



AGENDA

Board Meeting

Wednesday, March 26, 2025

7:00 p.m. – Open Session

Hybrid Meeting

MS Teams and Board Room, Central Board Office

Please note that all public sessions of Board Meetings are live-streamed and recordings are posted on the Peel District School Board website.

Members of the public can attend the public session of Board Meetings by watching the live-stream.

For additional details, including the live-stream link, visit www.peelschools.org/trustees.

AGENDA

Open Session

Wednesday, March 26, 2025

1. Call to Order
2. Motion to Convene in Closed Session – 6:45 p.m.
3. National Anthem and Acknowledgement of Traditional Lands – 7:00 p.m.
4. Approval of Agenda
5. Declaration of Conflict of Interest
6. Staff Recognition
 - 6.1. Retirements
7. Board Chair’s Announcements
8. Reports from Trustees Appointed to External Organizations
9. Approval of Minutes from Previous Board and Special Board Meetings
 - 9.1. Board Meeting – February 26, 2024
10. Committee Minutes for Receipt and Motions for Consideration
 - 10.1. Minutes – Special Education Advisory Committee – February 18, 2025
 - 10.2. Motions – Special Education Advisory Committee – March 18, 2025
 - 10.3. Motions – Governance and Policy Committee – March 19, 2025
11. Staff Reports
 - 11.1. Community Engagement and Outreach Plan – Update – *presented by Camille Logan/Atheia Grant*
 - 11.2. Multi-Year Strategic Plan Progress Report 7.1: Curriculum and School Improvement - *presented by Harjit Aujla/Lara Chebaro*
 - 11.3. Multi-Year Strategic Plan Progress Report 7.2: Planning and Accommodation Support Services – *presented by Jaspal Gill/Mathew Thomas*

AGENDA

11.4. Multi-Year Strategic Plan in Action (*oral*) - presented by Paul da Silva/Kervin White/Ozma Masood

12. Communications

13. Trustee Motions/Motions for Consideration

14. Notice of Motion

15. Adoption of the Closed Session Report

16. PDSB Success Stories

17. Adjournment

6.1

Board Meeting, March 26, 2025

Retirements

Strategic Alignment:

Plan for Student Success – Safe, positive, healthy climate/well-being

Report Type:

For Information

Prepared by: Masuma Khangura, Executive Officer, Human Resources, Partnerships and Equity

Submitted by: Rashmi Swarup, Director of Education

Overview

Objective:

To recognize retiring Peel District School Board staff.

Context:

Each month, staff who are or have recently retired are recognized.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Retirements

RETIREMENTS

ANDERSON, Penny
Classroom Teacher
Effective: June 30, 2025

BARBONE, Alfred
Classroom Teacher
Effective: June 30, 2025

BECKETT, Arlene
Classroom Teacher
Effective: June 30, 2025

BERRY, Katherine
Classroom Teacher
Effective: June 30, 2025

CHAN, Darwin
Classroom Teacher
Effective: June 30, 2025

CORRY, Tracy
Classroom Teacher
Effective: June 30, 2025

CULHAM, Jennifer
Classroom Teacher
Effective: June 30, 2025

FAIRLEY, Mark
Classroom Teacher
Effective: April 30, 2025

GORDON, Pam
Classroom Teacher
Effective: June 30, 2025

RETIREMENTS

GROVES, Julia
Classroom Teacher
Effective: June 30, 2025

HAINES, Janice
Classroom Teacher
Effective: June 30, 2025

HOFFMANN, Ralph
Classroom Teacher
Effective: June 30, 2025

JOYCE, Caroline
Designated Early Childhood Educator
Effective: June 30, 2025

KEETING, Patty
Classroom Teacher
Effective: June 30, 2025

KELLY, Carolyn
Classroom Teacher
Effective: June 30, 2025

KUZ, Stephanie
Classroom Teacher
Effective: June 30, 2025

LAMOUREUX, Lisa
Classroom Teacher
Effective: June 30, 2025

LEE, Bernice
Classroom Teacher
Effective: June 30, 2025

RETIREMENTS

LEVER, Keli

Classroom Teacher

Effective: June 30, 2025

LIU-ROBINSON, Suzanne

Designated Early Childhood Educator

Effective: August 31, 2025

MATJASEC, Elaine

Classroom Teacher

Effective: March 31, 2025

MCPHAIL, Heather

Classroom Teacher

Effective: March 31, 2025

MILLAR, Lisa

Classroom Teacher

Effective: June 30, 2025

O'DONNELL, Shirley

Classroom Teacher

Effective: June 30, 2025

PIMENTEL, Francisco

Custodian

Effective: March 24, 2025

PLEWS, Dena

Classroom Teacher

Effective: June 30, 2025

RADLEY, Eugene

Manager- Design and Construction

Effective: June 30, 2025

RETIREMENTS

RAMNARINE, Maleka
Classroom Teacher
Effective: March 31, 2025

RATHORE, Ranjit
Classroom Teacher
Effective: June 30, 2025

RYDER, Carol
Classroom Teacher
Effective: June 30, 2025

SAMU, Draman
Classroom Teacher
Effective: June 30, 2025

SANDHU, Jasmin
Educational Assistant
Effective: June 30, 2025

SANDS, Frank
Senior Manager- Business Services
Effective: May 31, 2025

SELIM, Hanaa
Educational Assistant
Effective: June 30, 2025

SHADOFF, Susan
Classroom Teacher
Effective: June 30, 2025

STURM, Rhonda
Classroom Teacher
Effective: June 30, 2025

RETIREMENTS

THROWER, Nancy
Classroom Teacher
Effective: June 30, 2025

TOMPKINS, Rachel
Classroom Teacher
Effective: March 31, 2025

WALDSTEIN, Michael
Classroom Teacher
Effective: June 30, 2025

WHELTON, Christine
Classroom Teacher
Effective: June 30, 2025

WOODWORTH, Sandra
Classroom Teacher
Effective: June 30, 2025

ZUBAC, Miroslav
Custodian
Effective: April 30, 2025

February 26, 2025
Board Meeting:nf

PEEL DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Minutes of a Board Meeting of the Peel District School Board, held on Wednesday, February 26, 2025, at 18:30 hours. The hybrid meeting was held in the Board Room, H. J. A. Brown Education Centre, 5650 Hurontario Street, Mississauga, Ontario, and by electronic means.

Members present:

David Green, Chair	Stan Cameron
Satpaul Singh Johal, Vice-Chair	Jeffrey Clark
Lucas Alves	Will Davies
Karla Bailey	Brad MacDonald
Susan Benjamin	Kathy McDonald

Member absent (apologies received):

LeeAnn Cole
Jill Promoli

Student Trustees:

Pradwit Thapa, Student Trustee North
Justin Ko, Student Trustee South
Austin Chrisjohn, Indigenous Student Trustee

Administration:

Rashmi Swarup, Director of Education
Harjit Aujla, Associate Director, School Improvement and Equity
Paul da Silva, Associate Director, School Improvement and Equity
Jaspal Gill, Chief Operating Officer and Associate Director, Operations and Equity of Access
Camille Logan, Associate Director, School Improvement and Equity
Tania Alatishe-Charles, Controller, Finance Support Services
Alvin Au, Superintendent of Education
Craig Caslick, Superintendent of Education
Lara Chebaro, Superintendent, Curriculum and School Improvement
Yonnette Dey, Superintendent of Education
Donna Ford, Superintendent of Education
Soni Gill, Superintendent of Education
Atheia Grant, Superintendent of Equity, Indigenous Education and Community Engagement
Lisa Hart, Superintendent of Education
Rasulan Hoppie, Superintendent of Education
Masuma Khangura, Executive Officer, Human Resources, Partnerships and Equity
Lisa Leoni, Superintendent, Leadership Development and School Partnerships
Luke Mahoney, Superintendent of Education
Mark Marshall, Acting Chief Information Officer, Learning Technology Support Services
Ozma Masood, Superintendent of Education

Administration: (Continued)

Neerja Punjabi, Superintendent of Education
Claudine Scuccato, Superintendent Special Education, Social Emotional Learning and Well-Being
Bernadette Smith, Superintendent, Innovation and International Programs
Michelle Stubbings, Superintendent, Safe and Caring Schools
Mathew Thomas, Controller, Planning and Accommodation Support Services
Jasmine Vorkapic, Governance Officer
Kervin White, Superintendent of Education
Nicole Fernandes, Board Reporter

1. Call to Order

Chair David Green called the meeting to order at 18:30 hours.

2. Closed Session

Resolution No. 25-68 moved by Susan Benjamin
seconded by Stan Cameron

Resolved, that the Board move into Closed Session (18:30 hours).

..... carried

The meeting recessed at 18:35 hours and reconvened at 19:01 hours.

3. Acknowledgement of Traditional Lands and National Anthem

A video recital of the Acknowledgement of Traditional Lands and the National Anthem was viewed.

4. Approval of Agenda

Resolution No. 25-69 moved by Stan Cameron
seconded by Jeffrey Clark

Resolved, that the agenda be approved.

..... carried

5. Declaration of Conflict of Interest

There were no declarations of conflict of interest.

6. Staff Recognition: Retirements

Vice-Chair, Satpaul Singh Johal, recognized retiring staff for their hard work and dedication to Peel DSB. He wished them well in their retirement.

Resolution No. 25-70 moved by Lucas Alves
seconded by Karla Bailey

Resolved, that the following retirements be received:

Eunice Blackwood	Sidalia De Medeiros	Sarah Patten
Dawn Borenzweig	Antonio Didiano	Thomas Raptopoulos
Manuel Calergis	Tami Karakasis	Marlene Sandig
Harold Chee-A-Tow	Joanne Kneebone	Sharon Smith
Anna Cifani	Jessica Malcew	Murray Wilson
Sean Cooper	Julie Navarro	
Claire De Freitas	Paolo Palmieri	

..... carried

7. Board Chair Announcements

Chair David Green announced the election of the student trustees for the school year 2025-2026. Amenah Gangat, from Lincoln Alexander Secondary School is elected Student Trustee North, and will represent students north of the 401. Julia Zhu, from Clarkson Secondary School, is elected Student Trustee South and will represent student south of the 401. Indica Simms Johnny, from Rick Hansen Secondary School, will be the Indigenous Student Trustee.

Resolution No. 25-71 moved by Satpaul Singh Johal
seconded by Lucas Alves

Resolved, that the report re Student Trustees for the school year 2025-2026, be received.

..... carried

Chair David Green recognized National Day of Pink, and he highlighted the excellent work done in schools during Black History Month. He expressed honour to be identified in two schools as a Black Champion.

Resolution No. 25-72 moved by Will Davies
seconded by Brad MacDonald

Resolved, that the report re Chair's Announcements (Oral), be received.

..... carried

Trustee Kathy MacDonald raised a point of personal privilege, stating that she is feeling unwell. She retired from the meeting (19:12 hours).

14. Motions for Consideration: Physical Planning, Finance and Building Committee, February 5, 2025

Resolution No. 25-79 moved by Stan Cameron
seconded by Brad MacDonald

Resolved that the following recommendations arising from a meeting of the Physical Planning, Finance and Building Committee, held February 5, 2025, be approved:

1. Report on Tenders: Ellengale Public School, Mississauga

That, the contract for the construction of Ellengale Public School be awarded to Struct-Con Construction Ltd. in the amount of \$ 27,680,000 (excluding HST).
(Appendix I, as attached to the Minutes)

..... carried

15. Minutes of the Curriculum, Equity and Well-Being Committee Meeting, February 12, 2025

Resolution No. 25-80 moved by Karla Bailey
seconded by Susan Benjamin

Resolved, that the Minutes of the Curriculum, Equity and Well-Being Committee Meeting, held February 12, 2025, be received.

..... carried

16. Black History Month Recognition

Camille Logan, Associate Director of School Improvement and Equity, reported that each year, the Peel DSB celebrates Black History Month during the month of February, to acknowledge the contributions of African, Black, and Afro-Caribbean people in Canada and around the world. She provided background information on the declaration of February as Black History Month in Canada, and initiatives over the years designed to affirm Black students and staff and the contributions of Black people to the transformation of Canada into the culturally diverse, compassionate and prosperous country. Atheia Grant, Superintendent of Equity, Indigenous Education and Community Engagement, reported that all schools in the Peel DSB celebrate Black History Month. The theme this year is From Ancestry To Destiny, Embracing Our Futures Through Knowledge, Unity And Love. She highlighted the series of virtual presentations, and workshops exploring ancestral knowledge led by the Centre of Black Excellence. The Black History Month website also offers a wealth of resources for educators, including French materials, media resources, and local event listings. She stated that the African, Black, Afro-Caribbean Student Success Team has played a vital role in fostering identity affirming spaces, promoting allyship in schools, and supporting staff in incorporating culturally relevant text into the curriculum.

16. Black History Month Recognition (Continued)

Superintendent Grant indicated that all Peel DSB secondary schools offer Black Studies courses, and elementary schools and classroom teachers are supported to effectively integrate Black studies into their curriculum. She highlighted the work at one school which hosted a fundraising event, a Black Excellence Conference, and a Black book fair to promote literacy and storytelling within the Black community.

Resolution No. 25-81 moved by Will Davies
seconded by Brad MacDonald

Resolved, that the oral report on Black History Month Recognition, be received.

..... carried

17. Proposed School Year Calendars 2025-2026

Associate Director of School Improvement and Equity, Harjit Aujla, reviewed the report of the proposed school year calendars for the 2025-2026 school year. He advised that the proposed calendars have been developed in consultation with neighbouring school boards, employee groups, associations, unions and with Central Department staff. He explained that every effort was made to ensure alignment with the coterminous board, due to savings in school transportation costs. He noted that there are seven professional learning days for elementary schools, for a total of 187 instructional days. Secondary school calendars provide for seven professional learning days, 10 examination and assessment days, for a total of 177 instructional days.

Resolution No. 25-82 moved by Karla Bailey
seconded by Susan Benjamin

Resolved, that the Proposed School Year Calendars for all elementary, secondary, balanced calendar schools (Roberta Bondar Public School, Ray Lawson Public School, Tony Pontes Public School) and PAS Central (Roy McMurtry School) for the 2025-2026 academic year, be approved. (APPENDIX I)

..... carried

18. Multi-Year Strategic Plan Progress Report 6.1: Equity and Inclusion, Indigenous Education & Community Engagement

Associate Director Logan that Multi-Year Strategic Plan (MYSP) progress reports feature the work of departments and alignment with the goals of the MYSP. She stated that today's report focuses on the work of the African Black Afro. Caribbean Student Success Team (ABC) and the Equity teams, in supporting student activities and programs, along with professional learning designed to build capacity of staff, and school and system leaders.

18. Multi-Year Strategic Plan Progress Report 6.1: Equity and Inclusion, Indigenous Education & Community Engagement (Continued)

Superintendent Atheia Grant stated that this progress report includes her oral report on Black History Month on the work of the African, Black, Afro-Caribbean Student Success Team (Item 16 of these Minutes), and the work of the Equity Team within the Equity and Inclusion, Indigenous Education & Community Engagement department. The Equity Team meets the Equity and Inclusion goal of the MYSP by supporting student leadership action in affinity spaces as well as providing opportunities for student groups to address issues that impact all students. Explaining the purpose of student affinity groups, Atheia Grant provided examples of these groups and their activities and initiatives. She indicated that feedback has been positive and speaks to the importance of identity and desire to gather in community. She presented information on the support provided by the Equity Team to the Student Equity Lead Council which empowers student voice and agency in shaping policies and procedures in the Peel DSB, making schools more equitable spaces for students. Outlining its composition and mandate, she indicated that the Council serves as an advisory body to Director Swarup.

Resolution No. 25-83

moved by Brad MacDonald
seconded by Will Davies

Resolved, that the report re Multi-Year Strategic Plan Progress Report 6.1: Equity and Inclusion, Indigenous Education & Community Engagement, be received.

..... carried

19. Multi-Year Strategic Plan Progress Report 6.2: Leadership Development and School Partnerships

Harjit Aujla, Associate Director of School Improvement and Equity, stated that, since August 2023, the Leadership Development and School Partnerships department has successfully established nine strategic partnerships with industry and academic institutions, which have provided more than 5,500 students with unique learning experiences, including direct university access and enrollment, professional certifications and valuable networking opportunities with career professionals in many pathways. Superintendent of Leadership and School Partnerships, Lisa Leoni, noted that every partnership agreement supports our system goals and priorities and MYSP is the driving force. Partners represent businesses, non-for-profit post-secondary institutions, and innovative thought leaders, and include exchange of knowledge, resource, financial investments, and resources. Ali Samani, Lead, Business Development and School Partnerships, spoke of the need to prepare students to adapt, innovate, and lead in a changing landscape, cognizant of current and future labour market needs. He stated that the work of partnerships, in addition to providing direct outcomes for students, also benefits educators by advancing their skills and contributions to innovative program design and transformative educational experiences. He explained in detail how the three key parameters, which are domestic trends, global trends, and shared value of lifelong learning, help to prequalify partnerships. Superintendent Leoni provided examples in highlighting partnerships in: enrolment in university education while in secondary school; completion of professional certifications from globally recognized institutions and organizations; networking and mentoring.

19. Multi-Year Strategic Plan Progress Report 6.2: Leadership Development and School Partnerships (Continued)

Resolution No. 25-84 moved by Satpaul Singh Johal
seconded by Stan Cameron

Resolved, that the report re Multi-Year Strategic Plan Progress Report 6.2: Leadership Development & School Partnerships, be received.

..... carried

20. Multi-Year Strategic Plan In Action

Associate Director of School Improvement and Equity, Paul Da Silva, stated that the report highlights initiatives in schools that are directly aligned with the MYSP. Yonnette Dey, Superintendent of Education, shared information from the Bramalea and Lincoln Family of Schools about educators who are committed to responsible leadership, making evidence-based decisions, and holding their teams accountable for creating safe and caring classrooms, specifically for Indigenous, Black and racialized students. Referring to the EQAO numeracy scores released in the Fall, Superintendent Dey noted that math scores were lower in the Peel DSB and the province. Remarking that mathematics is foundational for future success, she stated that educators at these family of schools were committed to expanding the use of manipulatives, creating meaningful professional learning for staff, and taking an intentional approach to monitoring and responding to assessment data to support student growth. They used OneNote to collect data in a transparent way, to ensure accountability. Schools purchased math tools for students to ensure high engagement, and created a professional learning network for educators to promote high impact strategies. At Darcel Senior Public School, the Peel Black Family Engagement Committee held its first numeracy event and families were provided with tools to support their child with math skills at home. Superintendent Dey noted that the goal is improved student learning outcomes, with results that link to the deliberate use of learning goals, success criteria, math tools, small group instruction, direct instruction, and equitable assessments. In response to a question, she confirmed that the next EQAO scores will be compared to evaluate the impact of these initiatives.

Resolution No. 25-85 moved by Susan Benjamin
seconded by Karla Bailey

Resolved, that the oral report re Multi-Year Strategic Plan in Action, be received.

..... carried

21. Adoption of the Closed Session Report

Resolution No. 25-86 moved by Satpaul Singh Johal
seconded by Lucas Alves

Resolved, that the report of the Closed Session re: Minutes of the Board Meeting (Closed), January 29, 2025, Minutes of the Physical Planning, Finance and Building Committee Meeting (Closed), February 5, 2025, and Motions for Consideration: Physical Planning, Finance and Building Committee Meeting (Closed), February 5, 2025, be received.

..... carried

22. Peel DSB Success Stories

School, staff, and student successes were highlighted, aligned with the Board's Multi-Year Strategic Plan. Information was shared regarding: celebration of Black History Month in February, with the theme: From Ancestry to Destiny: Embracing Our Futures through Knowledge, Unity, and Love; Ukweli Knowledge Quest Challenge held for the second year, for Grades 3-8 students to explore the impact of African, Black, and Afro-Caribbean people across the globe; community-centered learning experiences provided by the Centre of Black Excellence; Ujamaa Black Vendors Market, showcasing Black-owned local businesses hosted by the Peel Association of African Canadian Educators; 16 Peel DSB students graduated from the Algoma University Learners Early Access Program (LEAP); Grade 9 students, Riyanshi from the Woodlands School, and Shruti from Meadowvale Secondary School. participated in the World Robotics Olympiad held in Turkey; annual Peel DSB Skilled Trades Fair held in February bringing together educators and industry experts to explore career opportunities, pathways, and experiential learning opportunities to help Peel students thrive.

Resolution No. 25-87 moved by Stan Cameron
seconded by Jeffrey Clark

Resolved, that the report on Peel DSB Success Stories, be received.

..... carried

23. Adjournment

Resolution No. 25-88 moved by Brad MacDonald
seconded by Will Davies

Resolved, that the meeting adjourned (20:17 hours).

..... carried

..... Chair Secretary

RESOLUTIONS APPROVED IN CLOSED SESSION, FEBRUARY 26, 2025

Members present:

David Green, Chair	Jeffrey Clark
Satpaul Singh Johal, Vice-Chair	LeeAnn Cole
Lucas Alves	Will Davies
Karla Bailey	Kathy McDonald
Susan Benjamin	

Members absent (apologies received):

Stan Cameron (on Board business)
Brad MacDonald
Jill Promoli

1. Approval of Agenda

That, the agenda be approved.

2. Minutes of the Board Meeting (Closed), January 29, 2025

That, the Minutes of the Board Meeting (Closed), held January 29, 2025, be approved.

3. Minutes of the Physical Planning, Finance and Building Committee Meeting (Closed), February 5, 2025

That, the Physical Planning, Finance and Building Committee Meeting (Closed), held February 5, 2025, be received.

4. Motions for Consideration: Physical Planning, Finance and Building Committee Meeting (Closed), February 5, 2025

That, the following recommendation arising from the Physical Planning, Finance and Building Committee Meeting (Closed), held February 5, 2025, be approved:

1. Harold Brathwaite Secondary School/Save Max Centre Land Exchange

That the Board of Trustees adopt a resolution, as prescribed under Ontario Regulation 374/23, Acquisition and Disposition of Real Property, to enable the Peel District School Board, as a reasonable step in providing pupil accommodations, to complete a land exchange with the City of Brampton involving adjacent properties located at Sandalwood Parkway East and Great Lakes Road in Brampton. (Appendix I, as attached to the Minutes)

MOTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION: SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Arising from a meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee meeting, held March 18, 2025, the following recommendation is brought for Board approval:

1. Vocational 1 Program Review

Based on the findings from the Vocational 1 Program Review, APPENDIX I, the following recommendations are made to strengthen the Vocational 1 program and increase post-secondary options for students:

Placement

1. Improve communication and education about the Vocational 1 program by developing standardized communication materials to clearly explain the program and post-secondary options for:
 - a. prospective students and their families.
 - b. elementary and secondary special education teachers, guidance counsellors, and administrators.
2. Develop a student information form as part of the Vocational 1 placement process that captures strengths, interests, and post-secondary goals. Share with classroom teachers and update annually with students and their families as part of the course selection process.
3. Consider centralizing the IPRC meeting for initial Vocational 1 placement for all students and ensuring the availability of a psychoeducational consultant to support clinical interpretation of cognitive and adaptive skill assessments.
4. Consider offering a Vocational 1 partial integration placement option such that students can take full credit courses in areas of strength and interest without changing schools or giving up access to transportation.

