

Agenda – Education, Policy & Operations Committee Meeting

Wednesday, September 4, 2024- 5:30 p.m.

Limestone Education Centre

220 Portsmouth Avenue, Kingston, Ontario

Public Viewing: <https://bit.ly/LDSBEPOCMTGSep424>

Public Meeting – 5:30 p.m.

Private Session: Special Meeting – Following Adjournment of EPOC

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 THE AGENDA

3. DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

4. REPORTS FOR INFORMATION

4.1 **Grade 9/10 Technology Overview** – Superintendent Silver (Pages 2-4)

4.2 **PPM 170 – Parents Guide to School Communication** – Associate Superintendent Gollogly (Pages 5-6)

4.3 **Communications Update** – Director Burra (Pages 7-11)

5. REPORTS FOR ACTION

6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

7. NEW BUSINESS

8. CORRESPONDENCE

9. NEXT MEETING – October 2, 2024

10. ADJOURNMENT

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Administrative Report: Grade 9/10 Technology Overview

Education, Policy, and Operations Committee Meeting

September 4, 2024

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

To update Trustees on the new Grade 9 and 10 Technology Course being implemented in September 2024 and share funding information provided by the Limestone Learning Foundation (LLF) for STEM kits in Secondary Schools.

Supports Strategic Plan Goals:

- Improve graduation rates and preparedness for future success for all groups of students
- Improve student well-being/sense of belonging, participation/engagement in class time, and time focused on learning

Background

In December 2022, the Ministry of Education announced a revision of the Technology Education curriculum, beginning with revised Grade 9 and 10 courses to be offered in September 2024. The Technological Education curriculum has not been updated since 2009, and the goal of the revisions is to ensure students have the digital literacy and modern technological skills required for a workforce that has significantly changed, with advancements in automation.

In March 2023, the Ministry of Education announced changes to the graduation requirements for students. Starting with students entering Grade 9 this September, all students will now be required to earn a Grade 9 or 10 Technological Education credit as part of their Ontario Secondary School Diploma.

In April 2024, Geoff Petznick, Specialist High Schools Major & Skilled Trades Consultant, and Paul Allison, Intermediate STEM consultant, made a presentation to the Limestone Learning Foundation with a request for almost \$250 000 to fund Grade 9/10 STEM kits. The STEM kits would broaden exposure for students by providing technology tools that could be used in the classroom and for extra-curriculars, allowing for

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critical thinking, creativity and problem-solving skills which prepare students for all pathways after high school. In June 2024, the Limestone Learning Foundation approved funding to provide STEM kits in all LDSB Secondary Schools.

In June 2024, revised curriculum was released for TAS10, and TAS20- Technology and the Skilled Trades Grade 9 and 10 Technology courses, which replace the TIJ10 and TIJ20 Exploring Technologies courses from 2009. Both TAS10 and TAS20 count as compulsory credits and help fulfil the technology graduation requirement as part of the Ontario Secondary School Diploma. In addition to the TAS10 and TAS20 course codes, schools may offer the following broad-based technology focus courses related to Grade 9 and 10 Technology and the Skilled Trades:

- TGJ10/20 – Communications Technology and the Skilled Trades
- TEJ10/20 – Computer Technology and the Skilled Trades
- TCJ10/20 – Construction Technology and the Skilled Trades
- THJ10/20 – Green Industries and the Skilled Trades
- TXJ10/20 – Hairstyling and Aesthetics and the Skilled Trades
- TPJ10/20 – Health Care Technology and the Skilled Trades
- TFJ10/20 – Hospitality and Tourism and the Skilled Trades
- TMJ10/20 – Manufacturing Technology and the Skilled Trades
- TDJ10/20 – Technological Design and the Skilled Trades
- TTJ10/20 – Transportation Technology and the Skilled Trades

The above broad-based technology courses are based on the same curriculum expectations as TAS10 and TAS20, with specific expectations focused on skills and knowledge related to the focus area of the course.

