive alternatives, while Option 4 has received minimal support. Associate Superintendent Gollogly emphasized that alignment of the final calendar with Hastings and Prince Edward District School Board and Algonquin and Lakeshore Catholic District School Board is required due to shared transportation services, noting that misalignment could result in costs of approximately \$250,000 per day.

Consensus among the three boards is necessary, with a simple majority among the three boards determining the final selection. It was noted that some neighbouring boards have already finalized their calendars due to differing consultation timelines or an absence of consultation requirements. Limestone's process includes several weeks of public consultation and a survey, with the final calendar submission to the Ministry of Education due by March 1.

Associate Superintendent Gollogly concluded by noting that she will be bringing the final calendar option back to the Board for approval at the February 18, 2026 Board Meeting.

Chair Lloyd thanked Associate Superintendent Gollogly and called upon Trustees for questions.

## **6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

None at this time.

## **7. NEW BUSINESS**

None at this time.

## **8. CORRESPONDENCE**

None at this time.

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## 9. FUTURE MEETING SCHEDULE

April 1, 2026

## 10. ADJOURNMENT AND MOVE INTO PRIVATE SESSION

*Moved by Trustee Hutcheon that the meeting adjourns and that Trustees move into private session for a Property and Legal update. Rise and report out from private session will take place at the public February 18, 2026, Regular Board Meeting. Carried.*

The meeting adjourned at 6:26 p.m.

## PRIVATE SESSION

### Roll Call:

<b>Trustees:</b>	<b>Staff:</b>
G. Elliott B. Godkin (Vice-Chair) R. Hutcheon T. Lloyd J. Maracle K. McGregor (Chair) J. Morning J. Neill (approved regrets at the February 18 Board Meeting) 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. Hedderson, Associate Superintendent of Education
<b>Guests:</b>	<b>Recorder:</b>
	S. Mitton, Executive Assistant to the Director and Trustee Liaison

## 11. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Lloyd called the meeting to order.

## 12. DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Chair Lloyd asked Trustees if they had a conflict of interest to declare with any of the agenda items. There were no conflicts declared.

## 13. ACTION ITEMS

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None at this time.

#### **14. FOR INFORMATION**

- 14.1. Safe Schools Update
- 14.2. Personnel Update
- 14.3. Labour Update
- 14.4. Legal and Property – Associate Superintendent Hedderson and Associate Superintendent Blackburn provided a Legal and Property update.
- 14.5. OPSBA Update

#### **15. REPORT TO PUBLIC SESSION**

Chair Lloyd called for a motion for the Board to rise and report at the February 18, 2026, Regular Board Meeting.

*MOTION: That the Board rise and report at the February 18, 2026, Regular Board Meeting.*

*MOVED by: Trustee Scott. Carried.*

The meeting adjourned at 6:36 p.m.

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