Program and staffing

5. Expedite the approval process for the new Vocational 1 curriculum resources.
6. Expand the criteria for allocating educational assistant support to schools with Vocational 1 programs to include consideration for students' social/emotional and adaptive skill needs.
7. Provide dedicated funding to support the program, including hands-on learning materials, sensory items, technology, transportation, and physical space improvements.
8. Allocate additional sections to support a transitional program focused on preparing students for employment and independent living in Years 5 to 7. Consider implementing a class cap of 10-12 with dedicated Level 4 EA support to align with the intensive employment training programs offered by other school boards.

MOTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION: SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

9. Explore the possibility of flexible staffing options for Vocational 1 courses (e.g., special considerations for waiving subject qualifications, seniority rules).
10. Encourage schools with Vocational 1 programs to connect with other board funding sources and programs that support students with special education needs to access experiential learning such as the Community Connected Experiential Learning (CCEL) Grant and internal social enterprise programs.
11. Explore connections to the updated Ontario business curriculum to expand student opportunities to learn about self-employment, entrepreneurship, and social enterprise.
12. Explore the use of alternative curricula to address specific student needs with respect to daily living skills; job and community skills; self-determination skills (e.g., choice making, self-management, problem solving); and social and communication skills. Develop implementation guidelines that incorporate the use of evidence-based teaching strategies and consistent assessment standards.
13. Discontinue the practice of having students repeat courses for which they have earned credits without being provided with new learning opportunities.
14. Develop a framework for earning 0.5 credits in Vocational 1 courses that facilitates transition to an OSSD pathway (e.g., a Part 1 and Part 2 course that combine to make a full credit).
15. Develop a consistent set of system guidelines for counting 0.5 credit courses towards an OSSD for current students in Vocational 1 who wish to transition to an OSSD pathway.
16. Develop a standardized transition portfolio to document student skills and achievements to support educators and families to track progress and prepare students for future opportunities.
17. Leverage central transition staff to support students in Vocational 1 to trial post-secondary options such as social enterprise and trades before graduation and facilitate postsecondary transitions.
18. Strengthen central supports for post-secondary transition planning. Areas of responsibility would include:
 - a. Developing workshops, information sessions and accessible multi-lingual resources for families to share information about post-secondary pathways, transitions, and available supports.
 - b. Providing individualized support to assist families to access funding and community services.
 - c. Maintaining a voluntary contact list of graduated students to support improved tracking of post-secondary outcomes.

School experience

19. Work with elementary and secondary educators to enhance support for students in Vocational 1 and their families in the transition to secondary school. Encourage elementary educators to share teaching strategies and classroom practices they have found to be effective.
20. Share curriculum resources and strategies with parents to increase opportunities for repetition and reinforcement of learning at home.

MOTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION: SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Professional development

21. Provide release time and training for Vocational 1 school teams to review and adapt the new Vocational 1 curriculum resources to meet the needs of their school and students.
22. Provide professional learning opportunities for teachers and educational assistants focused on the academic and social/emotional needs of students in Vocational 1 with Mild intellectual disability and/or Autism.
23. Provide networking opportunities for PDSB staff who teach and work with students in Vocational 1 such as by re-establishing networks for Vocational 1 educators and administrators.
24. Provide a dedicated online space for Vocational 1 educators to share resources and best practices.
25. Include explicit consideration for Vocational 1 educators and students in board-led professional learning and centrally provided resources (e.g., learning about consent culture, system surveys like the Student Census).
26. Establish a partnership between the Student Success and Pathways and Special Education departments to develop professional learning for educators about trades opportunities for students in Vocational 1.

External partnerships and advocacy

27. Support School Student Success Teams (Department Head of Guidance, Department Head of Special Education, Student Success Teacher, and Co-op Teachers) to work collaboratively to secure partnerships with community organizations, industry associations, and local employers to expand post-secondary education and employment opportunities for students in Vocational 1.
28. Advocate to the Ontario Ministry of Education for mandatory special education training to become a certified teacher in Ontario.

Equity considerations

29. Monitor and work to reduce the overrepresentation of students marginalized by institutional systems in both elementary and secondary self-contained special education placements, particularly those who self-identify as Indigenous; African, Black, and Afro-Caribbean; Gender Diverse; and/or 2SLGBQ+; and students experiencing higher socioeconomic vulnerabilities by:
 - a. Examining identification processes for potential sources of bias.
 - b. Reviewing the process for making curricular modifications in early grades.
 - c. Ensuring families are fully informed about the impact of curricular modifications on access to secondary programming.
30. Explore the feasibility of offering the Vocational 1 program at a site in each superintendency to:
 - a) enhance inclusion opportunities;
 - b) reduce transportation time; and
 - c) keep students closer to their home communities.

Submitted by:

Camille Logan
Associate Director, School Improvement and Equity

Special Education Advisory Committee, March 18, 2025

Vocational 1 Program Review

Strategic Alignment:

Multi-Year Strategic Plan 2024 – 2028

Decision(s) Required:

Receipt

Prepared by: Claudine Scuccato, Superintendent of Special Education
Dr. Camille Logan, Associate Director, School Improvement and Equity
Dr. Laura Naismith, Research Coordinator
Jeff Bertrand, Coordinating Principal - Special Education

Submitted by: Rashmi Swarup, Director of Education, Peel District School Board

Overview

Recommendation:

- That the report of the Vocational 1 Program Review, attached as Appendix 1, be received.
- That the committee recommends that the Board of Trustees consider the 30 recommendations from the Vocational 1 Program Review for implementation.

Highlights:

- Students with autism, intellectual disability, and other developmental disabilities have been historically underserved in public education. Both in Canada and globally, there are persistent gaps in their education, employment, and income attainment.
- Data from multiple Ontario school boards, including PDSB, show that students marginalized by institutional systems are overrepresented in special education settings where they are educated separately from their peers.
- Students in Vocational 1 currently work towards an Ontario Secondary School Certificate (OSSC). An OSSC does not provide access to diploma granting or college trades programs.
- Across four cohorts of students who started grade 9 between 2015 and 2018 and were enrolled in Vocational 1 at some point, 45% achieved an Ontario Secondary School Certificate (OSSC) and 32% transferred to Vocational 2 and achieved an Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD). Their post-secondary destinations are mostly unknown.
- PDSB can learn from other school boards' practices in the areas of employment skills training, consistency of program delivery, communication with families, and professional development offerings for educators.
- The majority (73%) of students in Vocational 1 in the 2023-2024 school year wanted to work after they leave high school. They have a wide variety of career aspirations. Over half (56%) said they would like to do more school and 11% specifically mentioned college.
- Many parents felt the Vocational 1 program was beneficial for their child, though some said it was not meeting their expectations and/or had not helped their child.
- Educators who work in the Vocational 1 program shared that the lack of clear expectations and curriculum support documents has been a major barrier to program consistency both within and between school sites.
- Schools faced challenges in being able to provide students in Vocational 1 with robust co-op and experiential learning opportunities due to multiple factors including staffing, access to transportation, and specific student needs.

Background:

The Vocational 1 program is a full-time special education placement for Peel District School Board (PDSB) secondary students with intellectual disabilities. In January 2024, PDSB initiated a review of the Vocational 1 program and pathways for eligible students. This was done in response to feedback from families, educators, the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC), and other community partners.

The purpose of the review was to understand the extent to which the Vocational 1 program was meeting student needs and preparing them for life after high school. Academic literature was reviewed, a jurisdictional scan was conducted, and feedback was gathered from students, parents/guardians, and educators.

Evidence

Findings/Key Considerations:

- **Social demographics reveal continued identity-based overrepresentation:** Students who self-identify as Indigenous; African, Black, and Afro-Caribbean; Gender Diverse; and/or 2SLGBQ+; and students living in areas with high socioeconomic vulnerability are overrepresented in Vocational 1 programming.
- **Program communication with families is inconsistent:** Parents shared mixed experiences of the Vocational 1 placement process. Several commented about the lack of comprehensive information about the program structure and intended outcome and how the placement was falsely presented as a 'choice'.
- **Parent/Guardian feedback included concerns about program rigor and post-secondary outcomes:**
 - Many parents felt the Vocational 1 program was beneficial for their child, though some said it was not meeting their expectations and/or had not helped their child. Only 30-36% agreed that it was academically challenging for their child.
 - Parents felt there was a lack of suitable academic opportunities to replace the Vocational 2 program.
 - Parents wanted more support from their child's school to help their child access post-secondary education and/or fulfilling employment.
- **Educator feedback indicated a need for curricular supports:**
 - The lack of clear expectations and curriculum support documents was highlighted as a major barrier to program consistency both within and between school sites.
- **Administrator feedback identified existing staffing limitations as a barrier:**
 - Administrators wanted more flexibility in staffing to be able to place teachers with the right mindset and skills in front of students in Vocational 1.
 - They felt that the complex needs of students were not being accounted for in staffing allocations, both in terms of number of sections and educational assistant support.
- **Educators need more from the Board to feel prepared and supported:**
 - Only 18% of educators felt supported by the Board to work in the Vocational 1 program.
 - The main themes of what they said they needed to feel more prepared and supported were: Resource Allocation and Funding; Professional Development; Staffing and Support; Curriculum; Communication and Collaboration; and Program Sustainability and Advocacy.

Recommendations

There are thirty recommendations outlined in the report and are made to strengthen the Vocational 1 program and increase post-secondary options for students. Each recommendation connects directly to one or more key findings in the review. Recommendations will be reviewed comprehensively before implementation, considering operational feasibility, fiscal responsibility, and strategic alignment with district priorities. Each recommendation is assessed to ensure it effectively supports student success, equity, and overall system improvement while considering available resources and sustainability

Overview of the Recommendations

The recommendations emerging from the review outline ways to strengthen the program and increase post-secondary options for students. The highlights which follow are organized around some broad themes. Factors which would impact the operationalization of the recommendations include staffing processes, collective agreements and financial and operational feasibility.

Better communication with families around program placement and progress

Recommendations:

- Improve communication and education about the Vocational 1 program by developing standardized communication materials to clearly explain the program and post-secondary options for:
 - A. prospective students and their families;
 - B. elementary and secondary special education teachers
- Develop a student information form as part of the Vocational 1 placement process that captures strengths, interests, and post-secondary goals. Share with classroom teachers and update annually with students and their families as part of the course selection process.
- Develop a standardized transition portfolio to document student skills and achievements to support educators and families to track progress and prepare students for future opportunities.

More academic challenge, personalization, and choice

Recommendations:

- Consider offering a Vocational 1 partial integration placement option such that students can take full credit courses in areas of strength and interest without changing schools or giving up access to transportation.
- Discontinue the practice of having students repeat courses for which they have earned credits without being provided with new learning opportunities.
- Develop a consistent set of system guidelines for counting 0.5 credit courses towards an OSSD for current students in Vocational 1 who wish to transition to an OSSD pathway.

Strengthen transition support

Recommendations:

- Leverage central transition staff to support students in Vocational 1 to trial post-secondary options such as social enterprise and trades before graduation and facilitate post-secondary transitions.
- Strengthen central supports for post-secondary transition planning. Areas of responsibility would include:
 - A. Developing workshops, information sessions and accessible multilingual resources for families to share information about post-secondary pathways, transitions, and available supports.
 - B. Providing individualized support to assist families to access funding and community services.
 - C. Maintaining a voluntary contact list of graduated students to support improved tracking of post-secondary outcomes.

Clear learning expectations and curriculum support documents

Recommendations:

- Expedite the approval process for the new Vocational 1 curriculum resources.
- Provide release time and training for Vocational 1 school teams to review and adapt the new Vocational 1 curriculum resources to meet the needs of their school and students.
- Provide networking opportunities for PDSB staff who teach and work with students in Vocational 1 such as by re-establishing networks for Vocational 1 educators and administrators.
- Provide a dedicated online space for Vocational 1 educators to share resources and best practices.

More support for co-op, experiential learning, and employment skills training

Recommendations:

- Explore the possibility of flexible staffing options for Vocational 1 courses (e.g., special considerations for waiving subject qualifications, seniority rules).
- Allocate additional sections to support a transitional program focused on preparing students for employment and independent living in Years 5 to 7. Consider implementing a class cap of 10-12 with dedicated Level 4 EA support to align with the intensive employment training programs offered by other school boards.
- Establish a partnership between the Student Success and Pathways teams and the Special Education department to develop professional learning for educators about trades opportunities for students in Vocational 1.

More funding for program resources and supports

Recommendations:

- Provide dedicated funding to support the program, including hands-on learning materials, sensory items, technology, transportation, and physical space improvements.

-
- Expand the criteria for allocating educational assistant support to schools with Vocational 1 programs to include consideration for students' social/emotional and adaptive skill needs.
 - Encourage schools with Vocational 1 programs to connect with other board funding sources and programs that support students with special education needs to access experiential learning such as the Community Connected Experiential Learning (CCEL) Grant and internal social enterprise programs.

Impact Analysis

Equity & Human Rights Review:

The review represents a continuation of the PDSB's ongoing work to address systemic inequities that disproportionately affect access and outcomes for Indigenous, Black and other racialized students in special education programs. Recommendations made are intended to strengthen the Vocational 1 program and increase post-secondary options for students.

Board or Ministry Policy Alignment:

The recommendations put forward are in alignment the Multi-Year Strategic Plan, particularly Goal 1: Student Achievement, and Goal 3: Equity and Inclusion.

Financial Implications:

Recommendations with budgetary implications include:

Recommendation 6: Expand the criteria for allocating educational assistant support to schools with Vocational 1 programs to include consideration for students' social/emotional and adaptive skill needs.

Recommendation 7: Provide dedicated funding to support the program, including hands-on learning materials, sensory items, technology, transportation, and physical space improvements.

Recommendation 8: Allocate additional sections to support a transitional program focused on preparing students for employment and independent living in Years 5 to 7. Consider implementing a class cap of 10-12 with dedicated Level 4 EA support to align with the intensive employment training programs offered by other school boards.

Recommendation 21: Provide release time and training for Vocational 1 school teams to review and adapt the new Vocational 1 curriculum resources to meet the needs of their school and students.

All decisions about implementation of these recommendations will consider the impact on student achievement and wellbeing and financial responsibility.

Community Impact:

The review was undertaken in response to feedback from families, educators, the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC), and other community partners. Varied opportunities were

provided to engage these groups in the review and gather their feedback. Progress communications were shared with families of students in the program through their schools at multiple timepoints.

Next Steps

Action Required:

The Review will be submitted to the Board of Trustees

The responsibility for the review, approval and actioning of recommendations will rest with the Special Education department, in collaboration with other relevant partners. Special Education will outline processes and timelines for a staged implementation of the approved recommendations and subsequent actions.

Communications:

Prepare a communication for schools with Vocational 1 programs.
Prepare communication for students currently in Vocational 1 programs and their families.

References:

All relevant citations and references are included in the appended Vocational 1 Program Review.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Vocational 1 Program Review



Vocational 1 Program Review



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1 Introduction

The Vocational 1 program is a full-time special education placement for Peel District School Board (PDSB) secondary students with intellectual disabilities. In January 2024, PDSB initiated a review of the Vocational 1 program and pathways for eligible students. This was done in response to feedback from families, educators, the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC), and other community partners. The review also represents a continuation of the PDSB's ongoing work to address systemic inequities that disproportionately affect access and outcomes for Indigenous, Black and other racialized students in special education programs.

A 17-member review committee was established to provide input and guidance for the review process. The committee included PDSB staff from the special education, research, and curriculum departments, administrators of two schools with Vocational 1 programs and three members of SEAC whose own children graduated from the Vocational 1 program. The full committee met seven times between January and December 2024, with interim communication by email.

1.1 Terms of reference

The review committee established the following terms of reference by consensus:

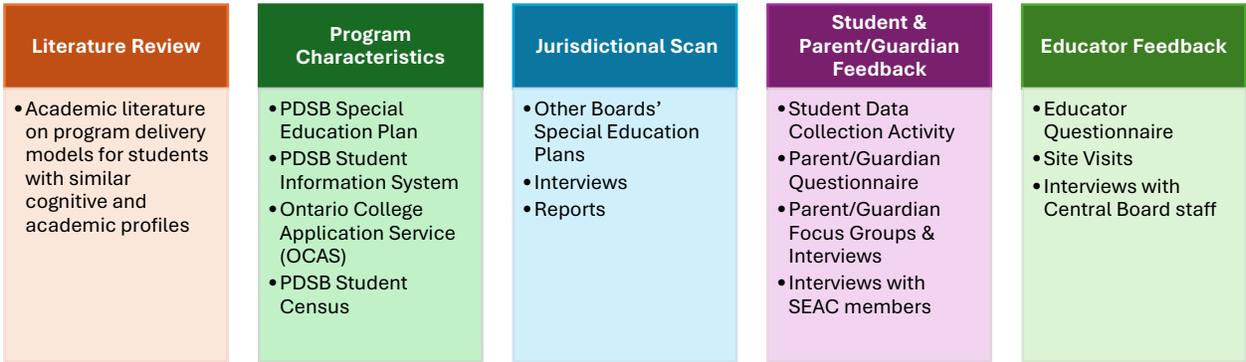
1. Review education literature for the program delivery models for students with similar cognitive and academic profiles.
2. Review Vocational 1 characteristics in the six PDSB Vocational 1 Programs:
 - a. student cognitive and academic profiles
 - b. IPRC processes and alignment with program criteria
 - c. program structure and curriculum
 - d. enrolment trends
 - e. K-8 Practices, Transition practices (8-9), graduation outcomes and post-secondary destinations *where available*
 - f. student social demographics
3. Jurisdictional scan of secondary educational programming and practices of other school boards in Ontario that support students with similar cognitive and academic profiles.
4. Provide opportunities for feedback from students and parents/guardians of current and past students on the program (academic, social emotional, preparedness for desired pathways).
5. Provide opportunities for feedback from educators and administrators at schools with Vocational 1 programs.
6. Identify programming and curricular strengths and needs, rooted in developmentally appropriate, functional literacy/numeracy and adaptive skills, to support improved student achievement and outcomes.
7. Propose changes to improve the Vocational 1 program and increase post-secondary options.
8. Create a framework to measure and report on the implementation and efficacy of any proposed changes to the Vocational 1 program.

1.2 Summary of review activities and data sources

Figure 1.1 outlines the key review activities and data sources consulted in this review. Multiple data collection methods were used to gain a comprehensive understanding of the degree to which the Vocational 1 program was meeting the needs of students and preparing them for life after high school. In total, data were collected from 681 participants affiliated with the Vocational 1 program, including 306 students, 290 parents/guardians, and 85 educators.

This feedback was considered holistically to develop recommendations for strengthening the Vocational 1 program and increasing post-secondary options for students. Four in-person feedback sessions were held for the review committee in October and November 2024 to discuss the findings from each review activity in detail. Each session was attended by between 3 and 10 review committee members. Two additional sessions were held in December 2024 to discuss the key findings and recommendations.

Figure 1.1: Overview of review activities and data sources



1.3 Organization of this report

Sections 2 through 6 of this report correspond to the categories of review activities shown in Figure 1.1. These sections contain further details on the data sources consulted, the data analysis methods used, the results, and the key findings for each of the review activities. Section 7 presents a consolidated list of key findings, Section 8 outlines concurrent activities related to the review, and Section 9 details the proposed core principles and recommendations for improving the Vocational 1 program.

2 Literature Review

A note on terminology:

In the research literature, **developmental disability** is used as an umbrella term for a broad range of lifelong conditions that are identified in childhood or adolescence and associated with cognitive, adaptive, and physical limitations. Common developmental disabilities include intellectual disability, cerebral palsy, autism spectrum disorder, and Down syndrome [1].

This definition is distinct from the exceptionality categorization that the Ontario Ministry of Education uses to guide special education identification and placement [2]. Mild intellectual disability and Developmental disability are categorized as Intellectual exceptionalities, with Developmental disability considered more severe, while Autism is categorized as a Communicational exceptionality.

While this literature review primarily uses the research definition of developmental disability, the term exceptionality is used when indicating the Ministry of Education categorization.

This literature review examines the research evidence on program delivery models for students with developmental disabilities, including type of education setting, curriculum, teacher preparedness and support, and additional challenges. While the review draws on a range of literature across international jurisdictions, findings from the Canadian and Ontario public education context are highlighted where available.

2.1 Context

Students with autism, intellectual disabilities, and other developmental disabilities have been historically underserved in public education. Prior to the middle of the 20th century, these students were typically excluded from general education environments. Where available, educational facilities for students with disabilities mainly consisted of residential schools outside of their home communities. This gradually progressed to the creation of a special education system that paralleled, but remained fully segregated from, the general education system [3].

Beginning in the 1970s, many governments faced increasing pressure to recognize and protect the rights of children with all types of disabilities to equality in public education. This led to a movement towards inclusive education, with the goal of having students with disabilities being supported to learn in settings alongside students without disabilities and given opportunities to participate in all aspects of school life. Key legislation that supported the inclusive education movement in North America included the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in the United States in 1975, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms in 1982, the Ontario Human

Rights Code in 1990, and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (notably Article 24) in 2007 [4].

Globally, there continue to be significant gaps in educational, employment, and income attainment between students with disabilities and those without [5]. A recent study using data from Statistics Canada showed that people with developmental disabilities were 4.1 times less likely to finish high school, 2.1 times less likely to finish post-secondary education, 2.4 times less likely to be employed and annually earned, on average, almost \$33,000 less than non-disabled people [6].

Key Finding 2.1 – Context

Students with autism, intellectual disability, and other developmental disabilities have been historically underserved in public education. Both in Canada and globally, there are persistent gaps in their education, employment, and income attainment.

2.2 Type of education setting

There is considerable academic research to support that placement in more inclusive, integrated settings is associated with better academic and social outcomes for students with disabilities [7], as well as modest academic benefits for students without disabilities [8]. There remain researchers and practitioners, however, who advocate that self-contained special education settings are better able to meet the needs of students with disabilities. Table 2.1 summarizes the advantages and disadvantages of self-contained special education settings.

Table 2.1: Advantages and disadvantages of self-contained special education settings [5]

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full-time specialized support to meet the individual needs of students with special education needs. • Typically, lower student-teacher ratios in special settings allow students to receive higher and more individualized support. • All teachers working in special education should be specialized. • Students interact with peers with similar challenges. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special education settings can lower academic expectations of students with special education needs. • Special education settings are understood to be more costly, and transition to mainstream schools from special settings can entail academic and socio-emotional challenges for students. • Lack of integration with students without special education needs. Risks of stigma and lack of societal inclusion in school and later in life.