Current Status

Several supports have been planned for educators teaching Grade 9 and/or Grade 10 Technology courses during the 2024/2025 school year. Expanded Opportunities teams from school boards within Eastern Ontario met in May 2024 to collaborate and create resources for Grade 9 and 10 educators in broad-based technology areas. In July 2024, a summer writing team was formed to review the created resources, and to create additional resources for the TAS10 and TAS20 courses. These educator created resources will be shared with technology teachers prior to the beginning of the school year. LDSB hosted a Summer Institute on August 21 and 22, with a session offered to technology educators to support planning and implementation of the new TAS10/20 courses for September. The addition of a new Grade

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9/10 STEM Consultant position beginning in September 2024 will support educators this Fall, and throughout the school year, and schools will continue to receive support from the Expanded Opportunities team centrally.

The Limestone Learning Foundation funding to support STEM kits has allowed for the purchase and introduction of STEM kits into secondary schools this Fall. STEM kits include:

- Micro:bits: pocket-sized computers that introduce how software and hardware work together
- Micro:bit Climate Action Kits: used with Micro:bits to explore the United Nations Sustainable Development goals and tackle climate change issues
- 3D printers: used to create product models and prototypes
- Virtual Reality Headsets and access to ORIGIN (Immersive Link) which provides a virtual learning platform to deliver fully immersive, multi-sensory experiences that enhance the understanding of careers and worksites
- VEX EXP Robots, which can be coded using Block coding, Python, and C++.

Professional Learning will be offered this Fall by members of the Expanded Opportunities Team to support the use of the technology tools provided through the LLF Funded STEM Kits.

Next Steps and Communication Plan

The opportunity for professional Learning and instructional coaching will be communicated with Technology Department Heads, offering support to teachers implementing the new TAS10/20 courses.

All components of the Grade 9/10 STEM Kits have been ordered, and once received, will be delivered to schools for student use in classrooms and during extracurriculars. Professional learning will include the curricular and extracurricular integration of the new technology tools contained within the 9/10 STEM Kits. Once the components arrive and kits are delivered to schools, communication will be shared with the Limestone Learning Foundation Board of Directors to acknowledge and thank them for their generous funding contribution.

Recommendations

That Trustees receive this report for information purposes.

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

Reviewed by: Krishna Burra, Director of Education

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Administrative Report: Family Communication and Ministry Requirements

Education, Policy, and Operations Committee Meeting

September 4, 2024

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

Aligned with our strategic plan to improve responsiveness and service to families, staff, and community partners, the Ministry of Education provided additional direction, in the form of Policy/Program Memorandum 170 (PPM 170), to school boards to improve transparency for families regarding guest (third party) speakers and presentations in Ontario schools, effective at the beginning of the 2024-25 school year. PPM 170 also sets expectations related to family communication.

Background

To ensure transparency for parents, school boards are required to provide detailed advance notice to families whenever guest speakers are invited into schools. This notice should include information on any handout materials, giveaways, or literature to be distributed. This requirement is consistent with the guidelines introduced for teacher Professional Activity (PA) Days in the 2023-24 school year.

To support school boards in implementing the ministry's policy on guest speakers, the Ministry of Education is providing additional guidance. This guidance clarifies that community members essential for delivering effective and appropriate education programs are not considered 'guest speakers' or 'third parties' under this policy. School boards and principals are responsible for determining which community members are essential, based on local needs, priorities, and board policies. Examples of essential speakers may include School Health Managers from Public Health Units or Indigenous Elders.

In line with PPM 170, schools and school boards must acknowledge family inquiries within two business days. If a parent inquiry cannot be fully addressed within five business days, the board shall make every effort to provide an estimated response date.

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Current Status

LDSB Administrative Procedure 290 has been updated to ensure that families receive specific information whenever external speakers or groups are invited to speak to K-12 students at school-based events. Schools are required to provide this information at least 14 calendar days prior to the scheduled presentations.