Note. Reprinted from *Mapping policy approaches and practices for the inclusion of students with special education needs* (p. 49) by O. Brussino, 2020, Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

Hornby and Kauffman attempt to reconcile these differences through an approach they call *Inclusive Special Education* [9]. In this approach, inclusion in mainstream schools is supported as far as appropriate, and there is a continuum of placement options for students with more intensive needs. Teachers across settings collaborate closely to ensure “equitable quality of appropriate provision and optimum outcomes for all learners” [9, p. 9].

Currently, most school-age students with intellectual disabilities in North American and European countries continue to be educated separately from their peers for the majority of the school day [10, 11]. The findings of a recent study in Ontario showed that 47% of students with a Mild intellectual disability exceptionality and 64% of students with a Developmental disability exceptionality were placed in a special education class (either full-time or with partial integration) as compared to a regular classroom with supports [12].

Data from multiple Ontario school boards, including PDSB, has shown that students marginalized by institutional systems are overrepresented in self-contained special education settings, including Black and Indigenous students, students with diverse gender identities and sexual orientations, multilingual learners, and students facing socioeconomic vulnerabilities [13-15]. Factors that contribute to these disproportionalities include racial and gender stereotypes associated with low academic expectations, testing and assessment practices that privilege Western experiences and understandings, differential discipline practices that disproportionately exclude students from regular education settings, and higher rates of victimization and negative school experiences that contribute to lower academic outcomes [14].

Research from the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) has shown that most students in self-contained special education programs do not go on to post-secondary education after high school [16]. Through a combination of an institutionalization of lowered expectations and more limited exposure to the academic curriculum, students are left “ineligible, unprepared, and/or believing they are unable to apply and pursue post-secondary opportunities” [16, p. 13].

Key Finding 2.2 – Type of Education Setting

While inclusive education settings are associated with better outcomes for all students, most school-age students with intellectual disabilities in North American and European countries continue to be educated separately from their peers for most of their school day.

Key Finding 2.3 – Overrepresentation of Students Marginalized by Institutional Systems

Data from multiple Ontario school boards show that students marginalized by institutional systems are overrepresented in self-contained special education settings.

2.3 Curriculum

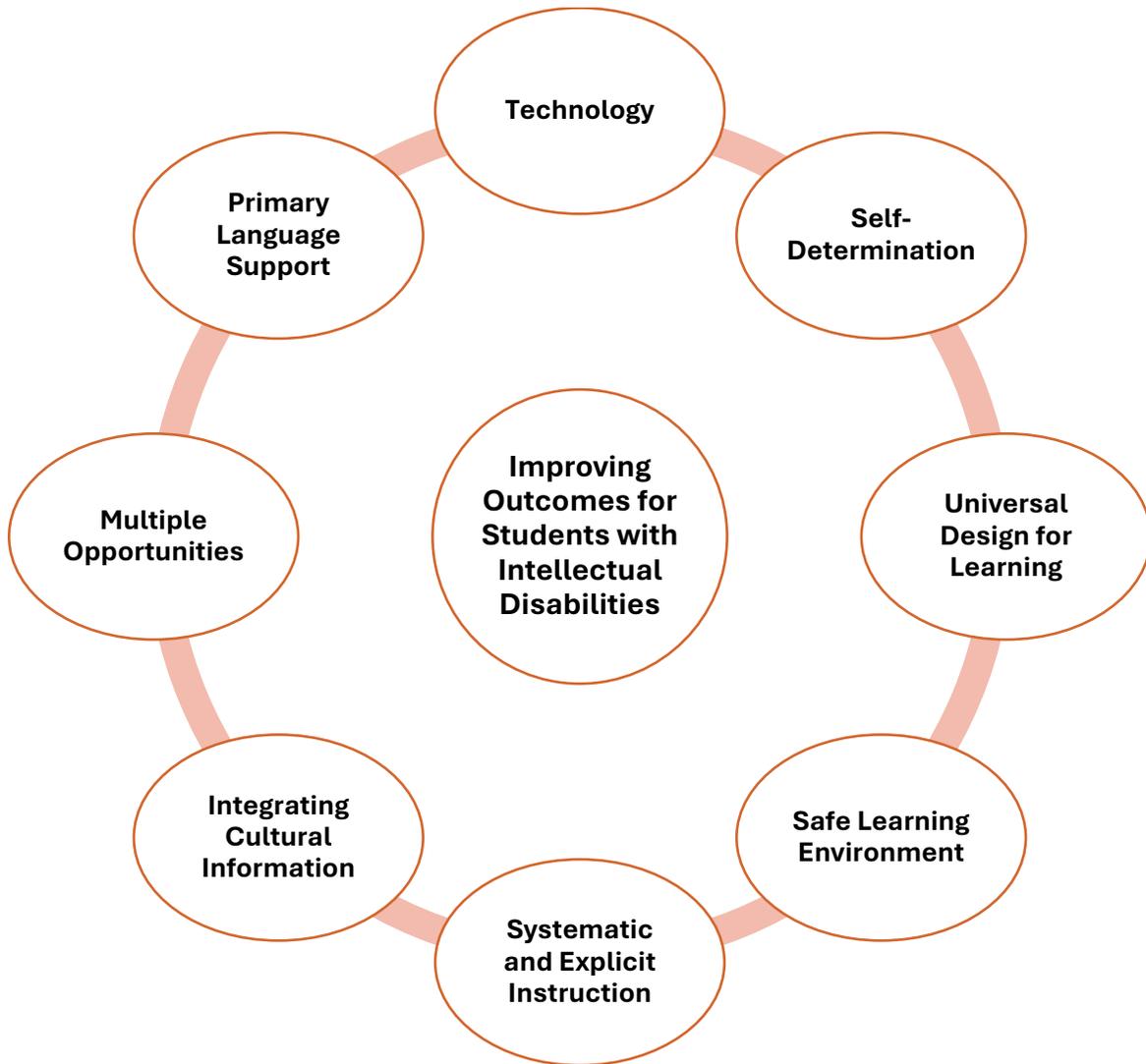
While the traditional focus of curricula for students with developmental disabilities has been on functional life skills [17], more recent guidelines advocate for the teaching of academic content such as literacy and mathematics together with daily living skills, job and community skills, self-determination skills, and social and communication skills [18]. Table 1.2 presents an overview of evidence-based teaching strategies and interventions associated with each of these areas of focus.

Table 2.2: Evidence-based teaching strategies and interventions to support students with disabilities [18]

Curricular Focus	Teaching Strategies and Interventions
Academic Skills: Literacy, Mathematics, Sciences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Systematic instruction • Prompting with time delay and reinforcement • Directed inquiry • Read-alouds • Graphic organizers • Manipulatives • Peer tutoring
Daily Living Skills: Self-care, food preparation, housekeeping, use of the telephone, home safety, sexuality education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culturally-relevant person-centred planning to set goals • Task analysis • Self-management • Social stories • Video and computer-based models • Simulated and authentic practice opportunities
Job and Community Skills: safety skills, purchasing skills, leisure skills, banking skills, transportation skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individualized transition assessment and planning • Systematic instruction • Community-based instruction • Social stories • Simulations • Video demonstrations
Self-Determination Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explicit, systematic teaching of component skills like choice making, self-management, and problem solving
Social and Communication Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Systematic instruction • Visual schedules • Teach all students how to make requests and refusals • Culturally-relevant visual supports • Peer tutoring

Figure 2.1. shows a framework that was developed to respond to the unique needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students with intellectual disabilities [19]. The framework includes many of the same teaching strategies listed in Table 2.2, but with particular emphasis on understanding, valuing, and integrating students' cultural identities and languages.

Figure 2.1: A culturally responsive framework for students with intellectual disabilities [19]



Note. Adapted from *A culturally and linguistically responsive framework for improving academic and post-secondary outcomes of students with moderate or severe intellectual disability* (p. 29) by C. J. Rivera et al, 2016, *Physical Disabilities: Education and Related Services*, 35(2).

Key Finding 2.4 - Curriculum

A curriculum for students with intellectual disabilities should address: academic skills; daily living skills; job and community skills; self-determination skills (e.g., choice making, self-management, problem solving); and social and communication skills. Evidence-based teaching strategies and interventions exist for each of these areas of focus.

Alternative curricula, learning expectations, and goals may be implemented to address specific student needs. The lack of consistent implementation and assessment standards for alternative curricula, however, make it difficult to gauge their effectiveness. Researchers who studied alternative curricula in the United States and Sweden argued that alternative learning standards lack meaningful progression of skills from elementary to high school and act as a barrier instead of an enabler to future independence and community participation [10]. To redress this, they proposed that an emphasis should be on pedagogical practices that promote access to general education settings like universal design for learning (UDL), project-based learning (PBL), embedded instruction, culturally responsive teaching, and formative assessment strategies.

Key Finding 2.5 – Alternative Curricula

Alternative curricula can be used to address specific student needs but are difficult to evaluate because they lack consistent implementation and assessment standards.

When designing curricula to support employability and job readiness, it is also important to consider students' views. Table 2.3 summarizes the factors that students with intellectual disabilities identified as helping them to be successful in securing competitive employment [20]. These themes reinforce the centrality of relationship building and effective collaboration between students, families, schools, and employers.

Table 2.3: Factors supporting successful school to work transitions for students with intellectual disabilities [20]

Theme	Subthemes
Self-determination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal empowerment • Identifying and expressing preferences • Goal orientation • Problem-solving • Self-advocacy
Soft skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Punctuality • Perseverance • Interpersonal skills • Trustworthiness • High work morale
Parent/family support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family as a driving force • Help in dealing with service systems • Practical support during job preparation
Wider network support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help during the job search process • Job coach support • Support from a designated colleague
School-workplace collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low threshold for contact • Opportunities for internships
Inclusive work environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colleagues that contribute to well-being • Support from employers
Individual accommodations at the workplace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work task lists • Repetitive routines • Awareness of job demands • On-the-job training • Flexibility for variations in energy levels

Key Finding 2.6 – Preparation for Employment

Effectively preparing students with intellectual disabilities for employment requires strong collaboration between students, families, schools, and employers.

2.4 Educator preparation and support

To improve educational outcomes, educator preparation and professional development programs need to emphasize evidence-based instructional strategies that have been shown to be effective across domains, populations, and settings. Knight and colleagues surveyed special educators of students with autism and/or intellectual disability on their use of 26 instructional practices and found wide variations in implementation, as well as lack of recent access to training and resources [21]. Other researchers have also found differences in the strategies used for students with intellectual disabilities in mainstream and special education settings. Teachers in mainstream settings were found to hold higher expectations for student performance, while teachers in special education settings focused more on supporting students' social participation. More research is needed to understand how to realize the benefits from both approaches [22].

There is also a need to advocate for reform in teacher education programs to ensure that all educators are prepared and supported to “work within a rights-based policy framework of inclusive education” [23, p. 4]. For teachers to feel confident to respond to a wide range of learning differences, inclusive education needs to be foundational to general teacher preparation and not reserved as a specialist topic. Importantly, however, “what it means to deliver high quality inclusive education and training at all levels remains unclear and contested” [23, p. 6].

At the system level, supporting educators to advance inclusion requires an organizational mindset shift from a medical model of disability that views disability as an individual deficit to a social model of disability that reconceptualizes disability as a mismatch between the disabled person and the environment. In this model, it is the environment that enacts barriers, and not the disability itself [24]. The focus for the system is thus on how to make regular classrooms and programs more accommodating for students instead of continuing to segregate students in self-contained settings. Robertson illustrates how this can be achieved in an Ontario context through an organizational change implementation plan that adopted a pilot school approach, along with a monitoring and evaluation framework, and a communication plan [25].

Key Finding 2.7 – Educator Preparation and Support

Successful inclusive education requires supporting educators as well as students. This includes initial training and professional development, as well as supportive school administration and climate.

2.5 Partnerships with families

While it is important for parents and educators to work together to obtain the best possible outcomes for students, parents of students with intellectual disabilities have found that achieving equal voice in decision making is an ongoing struggle [26].

Parents are routinely uninformed about the implications and typical outcomes of special education placements. Special education is positioned as a “benevolent, supportive, and caring space; as something necessary for the *now*, regardless of the future” [27, p. 113] and parents are not told about the ways that it will limit their child’s access to post-secondary education. The school also decides the terms upon which it will provide support, with many families facing a ‘choice’ of support in a special education setting or no support in a general education classroom [28]. For students with intellectual disabilities, this sometimes means that information about a student’s overall well-being can be disregarded if it doesn’t align with system policies and practices [26].

The use of ‘insider’ language is pervasive in special education meetings and there are noted “imbalances between parents who were privy to the language of rights and responsibilities of special education and parents who were unaware” [27, p. 11]. Newcomer families, particularly those that do not speak English fluently, are at a particular disadvantage. In a study of Caribbean and Latin American families navigating special education in Ontario, parents reported feeling pressured to accept school board placement decisions that they disagreed with, for fear of the consequences for their children’s education if they did not consent [29].

In trying to support their children on a day-to-day basis, parents of students with intellectual disabilities have described feeling like they are in a “state of perpetual navigation” [26, p. 150]. The success or failure of their child can vary significantly based on the specific educators and administrators they interact with, and how those individuals interpret system policies and practices. Attempts at problem-solving and planning are “skewed to the advantage of the system over the individual” [26, p. 151] and associated with time, economic, and emotional costs for parents. Strong leadership at all levels is needed to achieve true partnership to equitably meet student needs [26].

Key Finding 2.8 – Partnerships with Families

Families of students with intellectual disabilities struggle to achieve equal voice in decision making about their children’s educational opportunities. Strong school leadership at all levels is needed to achieve true partnership to equitably meet student needs.

2.6 Additional equity challenges

2.6.1 Special education identification

According to the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5)* [30], an intellectual disability involves impairments of mental abilities that arise during childhood or adolescence and significantly impair adaptive functioning in one or more of the following domains:

- Conceptual: language, reading, writing, math, reasoning, knowledge, and memory;
- Social: empathy, social judgment, interpersonal communication, ability to make and retain friendships;
- Practical: personal care, job responsibilities, money management, recreation, and organizing school and work tasks.

Standardized testing of intelligence is recommended as part of an individual's assessment, but IQ scores do not form part of the diagnostic criteria. Intellectual disability is conceptualized along a spectrum of severity from mild to profound, with most individuals falling into the mild level of severity. Intellectual disability is a chronic condition that "often co-occurs with other mental conditions like depression, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), and autism spectrum disorder (ASD)" [30, p. 1].

The process of identifying a student as having a Mild intellectual disability or Developmental disability exceptionality to access special education supports is different from making a diagnosis. The Ontario Ministry of Education [2] defines these exceptionalities as follows:

- **Mild intellectual disability:** A learning disorder characterized by:
 - an ability to profit educationally within a regular class with the aid of considerable curriculum modification and support services;
 - an inability to profit educationally within a regular class because of slow intellectual development;
 - a potential for academic learning, independent social adjustment, and economic self-support.
- **Developmental disability:** A severe learning disorder characterized by:
 - an inability to profit from a special education program for students with Mild intellectual disabilities because of slow intellectual development;
 - an ability to profit from a special education program that is designed to accommodate slow intellectual development;
 - a limited potential for academic learning, independent social adjustment, and economic self-support.

The subjective nature of the Ministry exceptionality criteria has been identified to be problematic [12, 31]. There are no standard assessment tools or procedures required by the Ontario Ministry of Education and school boards are given license to determine their own criteria for how to

operationalize terms like “ability to profit” and “potential”. This means that a student that meets criteria for one of these exceptionalities at one school board may not meet criteria for the same exceptionality at another school board. Of particular concern, students identified with a Mild intellectual disability exceptionality but without a formal diagnosis may not be eligible for disability supports from post-secondary institutions or governments after they leave school [31].

While the DSM-5 emphasizes the necessity of assessing adaptive functioning, many Ontario school boards continue to rely primarily or solely on IQ scores for identification purposes. The criterion for consideration for a Mild intellectual disability exceptionality designation can vary from the 1st percentile to below the 17th percentile [31]. In addition to the inherent variability of IQ scores due to a variety of factors, concerns have been raised about the appropriateness and adequacy of intelligence testing for assessing the capabilities of racially, culturally, and linguistically diverse students [27, 32], particularly students who identify as Indigenous [33] and/or Black [34].

2.6.2 Transportation

Students often must travel outside of their home communities to access special education programming. A recent study of TDSB students showed that students with non-gifted exceptionalities who accessed special education programming travel significantly longer in time and distance than other bussed students [35]. While the study was limited to examining in-vehicle time, the authors also note that out-of-vehicle times (waiting for late buses, boarding and disembarking) add to a student’s overall travel time and result in loss of time available for learning, family, and recreation. There is a need to consider how these students experience these disparities and adopt an “anti-ableist, anti-racist perspective to student transport” [35, p. 503].

Key Finding 2.9 – Additional Equity Challenges

Additional equity challenges for supporting students with intellectual disabilities include special education identification and transportation.

3 Program Characteristics

3.1 Program overview

The Vocational 1 program is a full-time special education placement with a class size cap of 15 students per class. Students can attend the Vocational 1 program starting in grade 9 up until the year they turn 21 (maximum 7 years).

The program is available at six PDSB secondary schools that are geographically distributed across the Region of Peel. Which school a student is offered placement at is determined by the student's home address. Transportation is provided.

Two groups of students are discussed in this review:

- **Current Group:** Students enrolled in Vocational 1 in the 2023-2024 school year as of March 30, 2024 (n = 452).
- **Former Group:** Students who started grade 9 between 2015 and 2018 and had a placement in Vocational 1 at some point during secondary school (n = 456).

There is some overlap between these groups as, in the 2023-2024 school year, there were 32 students from the 2018 cohort in their sixth year of Vocational 1 and 25 students from the 2017 cohort in their seventh year of Vocational 1.

An Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) meeting is required to place a student into the Vocational 1 Program [36]. Considerations for placement include:

- academic performance in the range of primary grades (Grade 1 to Grade 3)
- alternative goals requiring additional time and repetition to develop new skills
- an identification of any of the following exceptionalities:
 - Communication: Language Impairment
 - Intellectual: Mild Intellectual Disability
 - Multiple

As shown in Table 3.1, the location where the IPRC meeting is held depends on the student's current exceptionality designation.

Table 3.1: Location of IPRC meeting for Vocational 1 placement

Exceptionality Designation	Meeting Location
Initial identification of Autism or Developmental disability	Central Board Office
Non-identified special education student	Central Board Office
Initial identification of Mild intellectual disability	Vocational 1 Placement School
Existing IPRC identification	Vocational 1 Placement School

Students in the Vocational 1 program work towards an Ontario Secondary School Certificate (OSSC). To be granted an OSSC, students must achieve 14 credits (7 compulsory and 7 optional), compared to the 30 credits required for an Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD; Government of Ontario, 2016). Students in Vocational 1 are not required to attempt or pass the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT) or complete 40 hours of Community Service. Students who complete less than 14 credits may be granted a Certificate of Accomplishment (COA). The COA and the OSSC both provide access to a limited number of special education college certificate programs like the Community Integration through Co-Operative Education (CICE) and College Vocational programs, but neither provides a pathway for admission to college diploma or university programs.

A Vocational 2 placement was previously available for students with a similar cognitive profile who performed academically in the range of junior grades (Grade 4 to Grade 6). The Vocational 1 and Vocational 2 programs were co-located at the same secondary school sites. Students in Vocational 2 worked towards an OSSD in classes capped at 17 students. The Vocational 2 program is currently being phased out in accordance with the 2020 Ministry Directives over concerns that it limited post-secondary pathway opportunities disproportionately for Indigenous and racialized students [37]. Vocational 2 will only be available for students in grade 12 in the 2024-2025 school year and will no longer be available as a placement option by 2025-2026.

3.2 Student cognitive and academic profiles

Table 3.2 lists the special education exceptionality designations of students currently in Vocational 1, as retrieved from PDSB’s Student Information System (SIS).

Table 3.2: Exceptionality designations of students currently in Vocational 1 (n = 452)

Exceptionality Designation	Number of Students	Percentage of Students
Mild intellectual disability	242	54%
Autism	183	40%
Language impairment	90	20%
Learning disability	19	4%
Developmental disability	16	4%
Another exceptionality	10	2%
No exceptionality	2	<1%

Note. Some students had more than one exceptionality, so percentages do not add up to 100%.

Mild intellectual disability was the most frequent exceptionality designation (54%, 242), followed by Autism (40%, 183), and Language impairment (20%, 90). Nearly a quarter of students (24%, 110) had two exceptionality designations, with the most frequent being Mild intellectual disability and Autism (17%, 76).

Table 2.3 lists the exceptionality designations of students who were formerly in Vocational 1. Compared to current students, the proportion of students with a Mild intellectual disability exceptionality designation was slightly lower (46%, 182), the proportion of students with an Autism exceptionality was lower (25%, 98), and the proportion of students with a Language impairment exceptionality was higher (35%, 141). Among former students, 24% (94) had two exceptionality designations, with the most frequent again being Mild intellectual disability and Autism (7%, 28).

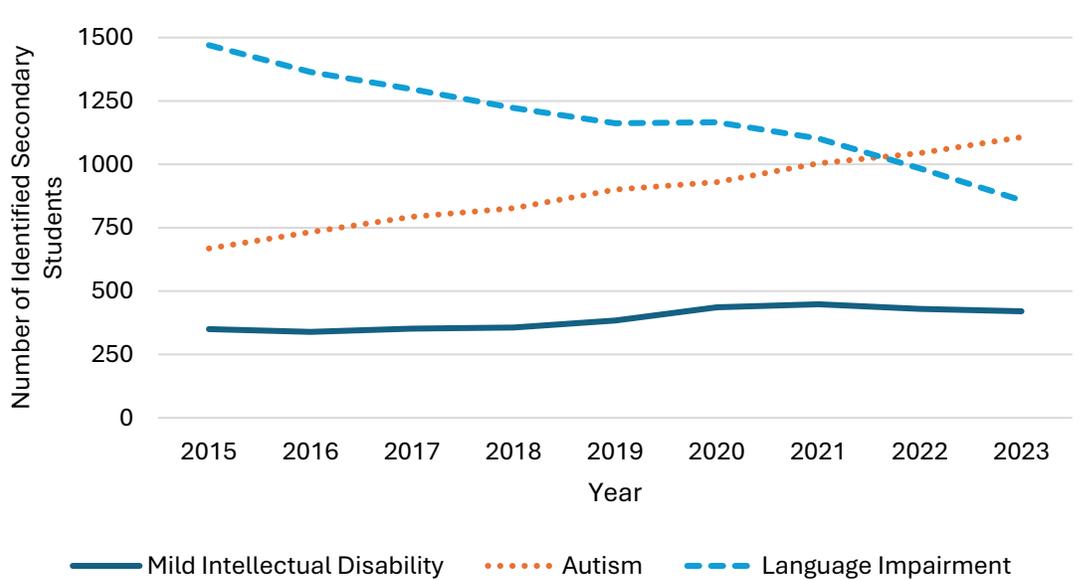
Table 3.3: Exceptionality designations of students formerly in Vocational 1 (n = 399)

Exceptionality Designation	Number of Students	Percentage of Students
Mild Intellectual disability	182	46%
Language impairment	141	35%
Autism	98	25%
Learning disability	35	9%
Developmental disability	14	4%
Another exceptionality	22	6%
No exceptionality	1	<1%

Note. Students enrolled in Year 6 or 7 of Vocational 1 in 2023-2024 are included in Table 3.2 only. Some students had more than one exceptionality, so percentages do not add up to 100%.

These results reflect broader trends in the identified exceptionalities of PDSB secondary students. Between 2015 and 2023, the number of secondary students identified with Mild intellectual disability increased by 20%, the number of secondary students identified with Autism increased by 65%, and the number of students identified with a Language impairment decreased by 40% (Figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1: System trends in the identified exceptionalities of PDSB secondary students



Key Finding 3.1 – Exceptionality Designations

Consistent with broader system trends, there was an increase in the proportion of students in Vocational 1 identified with a Mild intellectual disability exceptionality (46% to 54%) and/or an Autism exceptionality (25% to 40%) between 2015 and 2023. The proportion of students in Vocational 1 identified with a Language impairment exceptionality decreased (43% to 35%) during this period.

3.3 Program structure and curriculum

The Vocational 1 program is implemented as a series of self-contained 0.5 credit courses which are modified from the Ontario curriculum and delivered by a classroom teacher. The special education department head at each Vocational 1 school provides indirect program support. The program focuses on developing independent life skills related to the workplace, as well as the acquisition of basic literacy and numeracy skills. Experiential learning opportunities available through in-school and community co-op placements vary by program site.

As of the 2023-2024 school year, there were no standard curriculum resources or assessment criteria for Vocational 1 courses developed by either the PDSB or the Ontario Ministry of Education.

3.4 Enrolment trends

Schools with Vocational 1 programs vary significantly in size of their programs and the proportion of students in Vocational 1 to total school enrolment. Table 3.4 presents an overview of these data for the 2023-2024 school year.

Table 3.4: Enrolment in Vocational 1 by school, 2023-2024

School	Municipality	Number of students in Vocational 1	Total School Enrolment	Proportion of students in Vocational 1
Glenforest S.S.	Mississauga	33	1057	3%
Humberview S.S.	Caledon	17	1094	2%
Judith Nyman S.S.	Brampton	107	440	24%
Lincoln M. Alexander S.S.	Mississauga	21	846	2%
Turner Fenton S.S.	Brampton	102	1361	7%
West Credit S.S.	Mississauga	172	399	43%

Note. Student enrolment is continuous and so enrolment numbers and proportions fluctuated somewhat throughout the year.

Key Finding 3.2 – Enrolment Trends

In 2023-2024, there were considerable differences in the program size (17 to 172) and percentage of total school enrolment (2% to 43%) across the six schools with Vocational 1 programs.

3.5 Special education placement history

Students in Vocational 1 primarily attended PDSB elementary schools where they received special education services.

Table 3.5 summarizes the elementary special education placements of students currently in Vocational 1. Over two-thirds (69%, 310) of students had a full-time special education placement in grade 6, and 80% (363) had a full-time special education placement in grade 8. The most common grade 8 placements were the Intermediate General Learning Disability Class (n = 181) or the Intermediate ASD Program (n = 133). The class size caps for these placements are 16 students and 6 students, respectively.

Table 3.5: Elementary special education placements of students currently in Vocational 1 (n = 452)

Grade	Full-time Special Education Placement at PDSB	Another Special Education Placement Type at PDSB	Any Special Education Placement at PDSB
Grade 6	69%	9%	77%
Grade 7	77%	6%	84%
Grade 8	80%	7%	87%

Table 3.6 shows the elementary special education placements of students formerly in Vocational 1. As compared to current students, a lesser percentage of former students had full-time special education placements in grades 6, 7, and 8. The most common grade 8 placement was again the Intermediate General Learning Disability Class (n = 198).

Table 3.6: Elementary special education placements of students formerly in Vocational 1 (n = 399)

Grade	Full-time Special Education Placement at PDSB	Another Special Education Placement Type at PDSB	Any Special Education Placement at PDSB
Grade 6	38%	10%	47%
Grade 7	62%	11%	73%
Grade 8	69%	11%	80%

Note. Students enrolled in Year 6 or 7 of Vocational 1 in 2023-2024 are included in Table 3.5 only.

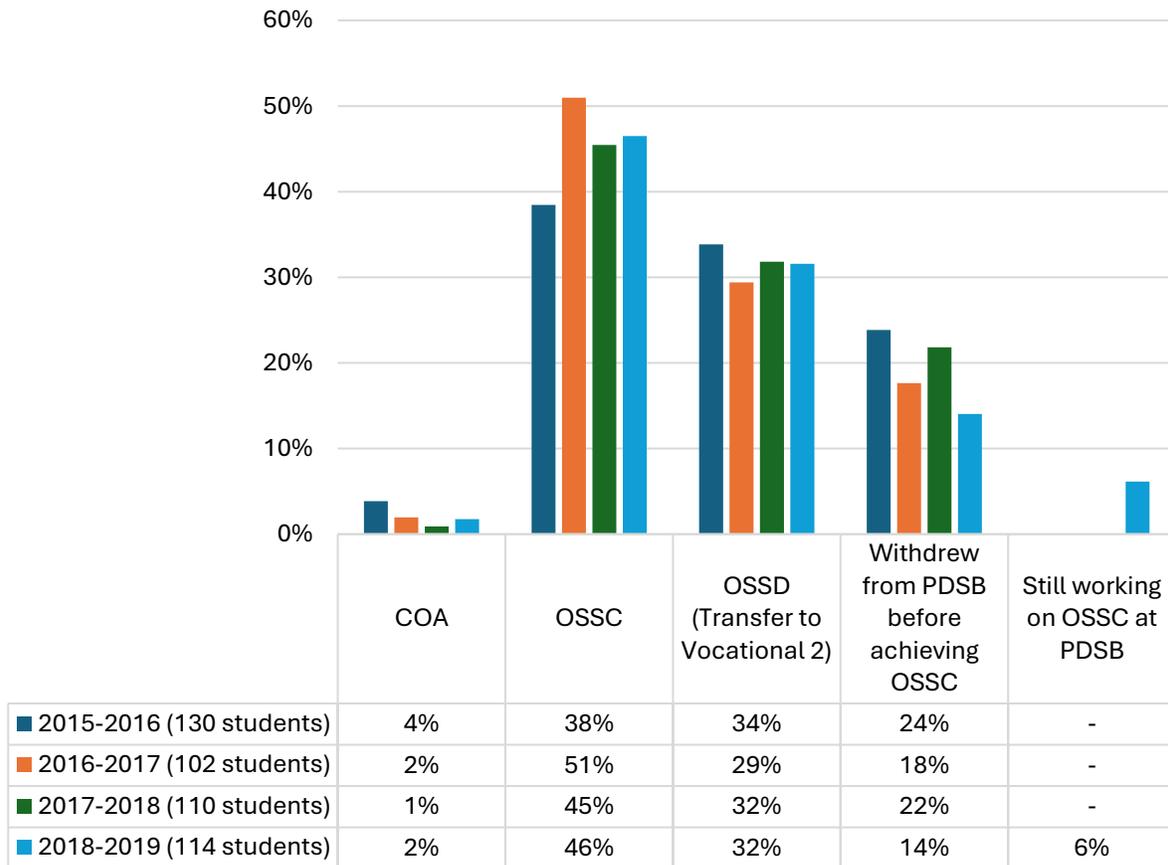
Key Finding 3.3 – K-8 Practices

80% of students enrolled in Vocational 1 in 2023-2024 had a full-time special education placement in a small class in grade 8.

3.6 Graduation outcomes and post-secondary destinations

Figure 3.2 summarizes the outcomes for students formerly in Vocational 1 by the end of the 2023-2024 school year across four cohorts. Between 38% and 51% of students in each cohort achieved an Ontario Secondary School Certificate (OSSC). Between 29% and 34% of students in each cohort transferred to Vocational 2 and achieved an Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD). Between 14% and 24% of students in each cohort withdrew from PDSB before achieving their OSSC. Withdrawal reasons captured in the PDSB Student Information System included: transfer to another secondary school (public, separate, or private), education in another province, territory, or country, and employment. Only 6% of students in the 2018-2019 cohort were enrolled for their seventh year in 2024-2025 and were still working on achieving an OSSC.

Figure 3.2: Vocational 1 outcomes by Grade 9 cohort year (n = 456)



Key Finding 3.4 – Graduation Outcomes

Across four cohorts of students who started grade 9 between 2015 and 2018 and were enrolled in Vocational 1 at some point, 45% achieved an OSSC and 32% transferred to Vocational 2 and achieved an OSSD.

All PDSB students are asked to share their plans with their school at the time they leave the system. Figures 3.3 and 3.4 show the self-reported post-secondary destinations for students formerly in Vocational 1 with an OSSC and an OSSD, respectively. Overall, a greater percentage of students with an OSSD reported plans to engage in ‘Further Education or Training’ (29% vs 18%), while a slightly greater percentage of students with an OSSC reported plans for ‘Employment’ (11% vs 8%). In the 2018 cohort, a greater percentage of students with an OSSC were registered to attend PDSB for Year 7 in 2024-2025 compared to students with an OSSD (40% vs 6%). Destinations were unknown for most students.

Figure 3.3: Destinations for students formerly in Vocational 1 who achieved an OSSC (n = 205)

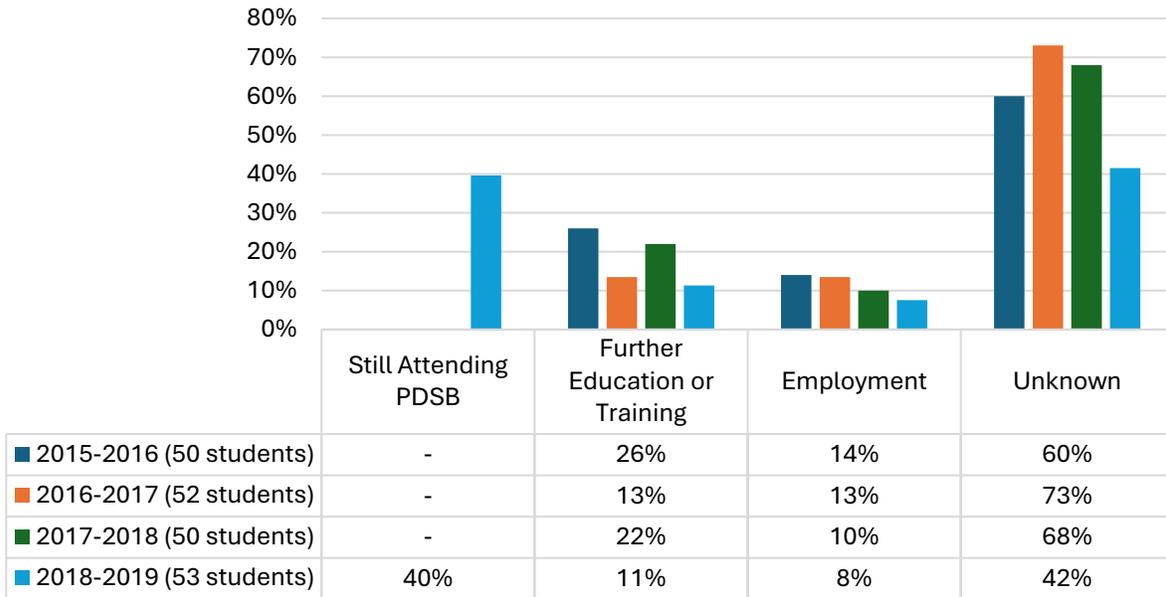
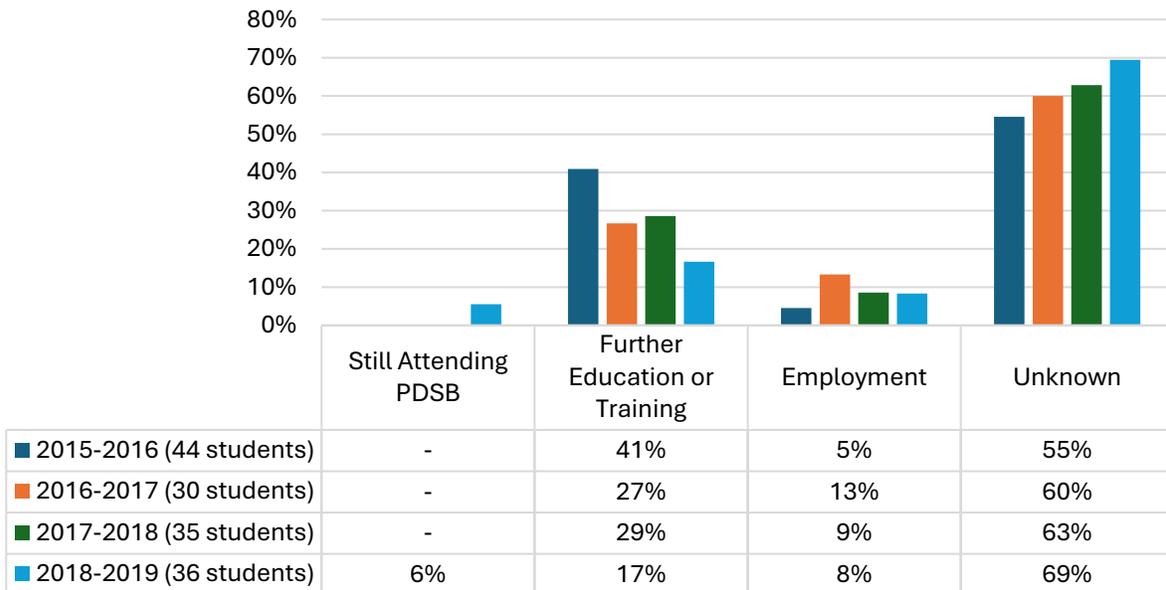


Figure 3.4: Destinations for students formerly in Vocational 1 who achieved an OSSD (n = 145)



Key Finding 3.5 – Post-Secondary Destinations

The post-secondary destinations of students formerly in Vocational 1 are mostly unknown.

Table 3.7 summarizes the data available from the Ontario College Application Service (OCAS) on the 2019-2022 application cycles (the most recent data available) for students formerly in Vocational 1. There were no records of any university applications for these students in data from the Ontario Universities' Application Centre (OUAC). PDSB does not have any access to data for private higher education institutions, or higher education institutions outside of Ontario.

Table 3.7: Applications, confirmations, and registrations to Ontario community colleges for students formerly in Vocational 1

Credential Type	Number of Students	Applied	Confirmed	Registered	Program Types
OSSC	205	10 (5%)	7 (3%)	6 (3%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Certificate programs like CICE and College Vocational
OSSD	145	48 (33%)	37 (26%)	32 (22%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mainly Diploma programs in a variety of fields, some Certificate programs

Key Finding 3.6 – Post-secondary Education

Across four cohorts of students in Vocational 1 who graduated with an OSSC, only 3% were found to have applied, confirmed, and registered to an Ontario community college.

3.7 Social demographics

In alignment with PDSB’s *Annual Equity Accountability Report Card* series, the following identity factors of students in Vocational 1 were examined:

- Indigenous and racial identities
- Gender identity
- Sexual orientation
- Socioeconomic vulnerability

Data were derived from the 2018 and 2023 PDSB Student Census administrations, the Student Information System (SIS), and the Socioeconomic Vulnerability Index (SVI). Further methodological details on how the data were coded can be found in the 2023 Annual Equity Accountability Report Card [38, pp. 8-9].

Disproportionality indices were used to compare the population of students enrolled in Vocational 1 in the 2023-2024 school year to the reference population of all PDSB secondary students. According to the Ontario Anti-Racism Data Standards, a racial disproportionality index is “a measure of a racial group’s overrepresentation or underrepresentation in a program, service, or

function relative to the group’s representation in the reference population” [39]. A disproportionality index greater than 1 means that an identity group is **overrepresented** and a disproportionality index less than 1 means an identity group is **underrepresented**.

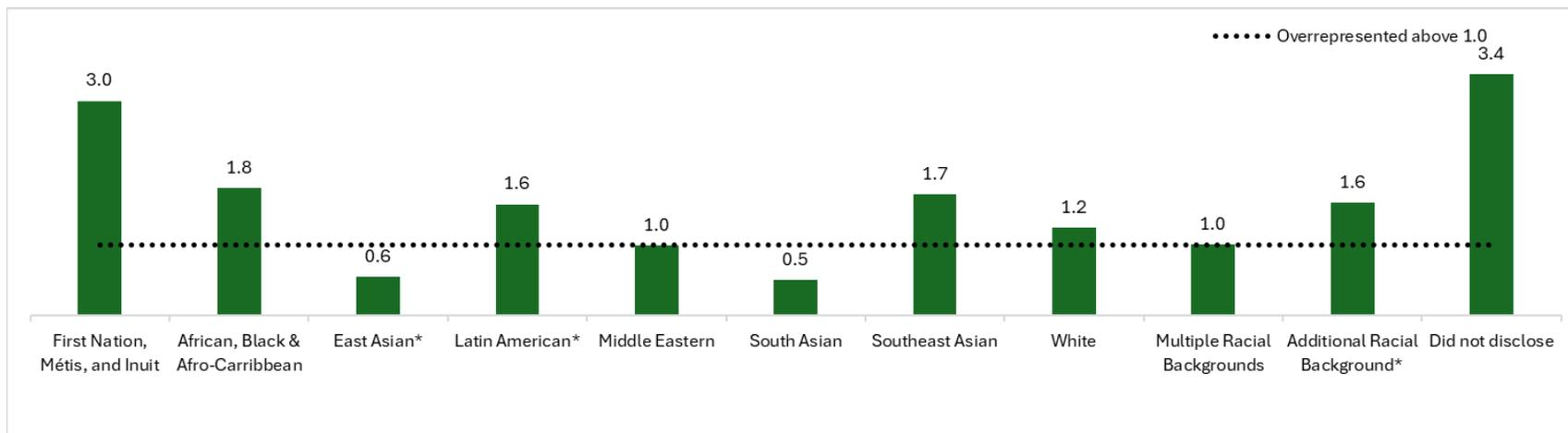
Only students who participated in the 2018 and/or the 2023 Student Census were included in the analyses of identity factors derived from Student Census data. Census data were available for approximately 85% of all PDSB secondary students and 74% of students in Vocational 1. Data availability for the SVI, a postal code-based measure, was approximately 95% for both groups.

Figures 3.5 to 3.8 illustrate that while students with a diverse range of identities are enrolled in the Vocational 1 program, their relative proportions are not always reflective of the entire PDSB secondary student population. Mirroring the results of previous Equity Accountability Report Cards [38, 40], the following patterns can be observed in Vocational 1 program composition:

- Students who identify as Indigenous and African, Black, and Afro-Caribbean are overrepresented.
- Gender diverse and 2SLGBQA+ students are overrepresented.
- Students living in areas with higher socioeconomic vulnerability are overrepresented.

Compared to all PDSB secondary students, students in Vocational 1 were more likely to not disclose their identities. This may reflect barriers that students in Vocational 1 experienced when completing the Student Census, such as inaccessible language and/or lack of privacy because their responses needed to be scribed by an educator.

Figure 3.5: Disproportionalities in self-reported Indigenous and racial identities of current students in Vocational 1 (n = 334)



Note. Disproportionality indices for racial identities marked with an * should be interpreted with caution as they are based on a small number of students in Vocational 1.

Figure 3.6: Disproportionalities in self-reported gender identity of current students in Vocational 1 (n = 334)

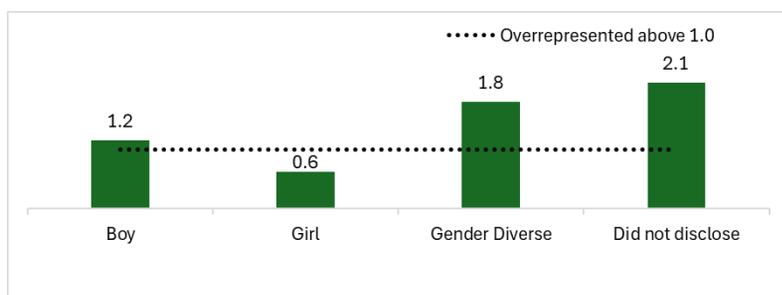


Figure 3.7: Disproportionalities in self-reported sexual orientation of current students in Vocational 1 (n = 299)

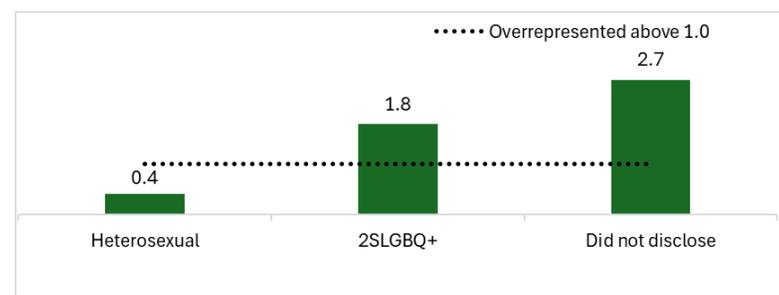
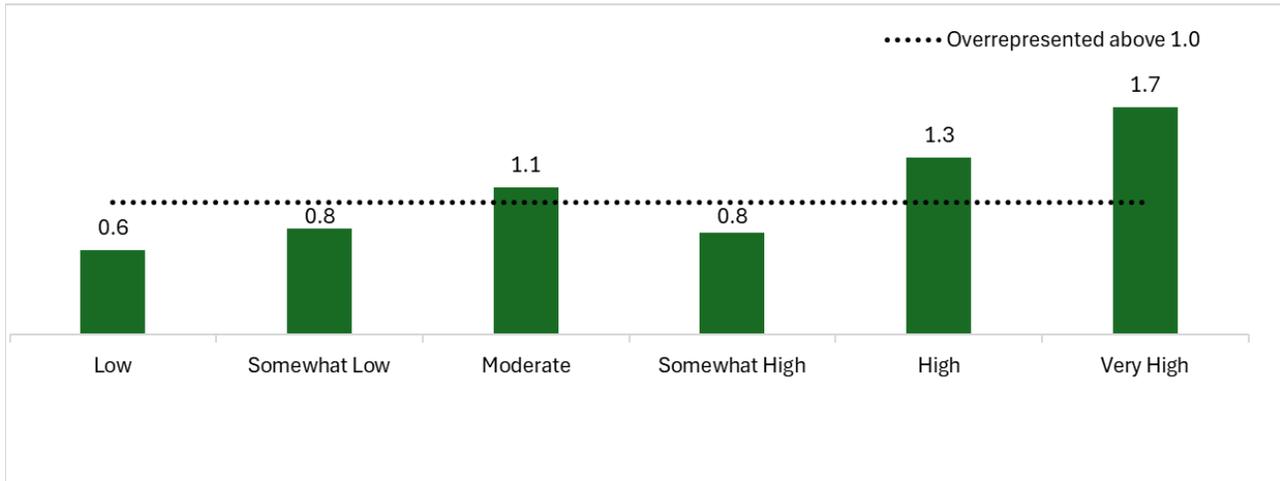


Figure 3.8: Disproportionalities in socioeconomic vulnerability cluster of current students in Vocational 1 (n = 431)



Key Finding 3.6 – Social Demographics

Students who self-identify as Indigenous; African, Black, and Afro-Caribbean; Gender Diverse; and/or 2SLGBQ+; and students living in areas with high socioeconomic vulnerability are overrepresented in Vocational 1 programming.