This requirement applies to any school event held during the school day that:

- Involves a third-party speaker or group (e.g., guest speakers, live performances);
- Is organized by the school, a department, a teacher, other staff members, the school council, or a student group;
- Involves all students in a school, or students from multiple classes.

It is expected that all presentations will align with the Ontario Curriculum and the school's educational goals.

As indicated, specific members of the community, such as School Health Managers from Public Health Units or Indigenous Elders, are considered essential and are exempt from this procedure. This also extends to centrally based LDSB staff.

Next Steps and Communication Plan

LDSB Administrative Procedures have been updated and PPM 170 expectations have been communicated with all school-based administrators for the start for the 2024-2025 school year. Implementation of the new expectations will be monitored over the course of the year.

Recommendation

That Trustees receive this report for information purposes.

Prepared by: Patty Gollogly, Associate Superintendent of Curriculum & Program Services, School Climate & Community Engagement

Reviewed by: Krishna Burra, Director of Education

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Administrative Report: Communications Update

Education, Policy, and Operations Committee Meeting

September 4, 2024

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

To provide Trustees with an update on several Communications initiatives and projects. The work of the communications staff supports almost all academic and corporate responsibilities in Limestone. This work includes direct support of the LDSB Strategic Plan goal number five: “Improve responsiveness and service to families, staff, and community partners.”

Current Status

The focus of the Communications staff is on the following objectives: to strengthen communication and engagement with families, educational and community partners and the public while supporting transparency and accountability. Recent and ongoing initiatives supporting these objectives include:

See Yourself in Limestone - Updated Branding and the Multi-Year Strategic Plan

As part of Phase 4: Report and Implementation of the Multi-Year Strategic Plan, several LDSB branded materials have been updated to support the Intention, Mission, Vision, and Values. Updated materials were shared with Trustees at the August Board Meeting and are being shared with schools across the district. These resources will be displayed for quick reference by staff, students, families, and community members. Updated brand assets include: posters, banners, interior signage, website design and messaging, corporate communication templates, presentations, social media templates, video campaigns (Making a Positive Difference – Staff Focus, and See Yourself in Limestone – Student Focus), and more.

myLDSB Intranet

Limestone’s new intranet, myLDSB, has launched and is a one-stop access point for all internal board resources, support, and information for employees. Based on feedback from the LDSB Corporate Services Survey from 2022, there was a clear request for a centralized place to access information and submit

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requests for support from various teams in just a few steps. myLDSB is now the one place employees can quickly access what they need to support the important work they do. Resources, supports, and ongoing communication will continue to be built out within this platform to support the work of all LDSB staff.

Re-Designed District and School Websites

All websites across the district are now live on our new platform. The re-design represents Limestone's commitment to providing the best possible resources and communication tools for our community. We believe these new websites will greatly enhance our ability to connect with students, families, and the broader community, offering:

- **Unified design** – all school and district sites now share a strong, cohesive, modern design that reflects our district's identity and values.
- **Enhanced user experience** – we have improved the navigation and layout to ensure that students, families, and staff can easily find the information they need, *in the language they need (translation is built into the platform)*.
- **Mobile optimization** – the websites are now fully responsive, providing a seamless experience on all devices, from desktops to smartphones.
- **Updated content** – the websites feature updated content that highlights for families what Limestone offers.

Accessible Resources and Recordings for Live-Broadcasts and Public Meetings

Efforts continue to determine further potential options for Limestone to enhance accessible supports for live broadcasted meetings (for example, live captioning or live transcription). Current technology integrated into MS Teams, and other virtual meeting platforms, does not provide fully accurate transcription/captioning. As different services potentially become available and artificial intelligence improves, accessibility should improve.

Starting this fall, recordings of Limestone's Regular Board Meetings, Education, Policy, and Operations Committee, and Parent Involvement Committee will be available to the public for six weeks following the live event/broadcast, and then will be archived, and available to the public if needed past the publication date. It should be noted that these recordings will not be in full compliance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA), and minutes will continue to be the official record for all meetings.