4 Jurisdictional Scan

A jurisdictional scan of secondary educational programming and practices was conducted by reviewing the special education plans and public websites of 8 large and/or neighbouring Ontario school boards:

- Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board (DPCDSB): <https://www.dpcdsb.org/programs-services/special-education/special-education-plan>
- Toronto District School Board (TDSB): <https://www.tdsb.on.ca/Learning-Equity-and-Well-Being/Special-Education-and-Inclusion/Special-Education-Plan>
- Halton District School Board (HDSB): <https://hdsb.ca/learning-and-resources/Pages/Special-Education-Programs-and-Placements.aspx>
- York Region District School Board (YRDSB): <https://www2.yrdsb.ca/student-support/special-education/special-education-plan>
- Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (OCDSB): <https://www.ocdsb.ca/programs-learning/special-education/special-education-plan>
- Durham District School Board (DDSB): <https://www.ddsb.ca/en/programs-and-learning/inclusive-student-services.aspx>
- Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB): <https://www.hwdsb.on.ca/secondary/supports/special-ed/>
- Waterloo Region District School Board (WRDSB): <https://www.wrdsb.ca/learning/programs/special-education/special-education-plan/>

Attempts were made to contact a representative at each board for further information. Four boards (TDSB, HDSB, OCDSB, DDSB) responded, and meetings were held virtually in June and July 2024.

4.1 Summary of findings

For Ontario secondary students with similar portraits to Vocational 1 learners, most school boards reviewed offer placement in fully contained or partially integrated special education programs. The exception is the Advantage Pilot Program (DPCDSB) which is a regular class placement with resource assistance. Placements are typically offered at a limited number of secondary schools within each board, though students in the Practical Learning Program (DDSB) and the Life Skills Program (WRDSB) can usually attend their home school.

Students in fully contained programs (TDSB, HDSB, DDSB, OCDSB, WRDSB) primarily take alternative (non-credit) courses that address learning expectations outside the scope of the Ontario curriculum (e.g., daily living skills, social skills, self-regulation skills). These courses are taught in small classes of 10-16 students by a teacher with special education qualifications and 1 or 2 educational assistants (EAs). Students are usually granted a Certificate of Accomplishment (COA) when they leave high school.

Students in partially integrated programs (DPCDSB, TDSB, HDSB, YRDSB, OCDSB, DDSB, HWDSB) have varying opportunities to take locally developed, applied, or workplace-level courses with mainstream students according to their strengths and needs. They may be able to earn enough credits to achieve an Ontario Secondary School Certificate (OSSC) or, in exceptional cases, an

Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD). The OCDSB is currently piloting a program to support students eligible for their General Learning Program (GLP) to take locally developed and/or destreamed courses at their home school with the support of an inclusion teacher [15].

Program delivery can sometimes vary by school site. Both DPCDSB and HDSB have made concerted efforts to standardize their program delivery model as well as their communications to families about processes for identification and placement. HDSB and TDSB offer program-specific professional development for teachers multiple times per year, and TDSB also has an extensive offering of professional development courses for EAs.

Four of the boards reviewed (TDSB, HDSB, DDSB, HWDSB) are currently participating in Project SEARCH, which is a structured school-to-work training program for students with developmental or intellectual disabilities [41]. The Project SEARCH model was developed at the Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center in 1996 and there are now over 750 sites worldwide.

Common characteristics of the program include:

- 1-year school to work program for students with intellectual disabilities aged 18-21;
- Selection is by application. Students must agree their Project SEARCH year will be their last year of student services and they will not return to high school after completing the program;
- Combination of in-class programming and three distinct cooperative experiences throughout the course of the school year. The sponsoring site must partner with a business site host that can offer a range of placement opportunities that will allow students to develop skills that will help them attain competitive employment;
- Supports 10-12 students per year, staffed by 1 special education teacher as well as job coaches and board staff.

In 2021-2022, 70% of students who completed a Project SEARCH program in Canada had secured competitive employment at a prevailing wage [41].

Other school boards, including YRDSB, OCDSB, and DDSB, have developed their own intensive employment skills program for students aged 18-21, with similar resource allocation to Project SEARCH. Boards that were notable for their communications with families about available transition supports included HDSB, YRDSB, and DDSB.

Key Finding 4.1 – Jurisdictional Scan

PDSB can learn from other school boards' practices in the areas of employment skills training, consistency of program delivery, communication with families, and professional development offerings for educators.

4.2 Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board (DPCDSB)

Secondary Enrolment: ~30,000

Advantage Pilot Program

- Regular class placement with resource assistance. Designed for students identified as exceptional (Autism, Language impairment, Learning Disability, Mild intellectual disability) who require a more intensive support delivery model.
- Available at 16 (of 26) secondary schools with the intention of having students remain close to their home community. Offered in grades 9-11 as of 2023-2024.
- Instruction and assessment provided through an alternative curriculum. Curriculum focus areas include well-being practices, literacy, numeracy, assistive technology skills, digital safety awareness and citizenship, and collaboration skills. Offers hands-on and experiential learning opportunities, as well as regular use of Lexia PowerUp, Empower Reading, and Knowledgehook sessions to build literacy and numeracy skills.
- Credit-bearing learning strategies (GLE) course delivered over 2 semesters to enhance and complement the alternative curriculum. Students work towards an OSSC or OSSD.
- Centralized scripts developed and provided to administrators and special education staff to ensure consistent messaging for families to make an informed decision about program placement.

Career Path Program

- Designed for students identified as exceptional (Autism, Language impairment, Learning Disability, Mild intellectual disability) to develop literacy, numeracy and employment skills.
- Program being phased out. Offered in grade 12 at 2 sites as of 2023-2024.

4.3 Toronto District School Board (TDSB)

Secondary Enrolment: ~74,000

[Intensive Support Programs \(ISPs\)](#) are designed to support communities of exceptional students with similar behavioural, communication, intellectual, or physical needs.

TDSB offers separate ISPs for Mild intellectual disability and Autism. Students in the Autism ISP have average to above average cognitive abilities and work towards an OSSD. There are no ISPs solely for students with Language impairment. Students may also attend a regular class placement at their home school with curricular modifications.

[Intensive Support Program \(ISP\) – Mild intellectual disability](#)

- Intellectual index and adaptive functioning scores generally fall between the 1st to 5th percentiles. Academic functioning is a minimum of four years below grade level.
- Special education class with partial integration:
 - Select subjects (English, Math, Science, Geography/History) are delivered in a smaller class environment and other subjects are taken in regular classes. For regular classes, the classroom and special education teachers work together to determine appropriate modifications, though there is variability in practices between schools.
 - Opportunity to personalize course selections, with arts and hands-on courses being popular options. Students may have access to locally developed compulsory (LDCC) courses based on the program needs across the entire school or may take applied or workplace-level courses. Co-op courses are encouraged for credits and experience.
 - Students can achieve an OSSC and may also have opportunities to attain an OSSD.
 - Multiple program sites, but placement may not be in a student's home school.
- Special education class full time:
 - Congregated (contained) placement with fully alternative (non-credit) programming and a curriculum of functional numeracy and literacy oriented towards vocational and life skills.
 - Available at 6 sites for students with more complex needs.
 - Students work towards a COA.
- Class size cap of 16 students (typically 10-14) with 1 special education teacher and 1 EA.
 - MID-specific after school professional learning offered for teachers 3x per year.
 - EA designation is Level J (moderate to severe needs), which is a higher paying role than Level I (mild to moderate needs), which helps with recruitment and retention.
 - Rich set of professional development courses (in-person and virtual) for EAs to learn about topics such as dysregulation, ABC charts, building relationships with students, and functional academics.
- Transportation provided for all students at congregated sites. For students at integrated sites, transportation provision is based on individual student needs.

[Project SEARCH](#)

- Business site hosts are the Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital and the University Health Network. Spots are usually reserved for students with a Developmental disability (DD) identification.

4.4 Halton District School Board (HDSB)

Secondary Enrolment: ~21,000

[Community Pathways Program \(CPP\)](#)

- Fully contained special education placement for students in grade 9 up to age 21.
- Students must have an intellectual exceptionality (either Mild intellectual disability or Developmental disability).
- Seven program sites geographically distributed across the region. Total program enrolment approx. 600.
- Fully alternative (non-credit) programming to support students to develop independent/semi-independent living skills and integrate into the community. Classes are often mixed-age: Junior (Years 1-4) and Senior (Years 5-7).
- Designed in two phases: a 4-year phase to build a functional academic foundation and develop a community readiness profile, and a 3-year certificate phase to prepare students for life after school (Employability Skills Certificate or Community Skills Certificate).
- Students may be in this placement full-time working towards a COA, or they may be partially integrated into mainstream classes within the school. Five of the seven sites also host [Locally Developed/Essential Pathway Programs](#), which facilitates transition to working towards an OSSC/OSSD.
- Class size cap of 10-12 students with 1 special education teacher. EA support allocated based on specific student needs.
- Transportation provided.
- Subject-specific professional development 2 times per year with all CPP teachers.
- Community Program Pathways Guide developed to ensure consistency in program areas, best practices, teaching strategies, curriculum mapping process for alternative curricula, administrator look-fors, roles and responsibilities.
- Two transition information evenings per year for parents of CPP students where the transition advisory committee, Disability Services Ontario, agency partners, respite, CICE programs are all present to discuss transition to life after high school.

[Project SEARCH](#)

- Business site hosts are the Oakville Trafalgar Memorial Hospital and the Milton District Hospital. Only CPP students can apply.

4.5 York Region District School Board (YRDSB)

Secondary Enrolment: ~44,000

Community Class Program

- Placement for students who need further support than offered in mainstream classrooms. Specialized classes offer individualized programming to meet a range of social, emotional, academic, and personal development goals.
- Partially integrated placement with alternative (non-credit) programming taught by a special education teacher.
- The Foundational Intensive class focuses on building core learning, organizational and executive functioning skills as well as student self-awareness, self-regulation and social-emotional coping skills. Students may work toward building the skills and independence necessary to transition into credit-bearing classes either full or part-time and will often continue working on their personal development goals in the Transitional program.
- The Transitional Intensive class focuses on building independence as well as functional academic and life skills to help students work toward a successful post-secondary transition. Students in this class participate in authentic experiential learning opportunities such as community Work Experience placements and may work toward their OSSC by taking elective credit-bearing courses.
- Other Community Class programs include the Developmental disability Program (10 students/class with 2 EAs) and the Autism program (6 students/class).

Work Experience Program (WEP)

- Partnership between the YRDSB, local businesses and industry.
- Non-credit earning secondary school class for students in special education programs, ages 15 to 21.
- School support staff provide job coaching and help train and monitor students in their work placements to increase skills and ensure success.

Pathways to Employment and Applied Knowledge (PEAK) Program

- Pathways to Employment and Applied Knowledge (PEAK) Program is a transition program designed for senior secondary school students and serves as a bridge from school to adult life options including work, college vocational programs and community participation. The program consists of a 25% in-class component and a 75% community work placement.

Extensive [Transition Resource Document](#) compiled to support families.

4.6 Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (OCDSB)

Secondary Enrolment: ~26,000

Specialized Program Class: General Learning Program (GLP)

- Fully self-contained placement available for grades 4 to 12.
- Placement criteria include Mild intellectual disability exceptionality, adaptive functioning assessment that indicates an impairment, academic functioning more than 4 years below grade level.
- Focus is on development of academic and life skills; curriculum is modified to meet students' needs.
- Increasing partial integration opportunities to take credit-bearing courses based on strengths and interests, but most students currently earn a COA. Considerable variation in opportunities by school site.
- Secondary GLP enrolment ~200 students across 3 program sites (2 larger, 1 smaller).
- Class size cap of 16 students with 1 special education teacher and 1 EA.
- Have built a central database to track what supports are available for students to access after they leave high school.

Storefront School

- Program provides intensive job training for students aged 18-21 with Mild intellectual disability, Developmental disability, and/or Autism exceptionalities. Admission by application.
- Storefront students participated in a variety of work experience placements in the community. Placements are 2.5h per day/5 days per week for 7-8 weeks. A life skills program is delivered in the afternoons. Program setting is an office building and not a school.
- Includes job coaching and transit training.
- Class size cap of 12 students with 1 special education teacher and 1 EA job coach per class.

The [General Learning Program Inclusion Project](#), started in January 2023, is a pilot project for students with MID to take locally developed or destreamed classes in their home school with the support of an inclusion teacher. This work has included the development of asset-based student profiles to help teachers understand students' personal, social, and academic goals. A report on the initial findings was presented to the OCDSB in May 2024 [15].

4.7 Durham District School Board (DDSB)

Secondary Enrolment: ~22,000

Practical Learning Program (PLP)

- Fully self-contained or partial integration placement for students with Mild intellectual disability, Developmental disability, and/or Autism exceptionalities.
- Available in 20/21 secondary schools (1-5 classes per school); students generally attend their home school.
- Program goal is to increase independence through a focus on communication skills, functional literacy and numeracy, independent living skills, life management skills, and healthy living.
- Most students work towards a COA, though there may be integration opportunities into regular courses based on student strengths and needs.
- Class size cap of 10 students with 1 special education teacher and a minimum of 2 EAs.
- Students can continue attending PLP for Years 5-7 or attend Transition to Work Program or apply for Project SEARCH.

Transition to Work Program

- Non-credit program for special education students aged 18-21 who are intending to enter the workforce and/or a Community Integration through Cooperative Education (CICE) college program.
- 6 programs across the district (~1 in each municipality) serve a total of 72 students per year.
- Program goal is for students to learn the necessary social, vocational and independence skills necessary to transition to successful employment.
- Provides community work experience opportunities through strong school-based partnerships with local agencies, industries and businesses; some students able to achieve Red Seal apprenticeship credentials.
- Class size cap of 12 students with 1 special education teacher and 2 EAs.
- Share regular updates to families: [Durham District School Board Inclusive Student Services Impact Update Newsletter Volume 7 \(ddsb.ca\)](#).

Project SEARCH

- Business site host is the Regional Municipality of Durham - Abilities Centre.

4.8 Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB)

Secondary Enrolment: ~15,000

Comprehensive Special Education Class

- Supporting students with similar learning profiles to students in Vocational 1 with a focus on increasing learning skills, the use of technology as compensatory tool and self-awareness as a learner.
- May have opportunities for integration to earn credits based on student strengths and needs.

Centralized Special Education, Inclusion and Equity Transition Navigation Services

- Expanding connections with families, employers and community services to support the future readiness of students with disabilities.

[Project SEARCH](#)

- Business site hosts are the Downtown Hamilton YMCA/YWCA and the Ron Joyce Children's Health Centre/Hamilton General Hospital.

4.9 Waterloo Region District School Board (WRDSB)

Secondary Enrolment: ~20,000

[Life Skills Program](#)

- Fully contained special education placement for intellectually exceptional students who require the development of fundamental living skills that lead to employability.
- Available at all secondary schools; 1 class per school.
- Provides intensive support for social/emotional needs.
- Fully alternative curriculum leading to a COA. Five program areas: personal life management, community access and awareness, practical math, practical language, vocational training and preparation.
- Integration opportunities available depending upon the strengths and needs of the student.
- Class size cap of 16 students with 1 special education teacher and 2 EAs (shared for all Secondary Life Skills and Developmental disability classes).

5 Student and Parent/Guardian Feedback

5.1 Student feedback

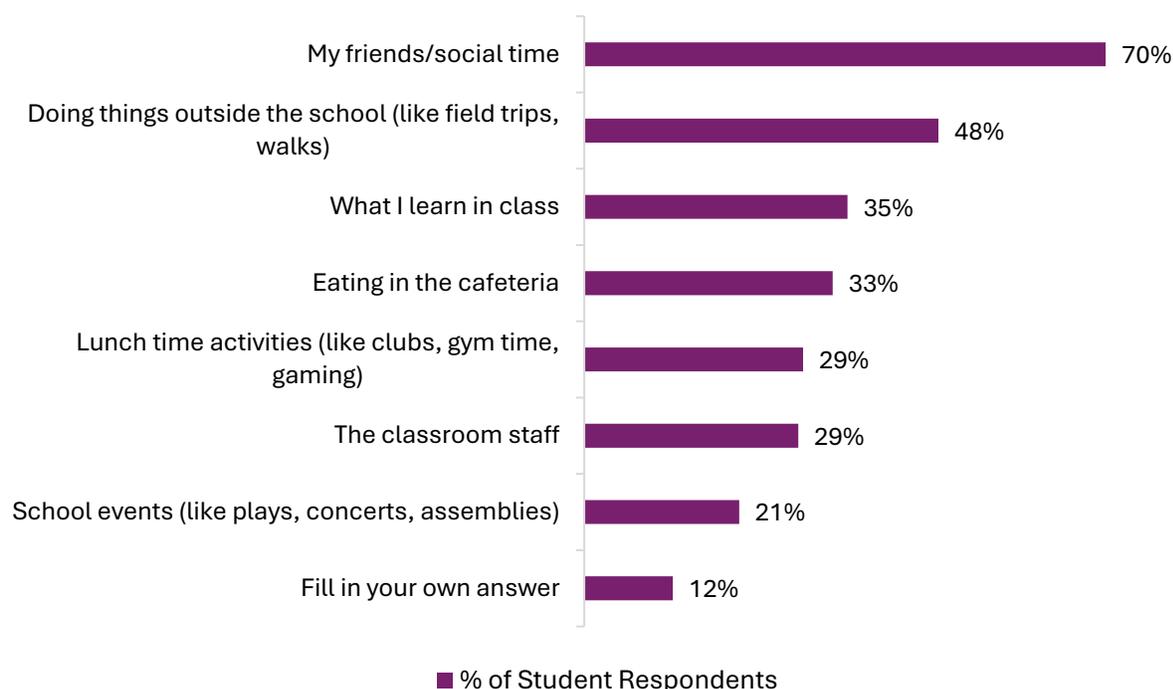
A student data collection activity was developed in consultation with the special education department heads at the six schools with Vocational 1 programs and took the form of an interactive classroom activity. Options were provided to access the activity in class either online or on paper, or to complete it with support at home.

A total of 306 responses were received in the following formats: 271 paper (student version); 25 paper (parent supported version); and 10 online. Responses were received from all six schools with Vocational 1 programs. Students from West Credit Secondary School, the largest Vocational 1 program site, represented the largest group with 158 responses (52%). The overall response rate for the student activity was **68%**.

5.1.1 What students in Vocational 1 like best about school

As shown in Figure 5.1, most students in Vocational 1 (70%, 212) selected 'My friends/social time' as one of the things they liked best about school. The next most frequently selected option was 'Doing things outside the school (like field trips, walks)' (48%, 144), followed by 'What I learn in class' (35%, 107). Student-provided answers for the 'Fill in your own answer' option included playing games or sports (6) and co-op (5).

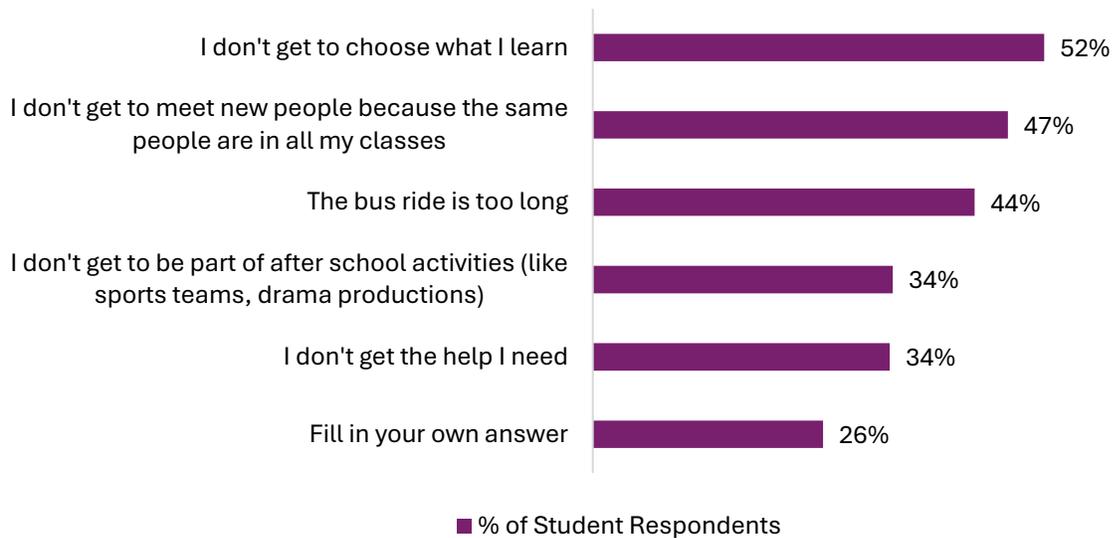
Figure 5.1: Summary of responses to 'What 3 things do you like best about school?' (n = 303)



5.1.2 What students in Vocational 1 like least about school

As shown in Figure 5.2, the most frequently selected option for what students in Vocational 1 liked least about school was ‘I don’t get to choose what I learn’ (52%, 149), followed by ‘I don’t get to meet new people because the same people are in all my classes’ (47%, 137), and ‘The bus ride is too long’ (44%, 126). Student-provided answers for the ‘Fill in your own answer’ option included loudness or noise (7), bullying (5), and having to wake up early (5).

Figure 5.2: Summary of responses to 'What 3 things do you like least about school?' (n = 289)



Key Finding 5.1 – Students’ Feelings About School

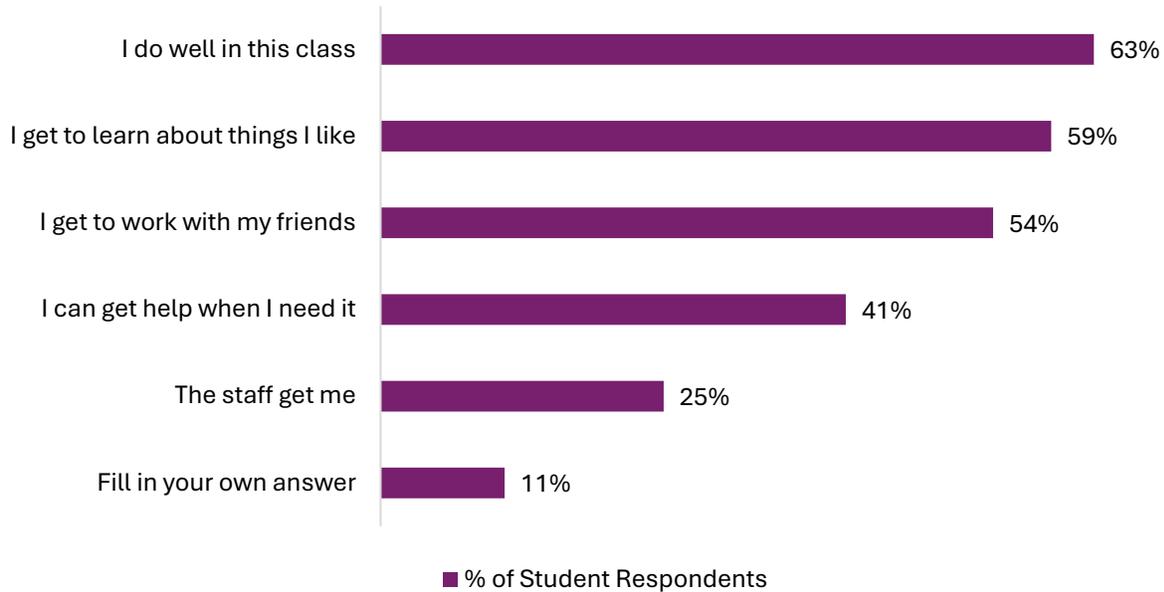
70% of students in Vocational 1 selected ‘**My friends/social time**’ as one of the things they liked best about school. 52% of students selected ‘**I don’t get to choose what I learn**’ as one of the things they liked least about school.

5.1.3 Favourite classes of students in Vocational 1

Of the 263 students in Vocational 1 who responded to the question ‘What is your favourite class?’, 21% (55) provided multiple answers. The most frequently reported favourite classes were gym (24%, 63), art (16%, 43), and math (15%, 40). Additional answers with more than a single response included: English, co-op, cooking/baking/hospitality, music, science, geography, cosmetology/hairstyling, drama, history, health, GLE/learning strategies, doggy day care, computer, auto, construction, business/marketing, green houses, and green industries.

As shown in Figure 5.3, students like these classes because they feel they do well in them (63%, 184), they get to learn about things they like (59%, 173), and they get to work with their friends (54%, 158). Student-provided answers for the ‘Fill in your own answer’ option included liking to learn (4), liking the staff (3), and finding the class engaging and fun (3).

Figure 5.3: Summary of responses to ‘Why is this your favourite class?’ (n = 294)



5.1.4 What students in Vocational 1 want to do after high school

As shown in Figure 5.4, most students in Vocational 1 would like to work after they leave high school (73%, 215). Figure 5.5 presents a word cloud of the different occupations mentioned including:

- police officer (8)
- teacher (8)
- YouTuber (8)
- chef (7)
- firefighter (7)
- hairdresser (7)
- mechanic (7).

Students also mentioned several specific businesses including:

- WalMart (5)
- FreshCo (4)
- PizzaPizza (4)
- McDonald’s (3)
- PetSmart (3).

Figure 5.4: Summary of responses to 'What do you want to do after you leave high school? (n = 293)

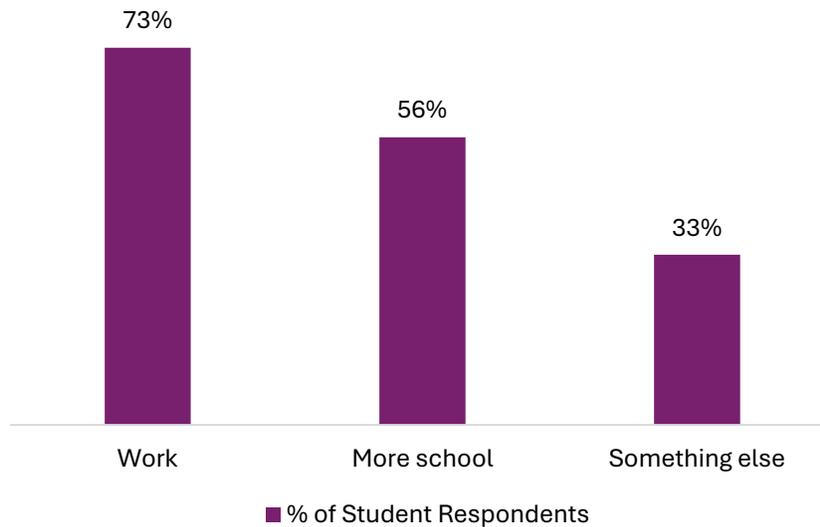
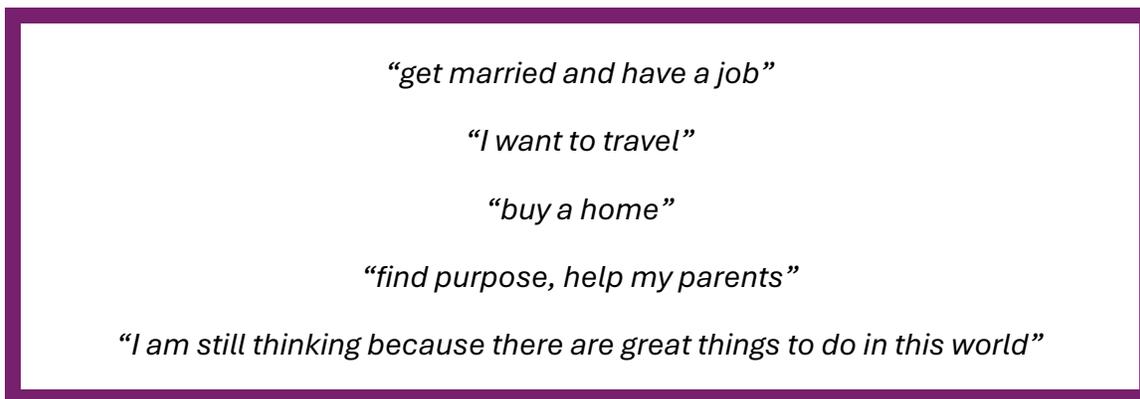


Figure 5.5: Word cloud of student responses to 'Work: What kind of job?' (n = 209)



Over half of students (56%, 164) selected that they would like to do more school, with 11% (31) specifically mentioning a desire to attend college. A third of students (33%, 97) selected 'Something else'. Selected quotes from their responses are shown in Figure 5.6.

Figure 5.6: Selected quotes from student responses to 'Something else: Tell us about it' (n = 94)



Key Finding 5.2 – What Students Want to Do After High School

The majority (73%) of students in Vocational 1 wanted to work after they leave high school. They have a wide variety of career aspirations. Over half (56%) said they would like to do more school and 11% specifically mentioned college.

5.1.5 How schools can help students in Vocational 1 achieve their goals

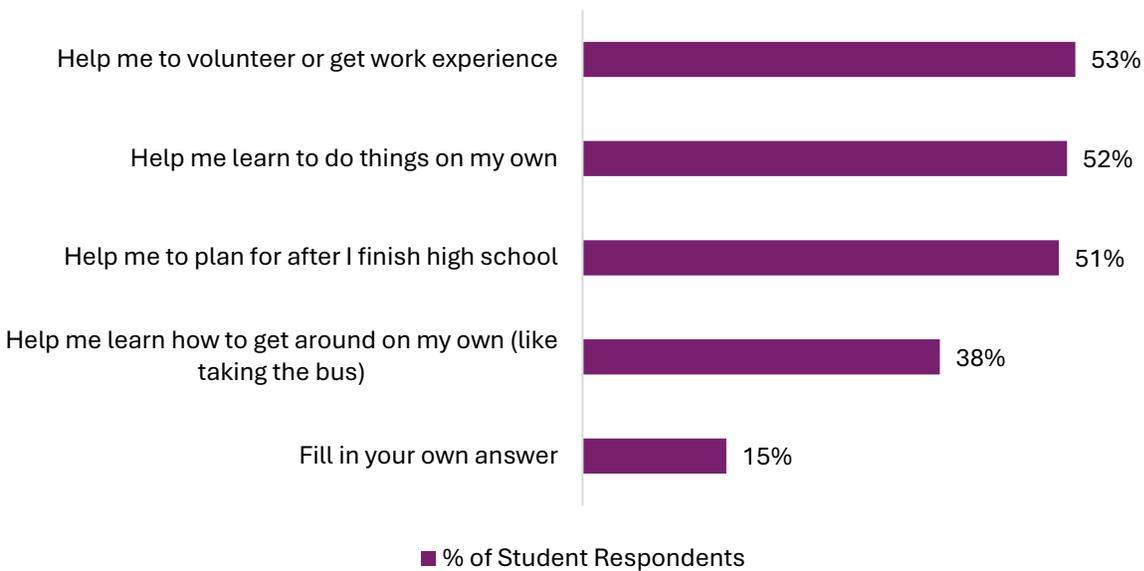
As shown in Figure 5.7, approximately half of students in Vocational 1 felt their school could help them achieve their goals by helping them to volunteer or get work experience (53%, 120), helping them learn to do things on their own (52%, 118), and helping them plan for after high school (51%, 116).

Specific tasks mentioned in student-provided responses included:

- help with preparing for college including applying and going on tours of programs (20)
- support taking public transportation (17)
- cooking and life skills (14).

Student-provided answers for the 'Fill in your own answer' option included 'help me figure out my weaknesses and how to work on them' and 'help to make friends'.

Figure 5.7: Summary of responses to ‘How can your school help you to achieve your goals?’ (n = 226)



Key Finding 5.3 – How Schools Can Help Students Achieve Their Goals

Over half (53%) of students in Vocational 1 selected ‘**Help me to volunteer or get work experience**’ as something schools could do to help them achieve their goals.

5.2 Parent/guardian feedback

A questionnaire for parents/guardians of students in Vocational 1 was developed in consultation with the central special education department. Parents/guardians were asked about their feelings on the Vocational 1 placement process, the overall program, their child’s school experience, and their aspirations for life after high school. Respondents were asked to select their child’s school, but the questionnaire was otherwise anonymous. Parents/guardians also had an opportunity to indicate whether they wanted to participate in a virtual focus group to discuss their child’s Vocational 1 program experience in more detail.

Machine translations of the questionnaire were available in 11 of the most common languages spoken by families in Peel: Arabic, Simplified Chinese, Traditional Chinese, Gujarati, Hindi, Punjabi, Spanish, Tamil, Telugu, Urdu, and Vietnamese.

The questionnaire was administered online using the Qualtrics survey platform in May 2024 and in September 2024. Two groups of parents were sent email invitations to the email address they provided at the time of registration:

- **Current Group:** Parents/guardians of students enrolled in Vocational 1 programs in the 2023-2024 school year (n = 425).
- **Former Group:** Parents/guardians of students who started grade 9 between 2015 and 2018 and had a placement in Vocational 1 at some point during secondary school (n = 323).

For current students in Vocational 1, paper copies were also made available for schools to share with the 27 families of current students who did not have email addresses in the system as well as any parents/guardians who preferred to respond in that format.

Interviews and focus groups with parents/guardians took place in June to July and October to November of 2024. Two members of the review committee who are current members of the Special Education Advisory Committee were also interviewed in October 2024 to share their experiences as parents of students who were formerly in Vocational 1.

5.2.1 Data analysis

Frequencies and percentages were tabulated for all multiple choice and agreement questions. Written comments from the questionnaire were analyzed together with the focus group transcripts and interview notes to identify common themes. While not necessarily representative of the experiences of all parents/guardians of students in Vocational 1, the quotes shared in the following sections reflect sentiments that were shared by multiple respondents.

5.2.2 Participation

A total of 290 questionnaire responses were received in the following formats: 249 online and 41 paper. There were 7 responses received in languages other than English: Arabic (4), Simplified Chinese (1), Spanish (1), and Vietnamese (1).

As shown in Figure 5.8, 80% percent of responses (231) were received from parents/guardians of students in the Current Group and 20% of responses (59) were received from parents/guardians of students in the Former Group. The response rate for the Current Group was **54%** and the response rate for the Former Group was **18%**.

Figure 5.8: Respondent groups for Vocational 1 parent/guardian questionnaire (n = 290)

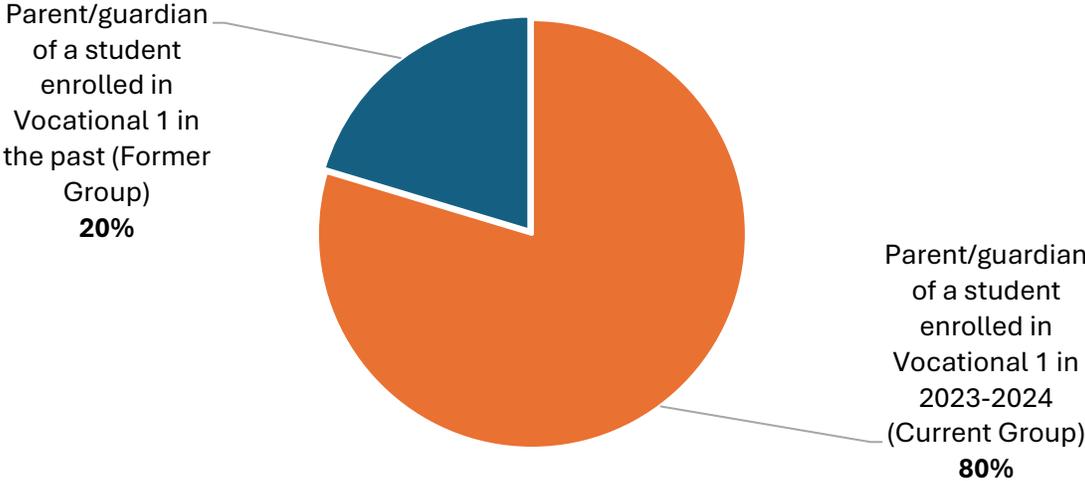


Table 5.1 summarizes the responses to the question ‘Which school does your child go to for the Vocational 1 program?’. All secondary school sites that either currently or formerly hosted Vocational 1 programs were represented to some degree, with West Credit S.S. being the most frequent response (Current Group = 117; Former Group = 18).

Table 5.1: Summary of responses to ‘Which school does your child go to for the Vocational 1 program?’ (n = 286)

School	Current Group N	Current Group %	Former Group N	Former Group %
Glenforest S.S.	21	9%	1	2%
Gordon Graydon Memorial S.S.	-	-	5	9%
Humberview S.S.	13	6%	2	4%
Judith Nyman S.S.	35	15%	16	28%
Lincoln M. Alexander S.S.	19	8%	4	7%
Turner Fenton S.S.	24	10%	11	19%
West Credit S.S.	117	51%	18	32%

Note. Gordon Graydon Memorial S.S. was closed in June 2018.

A total of 65 parent/guardian respondents indicated their interest in participating in a focus group and provided their contact information. All were contacted by phone or email; 12 parents/guardians participated in 1 of 3 virtual focus groups using Microsoft Teams and 6 were interviewed individually via Microsoft Teams or by phone.

5.2.3 School board designated exceptionalities

Parent/guardian respondents were asked in which categories their child was designated as exceptional by the school board. The response patterns of Current and Former Group respondents were similar. As shown in Table 5.2, ‘Mild intellectual disability’ was the most frequent response (Current Group = 42%; Former Group = 39%), followed by ‘Autism’ (Current Group = 40%; Former Group = 34%), and ‘Language impairment’ (Current Group = 16%; Former Group = 17%). ‘Learning disability’ was the most frequently provided written response for ‘Another exceptionality’ (8).

Table 5.2: Summary of responses to ‘Was your child identified by the school board as exceptional in any of the following categories?’ (n = 287)

Exceptionality Designation	Current Group N	Current Group %	Former Group N	Former Group %
Autism	91	40%	20	34%
Language impairment	36	16%	10	17%
Mild intellectual disability	95	42%	23	39%
Another exceptionality	24	11%	7	12%
Not sure	34	15%	8	14%

Note. Respondents could select multiple answers, so percentages may not add up to 100%.

5.2.4 Vocational 1 placement process

Parent/guardian respondents mostly agreed with positive statements about the Vocational 1 placement process (Tables 5.3 and 5.4). Current Group respondents had higher rates of agreement than Former Group respondents for most statements. The statement with the highest level of agreement was ‘During my child’s Vocational 1 placement meeting, their identity, like their gender, race, religion, and language, was respected’ (Current Group = 80%; Former Group = 72%). A greater percentage of Former Group respondents agreed that they felt pressured to agree to a Vocational 1 placement for their child than Current Group respondents (Current Group = 17%; Former Group = 40%).

Table 5.3: Summary of responses to 'How did you feel about the Vocational 1 placement process?' (Current Group)

Statement	N	Agree/ Strongly agree	Don't agree or disagree	Disagree/ Strongly disagree	Not sure
School staff gave me enough information about the Vocational 1 program so that I could decide what was best for my child	228	75%	12%	9%	4%
In the meeting about my child's Vocational 1 placement, I felt like I was part of the team making decisions	224	70%	14%	8%	8%
I was told during the meeting that my child would be working for an Ontario Secondary School Certificate (OSSC)	220	68%	8%	10%	14%
I understood how an Ontario Secondary School Certificate (OSSC) was different from an Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD)	219	63%	9%	14%	14%
During my child's Vocational 1 placement meeting, their identity, like their gender, race, religion, and language, was respected	224	80%	9%	2%	8%
When deciding on my child's Vocational 1 placement, the review committee thought about what my child was good at, what they needed, what they liked, and what they wanted to achieve	225	70%	16%	9%	6%
I felt pressured to agree to a Vocational 1 placement for my child	224	17%	16%	57%	10%

Table 5.4: Summary of responses to 'How did you feel about the Vocational 1 placement process?' (Former Group)

Statement	N	Agree/ Strongly agree	Don't agree or disagree	Disagree/ Strongly disagree	Not sure
School staff gave me enough information about the Vocational 1 program so that I could decide what was best for my child	57	63%	11%	25%	2%
In the meeting about my child's Vocational 1 placement, I felt like I was part of the team making decisions	58	66%	9%	26%	-
I was told during the meeting that my child would be working for an Ontario Secondary School Certificate (OSSC)	58	67%	3%	22%	7%
I understood how an Ontario Secondary School Certificate (OSSC) was different from an Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD)	58	66%	9%	24%	2%
During my child's Vocational 1 placement meeting, their identity, like their gender, race, religion, and language, was respected	58	72%	16%	5%	7%
When deciding on my child's Vocational 1 placement, the review committee thought about what my child was good at, what they needed, what they liked, and what they wanted to achieve	57	65%	9%	23%	3%
I felt pressured to agree to a Vocational 1 placement for my child	58	40%	19%	38%	3%

Parent/guardian respondents shared mixed experiences of the Vocational 1 placement process in their written responses. While some found the process to be supportive, others had to seek out information on their own and request a placement for their child or had not been involved in the process at all.

I greatly appreciated the information and the options provided during the placement process. The school tour provided was very helpful and informative in arriving at a decision.
(Questionnaire, Current Group)

I was never told about Vocational 1 or any other options. I did some investigation myself and called the school to talk to his counselor to let them know I wanted him in this program.
(Questionnaire, Former Group)

We did not have any meeting with the school staff for [child's] vocational training/program.
(Questionnaire, Current Group)

Several parent/guardian respondents commented about the lack of comprehensive information provided about the program structure and the Ontario Secondary School Certificate (OSSC) being the intended outcome:

There was VERY LITTLE information covering the academics in the program. (Questionnaire, Current Group)

I am very disappointed that it was not clear that my child would only earn 0.5 credits for each class, even for gym and non-academic classes. I did not know this until the first report card at the end of the first semester and then after confirming with the school.
(Questionnaire, Current Group)

I am a little sad and ashamed to say that I did not know, and it was not shared with me, that Voc 1 only leads to OSSC not an OSSD. I did not know about that until I filled out the survey for this focus group. (Focus Group 2)

Nearly all the interview and focus group participants shared that their child had a self-contained special education placement for grades 6 to 8 (e.g., Intermediate ASD Program, Intermediate General Learning Disability Class) and that they felt a mainstream secondary placement would not have been a good fit for their child. They remarked that the Vocational 1 program was falsely presented to them as a 'choice':

They told us at the end of grade 8 – you have two options, to join mainstream high school without any kind of support or join the Voc 1 program [...] it is really only one option since it was clear the mainstream option wouldn't have worked. (Focus Group 2)

Interview and focus group participants whose children had been in developmental disability (DD) programs sought a Vocational 1 placement to have more academic and social opportunities for their child. They were required to obtain additional cognitive assessments for their children before these requests would be considered by the board.

Her [assessment] report showed that despite not having any formal literacy or numeracy training, she was performing at late grade 1 and early grade 2 level. [...] I pushed for a meeting to happen asap and to have her transferred to the Voc 1 program [...] The Voc 1 program is opening a greater window of possibilities for what her future could look like compared to the DD route. (Focus Group 2)

Based on his psychoeducational testing – his cognitive abilities were higher than [DD Program School] could support. (Interview 1)

Newcomer parents relied on school staff to decide what was best for their child:

I feel lost, don't know what is good for him. Where should we put him so that he can learn a skill to survive and be employed, be adjusted, communicate, be able to survive alone? (Interview 3)

We're new to the country with less than four years here so we didn't know how the system works and what the broader options were. (Focus Group 2)

Key Finding 5.4 – Parent/Guardian Feedback About the Placement Process

Parents shared mixed experiences of the Vocational 1 placement process. Several commented about the lack of comprehensive information about the program structure and intended outcome and how the placement was falsely presented as a 'choice'.

5.2.5 Vocational 1 program

Current Group respondents had higher rates of agreement than Former Group respondents for positive statements about the Vocational 1 program. As shown in Tables 5.5 and 5.6, the statement with the highest level of agreement for both groups was 'The Vocational 1 program teaches my child important life skills so they can be more independent' (Current Group = 78%; Former Group = 58%). The statement with the lowest level of agreement for both groups was 'The Vocational 1 program is academically challenging for my child' (Current Group = 36%; Former Group = 30%).