Recognition of Dates of Significance

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Moving into the 2024-2025 school year, Limestone will be reviewing the dates of significance- focusing our attention on those dates that affect learning in schools, ensuring that we prioritize events and observances that have a direct impact on students' educational experiences. By highlighting these dates, we can create meaningful opportunities for learning, reflection, and engagement around important topics. This approach helps to reinforce the relevance of these events to the curriculum, fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation among students. The LDSB Equity Team is continuing to develop learning resources available on myLDSB for educators to use in the classroom focused on the identified dates. Trying to capture and reflect an increasing number of dates of significance is a challenge and has created increased expectations for what has become a very difficult, complex task.

LDSB Social Media

Currently, LDSB uses Twitter/X, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and LinkedIn as our main social networking sites. Schools have also adopted X, Instagram, and Facebook to celebrate and share their good news in education with families and the greater community.

Originally, a significant purpose for LDSB's use of social media was to raise awareness and provide an opportunity for two-way conversation between schools and families. Today, social media has become increasingly high-conflict, and managing/monitoring comments from followers is more challenging than ever before.

Communications will continue to consult with other school boards and review social media practices on X/Twitter, while continuing to use the platform for alerts, as well as registration and recruitment communications. This fall, Communications will be leveraging engagement on the board's school communication tools (i.e. website, SchoolMessenger, etc.), as well as Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and LinkedIn accounts, while continuing to monitor the value and frequency of using X/Twitter.

Starting this fall, the Communications team will no longer be live-posting on X/Twitter during regular Board Meetings. With the introduction of live streaming a few years ago, we have noticed a shift in engagement, and we want to focus on providing comprehensive highlights through Boardroom Briefs, available the following day, as well as the availability of meeting recordings as outlined previously in this report under *Accessible Resources and Recordings for Live-Broadcasts and Public Meetings*. Given the continuing evolution of social media spaces and platforms, communications staff will continue to monitor and assess the use of these tools as communication mechanisms.

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School Communication and Call Out Solution

As mentioned, the LDSB is committed to enhancing communication and engagement across our community. To support this, we have made significant investments in our school communications and publishing platforms, building on recent upgrades to the board and school websites. These improvements align with our strategy to manage and deliver effective communications across all levels.

Our upgraded SchoolMessenger platforms now offer enhanced capabilities, including updates to the LDSB mobile app, the mass notification system (Communicate) via text, email, or phone, a student attendance management tool (SafeArrival), and an improved interface/portal for attendance tracking. These enhancements provide a seamless experience across smartphones, computers, laptops, and tablets, offering customized services that can expand to meet our evolving needs.

We are also excited to introduce “Limestone Chat,” a new two-way messaging tool that enhances our school communication suite, aimed at improving family communication and supporting student success. With Limestone Chat, schools will be able to:

- Reach every parent and ensure communication equity
- Strengthen teacher-parent/caregiver relationships to foster family engagement and involvement
- Enhance student performance by keeping parents and caregivers connected to their student's education

Limestone Chat integrates fully with our SchoolMessenger Communicate system, allowing schools to send broadcast notifications and manage one-to-one messaging from a single, user-friendly interface.

This integration ensures consistency in communication as all staff members can work from the same platform. Families will receive a code to sign up for messages, accessible through the LDSB app or website.

Key features of Limestone Chat include:

- Automatic language translation
- Group and 1:1 messaging options
- Messaging initiated by both caregivers/parents and educators
- The ability to share text, audio, and images

These improvements to our school communication tools will be rolled out this fall, providing families and staff with more effective ways to stay connected and engaged.

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Recommendation

That Trustees receive this report for information purposes.

Prepared by: Communications Staff, and Krishna Burra, Director of Education

Reviewed by: Krishna Burra, Director of Education

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