Table 5.5: Summary of responses to 'How do you feel about the Vocational 1 program?' (Current Group)

Statement	N	Agree/ Strongly agree	Don't agree or disagree	Disagree/ Strongly disagree	Not sure
The Vocational 1 program is academically challenging for my child	216	36%	22%	34%	8%
My child's literacy (reading/writing) skills are improving through the Vocational 1 program	219	62%	19%	12%	7%
My child's math skills are improving through the Vocational 1 program	219	54%	22%	15%	9%
My child's ability to get along with others and handle their feelings is improving because of the Vocational 1 program	219	64%	16%	13%	7%
The Vocational 1 program teaches my child important life skills so they can be more independent	218	78%	11%	6%	5%
The Vocational 1 program prepares my child for other types of schooling after high school	219	52%	22%	11%	15%
The Vocational 1 program prepares my child to achieve their job goals	218	55%	24%	9%	12%

Table 5.6: Summary of responses to 'How do you feel about the Vocational 1 program?' (Former Group)

Statement	N	Agree/ Strongly agree	Don't agree or disagree	Disagree/ Strongly disagree	Not sure
The Vocational 1 program was academically challenging for my child	53	30%	11%	57%	2%
My child's literacy (reading/writing) skills improved because of the Vocational 1 program	55	47%	20%	31%	2%
My child's math skills improved because of the Vocational 1 program	55	42%	20%	33%	5%
My child's ability to get along with others and handle their feelings improved because of the Vocational 1 program	55	49%	22%	24%	5%
The Vocational 1 program taught my child important life skills so they could be more independent	55	58%	18%	20%	4%
The Vocational 1 program prepared my child for other types of schooling after high school	54	43%	13%	41%	4%
The Vocational 1 program prepared my child to achieve their job goals	56	33%	18%	44%	5%

In their written responses, many parent/guardian respondents shared that they were happy with the Vocational 1 program and felt that it was beneficial for their child. Specific benefits mentioned included: confidence, independence/life skills, social skills, academics, self-regulation, communication skills, and job training/work experience:

It improved his self-esteem and confidence. It gave him a full High School experience, with a very high level of belonging. He made very strong friendships with his schoolmates. It gave him the time to grow up at his own pace. It pushed him to set his own goals and to work hard to reach his goals. (Questionnaire, Current Group)

[...] the program is helping her strengthen her independent living skills, giving her the confidence to succeed academically to the best of her ability, and giving her the attention she needs to build on her literacy, numeracy, and social skills. (Questionnaire, Current Group)

Provides him with structure and discipline that helps him regulate his emotions and stay on top of his responsibilities. (Questionnaire, Current Group)

She is learning valuable skills in being part of a community. Shopping skills, meal planning, learning to be independent, which are all important if she in the future has an opportunity for more independent living options. (Questionnaire, Current Group)

My son has participated in 2 coop programs getting helpful skills to find the job, train for the job and ongoing feedback to do the job. It has also let him try possible jobs and learn what he is good at and not good at as well as what he likes- in a safe environment. (Questionnaire, Current Group)

Other parent/guardian respondents shared that the program was not meeting their expectations and not helping their child:

Academically, I do not feel that my child is being challenged or even meeting his potential. He can no longer tell time, count, add money, etc. all of which he could do in elementary school. (Questionnaire, Current Group)

That vocational 1 program gave him some hands-on life skills which helped him in day-to-day activities but as a mother my expectations were much more. (Questionnaire, Current Group)

After graduating from High School, my son did not have any employable job skills. (Questionnaire, Former Group)

It's not helping him. He's having a hard time getting into college and getting a job. (Questionnaire, Current Group)

Program looks good on paper but nothing practical they get in real life. (Questionnaire, Former Group)

Parent/guardian respondents whose children previously would have been able to transfer to the Vocational 2 program were particularly frustrated by the lack of suitable academic opportunities for them:

My child was a perfect fit for Vocational 2 program. This program was cancelled by the board. My child was forced to take Vocational 1 & thereby depriving her of high school diploma. She will be getting only high school certificate. We were not given a clear and good learning path for her. We don't even know what would be her career options. (Questionnaire, Current Group)

This year, I was told by one of her teachers that she probably should have been in Voc 2 a couple years back, so that was disheartening now that there is no Voc 2. Her options now are mainstream or she stays in Voc 1 – so again, no choice. (Focus Group 2)

My child would have greatly benefited from the Voc 2 program that was cut and now struggles to stay motivated when class work is too simple, however does not have the ability to move to the regular academic program. There is far too large a gap between the traditional high-school program and the VOC 1 program. (Questionnaire, Current Group)

Parent/guardian respondents stressed the need for more personalization and choice to meet their children's individual needs:

I just need them to look at students as individuals and help them to find their passion and potential. (Focus Group 2)

Parents [are] not given any choice to select courses and develop a program that will work for their child and their skillset. (Interview 2)

[There] should've been more personalized opportunities to build on his strengths. Recognize that children are all different and don't just give the same program to all. (Interview 3)

My child repeated the same exact class (same handouts) several times because she was told that there wasn't anything else she could take. Many of the classes she wanted were not available. (Questionnaire, Former Group)

There is strong resistance to providing individualized goals and working towards them. [...] While it is great that the program exists, there must be a concerted effort to make it more effective. Our goal should be to ensure that children who complete the program are better prepared for jobs and life. (Questionnaire, Current Group)

They also identified a need for more co-op opportunities and career-oriented employment training:

The vocational 1 placement process would do better to have them job ready in their expertise i.e. core strengths of the children and as per their interests. (Questionnaire, Current Group)

They really need to do more to prepare my son for his job skills. (Questionnaire, Current Group)

They should be able to have more work placement opportunity during their last year in the VOC 1. (Questionnaire, Current Group)

You're supposed to be equipping students with vocational knowledge. Teach them construction, not just how to build a birdhouse. If it is a culinary course, teach them how to have a career in culinary, how to work in a restaurant, not just how to make a birthday cake. (Focus Group 2)

Despite these limitations, there were multiple parent/guardian respondents who strongly emphasized the importance of the program and were concerned it was being targeted for cancellation:

This is a vitally important program to be retained for those kids that often fall through the cracks who don't get one-on-one EA care and also shouldn't be fully integrated into regular classes. My daughter would not be able to succeed in a regular program. (Questionnaire, Current Group)

Thanks to the Vocational 1 program our son will reach his personal potential - finding his own unique way of contributing in society and living with purpose and self-respect. Do not go backwards and remove this wonderful privilege for children who need it to attend this program. (Questionnaire, Current Group)

It would be the wrong choice to eliminate the Vocational 1 program. (Interview 2)

Key Finding 5.5 – Parent/Guardian Feedback About the Vocational 1 Program

Many parents felt the Vocational 1 program was beneficial for their child, though some said it was not meeting their expectations and/or had not helped their child. Only 30-36% agreed that it was academically challenging for their child. Parents felt there was a lack of suitable academic opportunities to replace the Vocational 2 program. Overall, parents wanted more personalization and choice to meet their children's individual needs, as well as more co-op opportunities and career-oriented employment training.

5.2.6 Vocational 1 school experience

Current Group respondents again had higher rates of agreement than Former Group respondents for positive statements about their child's Vocational 1 school. As shown in Tables 5.7 and 5.8, the majority of parent/guardian respondents agreed that their child likes their school (Current Group = 83%; Former Group = 67%) and is treated with respect (Current Group = 89%; Former Group = 75%). Comparatively fewer respondents agreed that their child has choices in what they learn (Current Group = 64%; Former Group = 53%).

Table 5.7: Summary of responses to 'How does your child feel about their Vocational 1 school?' (Current Group)

Statement	N	Agree/ Strongly agree	Don't agree or disagree	Disagree/ Strongly disagree	Not sure
My child likes their school	221	83%	8%	5%	4%
My child feels like they belong in their school	217	78%	10%	7%	5%
My child is treated with respect by staff in their school	219	89%	6%	2%	3%
My child feels safe at their school	220	80%	10%	6%	4%
My child has choices in what they learn	219	64%	16%	10%	10%

Table 5.8: Summary of responses to 'How does your child feel about their Vocational 1 school?' (Former Group)

Statement	N	Agree/ Strongly agree	Don't agree or disagree	Disagree/ Strongly disagree	Not sure
My child liked their school	51	67%	10%	14%	10%
My child felt like they belonged in their school	50	60%	16%	20%	4%
My child was treated with respect by staff in their school	51	75%	6%	14%	6%
My child felt safe at their school	51	67%	12%	18%	4%
My child had choices in what they learn	51	53%	20%	20%	8%

Focus group participants felt the Vocational 1 setting offered an important and necessary alternative to a mainstream school environment:

These kids need a place to go where they feel safe, where you can keep it contained and focused on their needs and capabilities. Students with special needs get lost in the mainstream. (Focus Group 1)

Everything has been as normal for him as he will ever experience, and I'm so thankful that he did not go to mainstream school because it would have been a nightmare for him. (Focus Group 3)

Other parent/guardian respondents felt that the program would benefit from more mainstream integration:

I think the children would do a bit better with other students for some classes so they aren't so divided. (Questionnaire, Current Group)

I would love to see more integration with the rest of the student body, as there are many benefits for everyone, to bringing these students in the Voc1 Program out into the general population. (Questionnaire, Current Group)

Focus group participants appreciated the opportunities and support available for their children to participate in extra-curricular activities and school performances:

My daughter did wonderful in the drama. We knew that she was not going to be playing a main part, but she would be participating so that was a very good experience for her. (Focus Group 2)

He plays all kinds of instruments, he loves it and he's doing really good in that. So that is a very good experience. I like that he gets to participate in something. (Focus Group 2)

The kids sell plants that they have planted in the horticultural program – these are valuable experiences for them – they're taking pride in their work. It is a huge community effort and it is extremely valuable to their high school career. (Focus Group 1)

[...] developing an appreciation for being physically active, for the arts, for music, for being involved, having those social connections, I think it's important and they'll need those all their lives in order to be a success. (Focus Group 2)

When there were behavioural incidents, however, some parent/guardian respondents felt the schools didn't adequately consider their child's needs or developmental level. For example, students with physical outbursts due to emotional dysregulation were treated as if they were being intentionally violent:

Staff created an environment of fear [...] He is not very verbal, but he knows how people perceive him – when someone doesn't feel safe with him, he doesn't feel safe. (Interview 1)

They got police involved [...] the school never looked at my son's profile as he has a mild intellectual disability [and] a mind half his age. (Questionnaire, Current Group)

Key Finding 5.6 – Parent/Guardian Feedback About Their Children's School Experience

Some parents felt the Vocational 1 setting offered an important and necessary alternative to a mainstream school environment, while others wanted to see more integration opportunities. Most parents agreed that their child had a good school experience. They appreciated opportunities for their child to participate in extra-curricular activities and school performances. Some parents felt

that schools didn't adequately consider their child's developmental level when responding to behavioural incidents.

Most parent/guardian respondents agreed with positive statements about their own experience of their child's school (Tables 5.9 and 5.10). The statement with the highest level of agreement for both groups was 'I feel respected by school staff' (Current Group = 88%; Former Group = 74%). The statement with the lowest level of agreement for both groups was 'I receive enough information about how my child is doing in school and the ways I can support their learning' (Current Group = 68%; Former Group = 60%).

Table 5.9: Summary of responses to 'How do you feel about your child's Vocational 1 school?' (Current Group)

Statement	N	Agree/ Strongly agree	Don't agree or disagree	Disagree/ Strongly disagree	Not sure
I am satisfied with the communication I have with my child's school	220	77%	10%	10%	3%
I feel respected by school staff	219	88%	8%	2%	2%
I feel that my child gets the support needed to learn to the best of their ability	220	75%	9%	12%	4%
I receive enough information about how my child is doing in school and the ways I can support their learning	219	68%	16%	14%	3%

Table 5.10: Summary of responses to 'How do you feel about your child's Vocational 1 school?' (Former Group)

Statement	N	Agree/ Strongly agree	Don't agree or disagree	Disagree/ Strongly disagree	Not sure
I was satisfied with the communication I had with my child's school	50	60%	14%	24%	2%
I felt respected by school staff	50	74%	16%	8%	2%
I felt that my child gets the support needed to learn to the best of their ability	50	62%	10%	26%	2%

I received enough information about how my child is doing in school and the ways I could support their learning	50	60%	6%	32%	2%
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Focus group participants wanted schools to recognize that their children had different needs than mainstream students. They wanted more communication about what their children were doing in class to be able to support and reinforce their learning at home:

Being able to ask about specific things would help me to communicate with him. I would love to see more communication to allow me to talk to and support my son. [...] In comparison to what we were used to [in elementary school], we're completely in the dark. We know it's high school, but they're not typically developing kids. (Focus Group 2)

So again, their learning needs to be reinforced at home because even though they learn and he comes home with the receipt [from buying a donut], my son can't always tell me about the skill he learned. (Focus Group 3)

Yes, it is high school but it isn't high school for them. Communication is critically important in the support of our children. (Focus Group 2)

This extended to wanting a more comprehensive understanding of their child's learning progress:

I never knew much about what her skills or educational needs were - what are her numeracy and literacy skills? Is she falling dramatically behind? How can I support her at home? Report cards are cut and pasted and not personalized to each child and not giving you what you need to know in terms of their education. (Focus Group 1)

I always wondered how she's progressing academically. What grade level is she at? Has she made any progress since the last assessment? (Focus Group 3)

We need something measurable like a scale so that parents can continue to work at home to support students. (Focus Group 1)

Several focus group participants remarked that their child's Individual Education Plan (IEP) was utilized ineffectively, if at all, and felt the program would benefit from having more regular and detailed check-ins around IEPs:

My son's IEP was never done. They have been using his IEP from grades 7 and 8 and they're signing off on it and still using that. (Focus Group 2)

Every year, we did see the IEP, and it is signed off by the spec ed teacher, the principal and myself - but I did come to realize that I don't think they use the document as intended and I don't think that all of the teachers review it and implement it [...] it just seems like a piece of paper at this point to me. (Focus Group 2)

[The IEP] doesn't have to be as detailed as it was in elementary school, but the lack of detail doesn't tell me anything about the goals that they're setting for him to be successful. (Focus Group 3)

Focus group participants also noted that exam closures presented a significant disruption:

Twice a year we have to make arrangements for our son to be off school for two weeks. We have to take time off, we have to see if family can look after him. (Focus Group 2)

This is wrong – three weeks a year doing nothing so that the school can do exams and paperwork is wrong. (Focus Group 2)

Practically two weeks of no routine is hell frankly. (Focus Group 2)

Key Finding 5.7 – Parent/Guardian Feedback About Their School Experience

Parents wanted more communication about what their child was doing in class, a better understanding of their learning progress, and more effective use of their IEPs. Exam closures presented significant disruptions to the routines of students in Vocational 1 and their families.

5.2.7 Feelings about teachers

Most parent/guardian respondents agreed with positive statements about their child’s teachers (Tables 5.11 and 5.12). The statement with the highest level of agreement for both groups was ‘My child’s teachers care about them’ (Current Group = 81%; Former Group = 77%). The statement with the lowest level of agreement for both groups was ‘My child’s teachers help them to reach their goals’ (Current Group = 72%; Former Group = 65%).

Table 5.11: Summary of responses to 'How do you feel about your child’s Vocational 1 teachers?' (Current Group)

Statement	N	Agree/ Strongly agree	Don't agree or disagree	Disagree/ Strongly disagree	Not sure
My child's teachers care about them	219	81%	9%	5%	5%
My child's teachers take time to get to know them	219	75%	12%	6%	6%
My child's teachers encourage them to be the best student that they can be	218	75%	15%	4%	6%
My child's teachers help them to reach their goals	218	72%	17%	4%	7%

Table 5.12: Summary of responses to 'How do you feel about your child's Vocational 1 teachers?' (Former Group)

Statement	N	Agree/ Strongly agree	Don't agree or disagree	Disagree/ Strongly disagree	Not sure
My child's teachers cared about them	47	77%	11%	4%	9%
My child's teachers took time to get to know them	48	71%	15%	13%	2%
My child's teachers encouraged them to be the best student that they could be	47	68%	15%	13%	4%
My child's teachers helped them to reach their goals	48	65%	13%	17%	6%

Parent/guardian respondents wrote many comments about the supportive and encouraging staff at schools with Vocational 1 programs:

The staff have made excellent efforts towards my child's learning. They meet his needs and are very patient and kind. (Questionnaire, Current Group)

The staff [...] are amazing. Caring and attentive, creative and outside-the-box thinkers. Very happy with them and the care they provide to my son. I feel he is safe there. (Questionnaire, Current Group)

My child's teachers have always been very supportive and understanding of my child, and if my child has a bad day, they work with my child to outline expectations as far as behaviour, give my child a chance to take breaks when needed, and above all they are understanding and kind. I appreciate that and thank them for the hard work they do. (Questionnaire, Current Group)

Focus group participants, however, expressed some frustration at the degree to which they were expected to problem-solve for their child when issues arose. They largely attributed this to lack of staff training:

We get calls during the day and I have to solve the problems. I don't mind helping teachers to do this, but shouldn't they have been trained to help these children? (Focus Group 2)

She doesn't need 1:1 support, but she needs guidance, and tangible strategies and ideas which I gave them. [...] it's crazy that I'm trying to figure out how to help my child in a system when I believed we put her there and they're helping her to learn all this. (Focus Group 2)

The meltdown happened because some teachers aren't properly trained to support our children and this teacher was a new graduate and she wasn't well informed or prepared to teach children with different needs. (Focus Group 2)

So, we are trying whatever we can from our side [...] we always connect with these special education teachers, her teachers, and I always tell them in advance that this is who she is. We are trying our best, but we are still struggling with that. (Focus Group 3)

Some parent/guardian respondents shared negative experiences they or their children had with staff:

I would like to let [the] school know that kindly have a check on your teachers' behavior with kids; my child complains about some teachers. (Questionnaire, Current Group)

Teachers should keep their hands to themselves. They should use kind words. You can hurt these kids' feelings. (Questionnaire, Current Group)

Plan is good to help them attain what they are capable of but the people around who can help them to achieve it lack in training as well as compassion. (Questionnaire, Current Group)

Key Finding 5.8 – Parent/Guardian Feedback About Staff

Parents shared that staff were largely supportive and encouraging, but also that they sometimes lacked training to problem-solve effectively when issues arose. Some parents shared negative experiences they or their children had with staff.

5.2.8 Transportation to and from school

As shown in Table 5.13, parent/guardian respondents shared that their children mostly travel to and from school by bus (Current Group = 94%; Former Group = 88%).

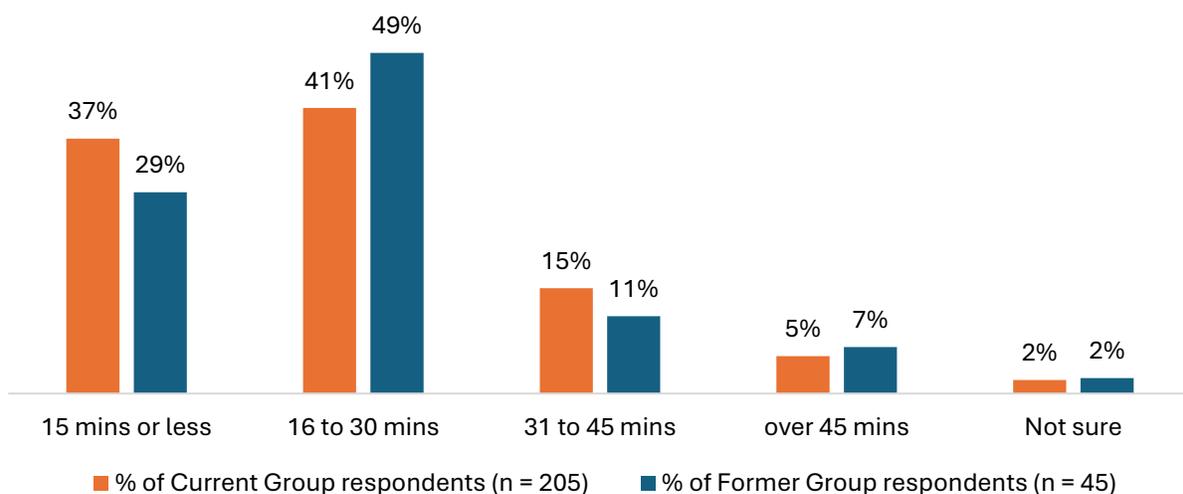
Table 5.13: Summary of responses to 'How does your child usually get to and from school?' (n = 270)

Transportation Method	Current Group N	Current Group %	Former Group N	Former Group %
School bus	209	94%	42	88%
Car	19	9%	5	10%
Walking	5	2%	3	6%
Public transportation	5	2%	4	8%
Cycling	1	<1%	-	-
Another way	4	2%	-	-
Not sure	-	-	1	2%

Note. Respondents could select multiple answers, so percentages may not add up to 100%.

Figure 5.9 shows the distribution of responses to the question 'How long does it take your child to get to school (in minutes)?' after being re-coded into 15-minute categories. Most students (Current Group = 78%; Former Group = 78%) travel 30 minutes or less to get to school, though 5-7% of students had a one-way travel time of over 45 minutes.

Figure 5.9: Summary of responses to 'How long does it take your child to get to school?'



Parent/guardian respondents viewed bussing as critical for getting their child to school, but also as something that interfered with their child’s ability to participate in extra-curricular activities:

It's really difficult that all of the activities have to be within that scheduled bus time [...] I think that there would absolutely be more opportunities if it was walking distance (Focus Group 3)

One Former Group respondent shared a negative experience with bussing:

The school bus experience was traumatic. He was bullied and so were other Voc 1 students. (Questionnaire, Former Group)

Key Finding 5.9 – Parent/Guardian Feedback About Transportation

88-94% of students in Vocational 1 take the bus to school. While most travel 30 minutes or less to get to school, there are 5-7% of students whose travel time was over 45 minutes each way. Bussing was seen as critical, but parents also noted that it interfered with students’ ability to participate in extra-curricular activities. Some students have experienced bullying on the bus.

5.2.9 Post-secondary destinations

As shown in Figure 5.10, many parent/guardian respondents indicated that their child would like to do ‘More school’ (Current Group = 53%; Former Group = 43%) and/or ‘Work’ (Current Group = 41%; Former Group = 43%) after they finish high school. Eight parent/guardian respondents mentioned specific college certificate programs like the Community Integration through Cooperative Education (CICE) program or the Vocational program at George Brown College.

Specific fields of study mentioned included:

- baking/cooking/culinary (11)
- computer science/programming/technology (9)
- animation/graphic design/media arts (6)
- automotive (5)
- cosmetology/hair/makeup (4)
- a trade (4).

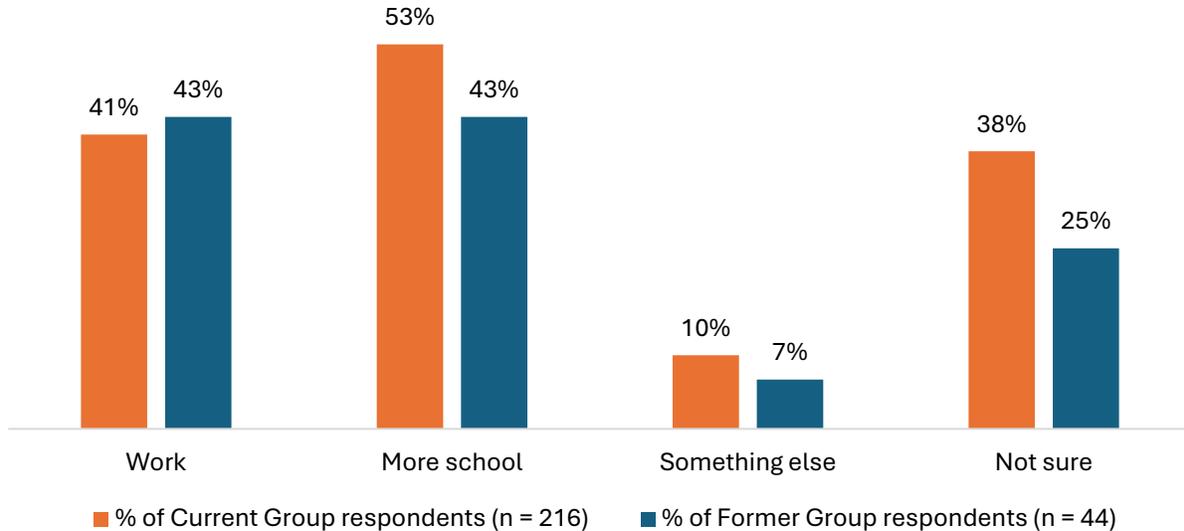
Specific jobs mentioned were aligned with the student responses illustrated in Figure 5.5, including:

- mechanic (9)
- chef (3)
- hairdresser (3)
- police officer (2)
- firefighter (2).

Responses for 'Something else' (Current Group = 10%; Former Group = 7%) included:

- drawing/art (2)
- small business (2)
- YouTube/video editing (1)
- swimming/lifeguard (1).

Figure 5.10: Summary of responses to 'What does your child want to do after high school?'



Former Group respondents were additionally asked what their child was doing now (Figure 5.11).

For 'Work' (36%) specific jobs mentioned included:

- warehouse work (2)
- working at the grocery store (2)
- childcare assistant (1)
- security guard (1)
- landscaping (1)
- garbage truck helper (1).

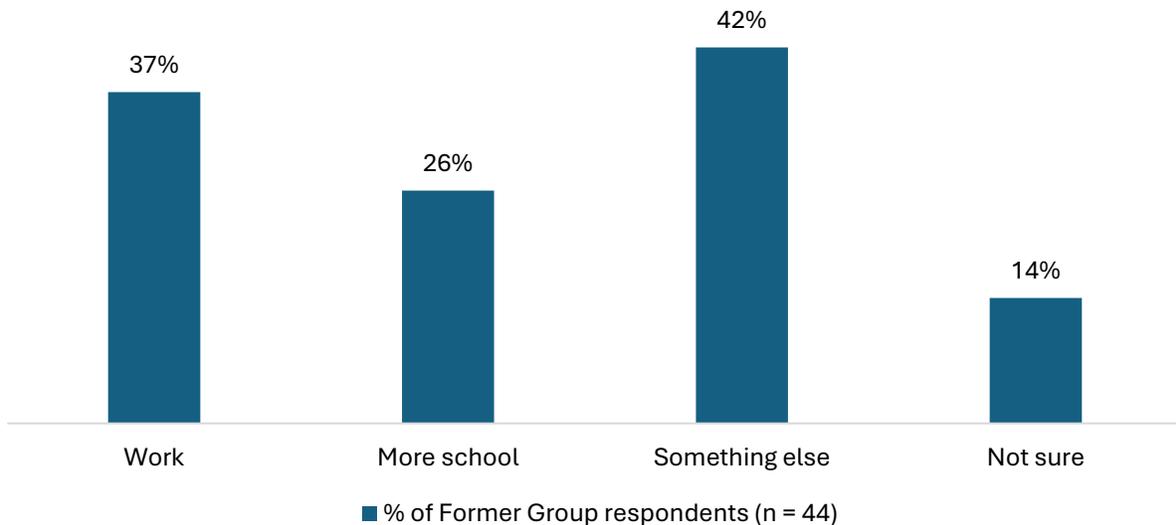
For 'More school' (27%) fields of study included:

- cooking/culinary arts (3)
- personal support worker (1)
- photography (1)
- upgrading English to start college (1).

Responses for 'Something else' (41%) included:

- nothing (4)
- looking for work (3)
- attending adult day programs (3)
- at home receiving disability supports (2).

Figure 5.11: Summary of responses to 'What is your child doing now?'



In their written comments, many parent/guardian respondents expressed a desire for more support from their school in planning for their child's future. They want their children to be able to access both post-secondary education and fulfilling employment:

My child can do the vocational 1 program and get her certificate, but she wants to go to college to get her diploma in Arts program [...] Hope the school understands her interest for her future and work on it. (Questionnaire, Current Group)

I think that more work should be done with the parents to ensure they understand what their child will need to continue on [to post-secondary education] after high-school. (Questionnaire, Former Group)

I do think Voc 1 should have an orientation for these types of [post-secondary] programs to help them understand what the next step should be. (Focus Group 1)

Need more info of planning for future. What are the next steps after high school? What are the opportunities for work with certificate? Is there any job placements or agencies that will work with ASD kids & get them jobs? (Questionnaire, Current Group)

I think it will be quite difficult to find meaningful employment and so any connections that the school can help put in place I think would be really appreciated. (Focus Group 2)

Key Finding 5.10 – Parent/Guardian Feedback About Post-Secondary Destinations

Parents wanted more support from their child’s school to help their child access post-secondary education and/or fulfilling employment.

Above all, parent/guardian respondents felt schools and families need to work together more effectively for the benefit of the students:

It’s not rocket science – deal with the parents, listen to them, work together as a team to figure out how best to work for each student. (Focus Group 2)

We need to remember that students with intellectual challenges take time to develop and grow, we cannot be sending them to school for the purpose of just providing babysitting but an enhanced educational learning experience that is truthful, where everyone works together to come up with the best plans to help the student grow and become the person he wants to be. (Questionnaire, Former Group)

Key Finding 5.11 – Parent/Guardian Feedback About Collaboration

Parents felt that schools and families need to work more effectively together for the benefit of the students.

6 Educator Feedback

Multiple data collection activities were developed for central and school-based educators and administrators to provide feedback on the Vocational 1 program including site visits, an online questionnaire, and interviews.

6.1 Site visits

In April 2024, two members of the research department visited each of the six schools with Vocational 1 programs to conduct a 90-minute focus group with the principal and/or vice-principal, the special education and guidance department heads, and 1 to 2 teachers and/or educational assistants (EAs) who teach students in Vocational 1.

Discussion topics included:

- Program structure and facilities
- Strengths and limitations of the Vocational 1 program
- Supports and challenges for students
- Supports and challenges for families
- Educator preparation and professional development.

The notes from the visits were later shared back with the school teams and they were invited to make any changes necessary to better capture the Vocational 1 experience at their school.

6.1.1 Program structure and facilities

Like mainstream high school students, students in Vocational 1 take four courses per semester. While most schools had students transition between rooms and teachers for their different courses, other smaller sites kept students in the same classroom for the full day, either with the same teacher or rotating teachers.

Schools with Vocational 1 programs are allocated teacher staffing based on an enrolment formula of 15 students per course section. This meant that schools with low Vocational 1 enrolment (17 to 33 students total) were limited in the range of courses they can offer. Students at smaller sites typically had no opportunities to choose their own courses. While these schools rotated the elective programming over a multi-year cycle (e.g. transportation technology one year, sewing the next year) to offer as many opportunities as possible, students still needed to take these courses all together. Smaller sites also used multi-level classes (e.g., a grade 9/10 class) to increase the variety of courses they could offer. In some cases, limited course options meant students repeated courses like Grade 12 English multiple times without being able to earn additional credits.

The structure of the program as a full-time special education placement limited opportunities for students to take regular classes. Students who may have had the ability to take regular classes in an area of interest (e.g., auto shop, music) could not always do so for credit, as their enrolment in a course effectively reduced its class size cap to 15 and put the school in a position of potentially having to reallocate a shared EA to support a single student.

Most Vocational 1 school sites have extensive facilities including kitchens, horticulture rooms, cosmetology studios, auto shops, and woodworking shops. West Credit additionally has a

childcare centre and a doggy daycare. Smaller sites struggled to fully use their school’s facilities, due to supervision needs and balancing the needs of multiple programs within the school. Schools also faced limitations to the size of classroom spaces for students who need flexible seating and movement breaks.

6.1.2 Program strengths and limitations

School staff were strongly committed to their Vocational 1 programs and did not want to see them phased out or dismantled. They felt that the key strength of the program was the presence of adults who genuinely cared for students and worked to help them feel accepted and integrated within the school community. By creating a supportive and nurturing environment, students were able to form authentic friendships, some for the first time in their school lives.

School staff felt the emphasis of the Vocational 1 program on social and life skills, in addition to academics, helped to prepare students for real-world interactions. They were able to be flexible in how they responded to student needs and interests and felt that many students left the program feeling more confident and capable, even if they were not always able to obtain immediate employment.

Strong collaboration between teachers and EAs enhanced the learning experience and made it possible to address students’ individual needs. Schools that made early connections with elementary feeder schools found that this helped to support students in their transition to high school. Some schools were also particularly strong in their ability to collaborate internally to share resources and best practices.

Key Finding 6.1 – Educator Feedback About Vocational 1 Program Strengths

According to staff at schools with Vocational 1 programs, program strengths included: caring adults who create a supportive and nurturing environment, emphasis on social and life skills, and strong collaboration between teachers and EAs.

Limitation: Lack of curriculum

School staff shared that the lack of clear expectations and curriculum support documents presented a major barrier to program consistency both within and between school sites. They expressed that the expectation that students should achieve 14 credits was not supported by any centrally approved curriculum documents, expectations, or success criteria. This lack of structure contributed to inconsistencies in teaching and assessment practices and a general sense of insecurity among staff, who didn’t feel they could take risks in their teaching without clear direction.

School staff felt that holistic curriculum documents that outlined the program’s purpose, specific goals, and teaching strategies were needed. These documents should provide guidance on course content, examples of effective teaching methods, and resources that support cross-curricular

connections. Educators felt that an online platform to access course-specific lesson plans, resources, and best practices would foster collaboration and consistency across schools. They felt that parents would appreciate access to this platform, both to understand their child’s progress and to reinforce their learning at home.

School staff also felt that a standardized transition portfolio that documented student skills and achievements would help educators track progress and prepare students for future opportunities. This could also be shared with parents to help them understand the possible progression pathways for their child. Some educators also questioned whether the whole Vocational 1 program should be reoriented around student abilities, rather than continue to be age-based.

Key Finding 6.2 – Educator Feedback About Lack of Curriculum

The lack of clear expectations and curriculum support documents has been a major barrier to program consistency both within and between school sites.

Limitation: Staffing

School administrators faced many challenges with staffing Vocational 1 courses. As Vocational 1 courses are offered for credit, teachers require subject qualifications (e.g., Math, Science, English), but not necessarily special education qualifications. This meant that interested and dedicated Vocational 1 teachers on temporary assignments (i.e., LTOs) could not always be retained at the school due to seniority-based staffing rules. Administrators wanted more flexibility to be able to staff Vocational 1 classes with teachers with an interest and aptitude for special education: “staff first, and staff intentionally”.

School administrators shared that there was a lot of fear and stigma around Vocational 1 teaching and that not all teachers were willing to teach these courses. In schools where there was a lack of whole-school buy-in for the program, this created additional pressures on dedicated staff and contributed to high burnout and turnover rates. Schools wanted to see enhanced teacher professional development and support to be able to build a system-wide culture of understanding and appreciation for the unique strengths and learning needs of students in Vocational 1.

There were also challenges with EA staffing. As schools with Vocational 1 programs were only allocated 1 or 2 EAs for the whole school, they often had to draw on EA support allocated to the ASD Resource program which provides 1 EA for every 6 students. Individual students may be granted EA support for specific physical and personal care needs, but there are currently no provisions for allocating additional EAs to support students’ social, adaptive, and behavioural needs. Additionally, many schools faced daily gaps in EA coverage and often had to resort to asking lunchroom supervisors to fill in on an emergency basis.

Key Finding 6.3 – Administrator Feedback About Staffing

Administrators wanted more flexibility to be able to staff Vocational 1 classes with teachers with an interest and aptitude for special education. They felt that the complex needs of students were not being accounted for in staffing allocations, both in terms of number of sections and educational assistant support.

Limitation: Providing co-op and experiential learning opportunities

School staff recognized the importance of co-op and experiential learning opportunities for building life skills, independence, and job-readiness. They wanted to offer dedicated programs for all eligible students in Years 5 to 7 that progressed along a continuum from opportunities in the building, community outings as a class, and supervised small-group co-op experiences at local businesses, but faced many barriers. Some schools had limited or no access to public transportation and/or limited connections to local business or other organizations willing to receive students. Small groups of students couldn't be supported outside of school if it would create supervision gaps for other students left in the building. Students with mobility needs faced additional barriers. As a result, many sites had to reduce the number of co-op periods, reduce the frequency of outings, or rely exclusively on in-house co-op opportunities (e.g., coffee carts, cafeteria, library, gardening) to meet these needs. Some schools were having to cancel co-op periods entirely due to declining staffing.

School administrators wanted staffing and transportation funding formulas to be adjusted to account for these needs and more central support to develop intentional partnerships and working agreements with local businesses and industries to support placement opportunities.

Key Finding 6.4 – Educator Feedback About Co-op and Experiential Learning

Schools faced challenges in being able to provide robust co-op and experiential learning opportunities due to multiple factors including staffing, access to transportation, and specific student needs.

Limitation: Phasing out of the Vocational 2 program

As of the 2023-2024 school year, 5 of the 6 schools with Vocational 1 programs continued to offer Vocational 2 programming for students in grades 11 and 12. The other school had been preparing to receive a Vocational 2 program in the year that it closed to grade 9 entry. In 2024-2025, Vocational 2 programming will be available for students in grade 12 only.

School staff shared that the phasing out of the Vocational 2 program was having a 'devastating' and 'disastrous' impact on students in Vocational 1 and their families. Vocational 2 previously acted as a 'bridge' or 'stepping stone' for students to transition to an OSSD pathway in small classes with

access to EA support. All school sites were now struggling with how to effectively support students who were experiencing academic success in the Vocational 1 program. Whereas previously, students could have trialed and then transitioned to Vocational 2, their options now were to remain in Vocational 1 or return to their home school to take regular classes with little to no EA support. School staff felt that the academic and support gap between these options was a ‘huge leap’ that was not realistic to expect of students who often continued to have gaps in their social and adaptive skills.

As the Vocational 1 program is based on 0.5 credit courses, students who were ready to transition out of the program also faced barriers in achieving the required credits for an OSSD. Their options were to take courses in much larger classes with younger students, take classes in summer school or through independent study, and/or give up opportunities for electives in areas of interest to attend bridging programs. They also had to give up access to transportation and/or leave an environment where they had friends and were comfortable. Consequently, students in these situations tended to remain in Vocational 1. Staff observed that the lack of academic challenge and opportunity were contributing to student boredom, dissatisfaction, and behavioural difficulties. They felt that students were considerably more isolated and limited now and wanted guidance on how to empower students to gain the skills they need for life and work beyond Vocational 1.

The loss of the Vocational 2 program also had a negative impact on the variety of courses and learning opportunities schools could offer for students in Vocational 1, as fewer enrolled students reduced the schools’ overall staff allocations.

Key Finding 6.5 – Administrator Feedback About Phasing Out of Vocational 2

Administrators wanted guidance on available pathways for students who have progressed academically beyond Vocational 1 but may not yet be ready for mainstream classes.

6.1.3 Supports and challenges for students

School staff felt that the Vocational 1 program fostered a strong sense of belonging amongst students and that their social relationships with each other and with mainstream students were generally supportive. All schools offered extra-curricular activities that were open to all students, though Vocational 1 student participation in before or after school activities was limited as most students are bussed. Students in Vocational 1 had opportunities to participate in lunchtime activities like gaming, anime, affinity clubs (GSAs/BSAs), band/choir, and karaoke. Larger sites also had opportunities for students to participate in sports teams and field trips.

School staff shared that many students in Vocational 1 struggled with the transition from grade 8 to grade 9. Students who came from small, contained classrooms in elementary school found the loud, busy high school environment to be particularly overwhelming. They also struggled with curriculum expectations and sitting in the classroom for long periods. Compared to mainstream students, there was a greater need for staff to help students to navigate their frustrations and

regulate their emotions. School staff also shared they faced challenges addressing excessive technology use and communicating with students around disciplinary issues.

Staff across schools reported that the students coming into the program in the last two years had much higher adaptive functioning needs than in previous cohorts. Whereas the goal is for students in Vocational 1 to be able to transition between classes independently, and have freedom at lunchtime, multiple schools shared that they needed to provide all-day supervision to some students to keep them safe. These needs also limited the type and frequency of activities that could be done in small groups, or outside the school. In contrast, some older students wanted more independence and freedom than the program could offer and sometimes displayed behavioural challenges when these desires were not met.

Schools offered an open-door policy to allow students to seek help from trusted adults when needed. Resource rooms, contact rooms, and sensory spaces at schools were accessed often. Schools faced challenges, however, in how effectively they could respond to the diversity of student needs with limited staff and resources. They also commented about the lack of accessibility and general consideration for Vocational 1 in centrally-supported student initiatives (e.g., learning about consent culture, system surveys like the Student Census).

Key Finding 6.6 – Educator Feedback About Supports and Challenges for Students

School staff reported that students in Vocational 1 have a strong sense of belonging within the program, though bussing limits their opportunities to participate in extracurricular activities with mainstream students. Many students struggle with the transition from grade 8 to grade 9 and students' adaptive functioning needs have increased in recent years. The needs of students in Vocational 1 are not considered in centrally-supported student initiatives.

6.1.4 Supports and challenges for families

School staff generally felt that they had good communication with families around initial Vocational 1 placement. They welcomed prospective students and families to tour their schools, meet the staff, and get an overview of the Vocational 1 program and school facilities before making their placement decisions, and to attend transition meetings before the school year started. They made efforts to engage all parents in the placement and annual review process and to tailor the program to family and student needs and goals as much as possible.

Day-to-day communication was facilitated by sharing contact information for administrators and teachers with families and communicating regularly through multiple channels (e.g., email, phone calls, Google Classroom). They noted the importance of sharing students' small wins as well as reaching out promptly to resolve any issues. They felt most parents were mainly concerned about their children's well-being and safety and that they were mostly satisfied with how these were being addressed. Challenges included not having resources available in multiple languages and meeting the needs of newcomer families who were navigating an entirely new education system.

Schools held events to bring families into the school including information nights, funding application nights, and family fun nights. They acknowledged that some families faced barriers to their participation in these events including transportation, employment responsibilities, and language needs.

School staff also shared that there were a lot of difficult conversations with parents. They recognized that all parents wanted their children to attain their best potential but also felt that some parents struggled to accept the reality of their children’s disabilities. Conversations about what was possible and not possible in terms of their academic progress could thus be challenging. Families differed in their understanding of the OSSC and available post-secondary options. Schools had few options to provide for families who wanted their children to progress academically to attend specific college or university programs.

School staff also acknowledged that there were significant gaps in how transition supports were provided. With little central support over the past few years, this role now fell to the special education department heads. While they did what they could to share information with families about disability supports like Developmental Services Ontario (DSO) and the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP), resources in the community, and day programs, they felt limited in their ability to respond to students’ and families’ unique needs. They wanted to see central transition supports reinstated and strengthened, and more work done to improve employment opportunities for students.

Key Finding 6.7– Educator Feedback About Supports and Challenges for Families

School staff reported good communication with families around placement and daily routines, while conversations around academic progress and post-secondary pathways were more difficult. They noted a particular need for strengthened central transition supports.

6.1.5 Educator preparation and professional development

Educators who work in the Vocational 1 program shared that they had found learning about student portraits helped to prepare them to teach. This relied on having the elementary feeder schools give a fulsome presentation about students as well as having conversations with parents and students about their goals. One school shared that they maintain a database for all students where teachers could retrieve their portraits to get a better understanding of student needs. Other schools only provided this information when there was a specific need.

Teachers with special education training didn’t always feel adequately prepared to work with students in Vocational 1. They wanted more training about different kinds of disabilities that may present in a Vocational 1 classroom and how to recognize and address situations where students were experiencing dysregulation and/or exhibiting challenging behaviours. They expressed the importance of EAs receiving this kind of training as well to be able to respond sensitively to students and help de-escalate situations if needed. Teachers in Vocational 1 also wanted to learn

more about how to build students' confidence as learners and how to meet students where they are, both cognitively and emotionally, and still hold high expectations for them.

Teachers who were subject specialists found it challenging to reframe their teaching approach and expectations to meet the needs of students in Vocational 1. They felt they benefitted from opportunities to receive mentoring from more experienced teachers and to reach out to other staff for resources and support. While larger sites offered many opportunities for this kind of internal collaboration, teachers at smaller sites felt much more isolated.

School staff shared there were few opportunities for centrally supported networking or collaboration across sites. They expressed a desire to revive the VOC1 network where teachers across different schools would get together to navigate through challenges and share best practices and resources. They felt that providing release time for department heads and teachers to get together at a central location would enhance the consistency and effectiveness of the program and signal that the board valued Vocational 1 as much as other programs like the International Baccalaureate (IB) program.

Teachers in Vocational 1 struggled to find relevance for their students in the ways that board-led professional learning was presented (e.g., Empowering Modern Learners) and felt that any centrally-led professional learning should be tailored to their unique needs. They felt there was an overemphasis on having all students attain college and university pathways and wanted to see the workplace recognized as equally viable and valuable pathway for students.

Key Finding 6.8 – Educator Preparation and Professional Development

Educators wanted more training and professional development opportunities to meet students' unique academic and social/emotional needs. They shared that learning about student portraits helped prepare them to teach and particularly valued opportunities for mentorship and collaboration both within and between Vocational 1 school sites. They did not feel that board-led professional learning was relevant for their students.

6.2 Questionnaire

An online questionnaire was developed in consultation with the central special education department. The questionnaire included questions on staff experience and training, understanding of Vocational 1 learners and program pathways, strengths and limitations of the Vocational 1 program, feelings of preparedness and support, and suggested changes to better support students in Vocational 1 and their families.

The questionnaire was implemented online using the Qualtrics survey platform and distributed to the principals at the six schools with Vocational 1 programs in May 2024 to be shared with staff who either currently or had previously worked in the Vocational 1 program. Responses were

collected anonymously so that they could not be traced back to either individual educators or schools.

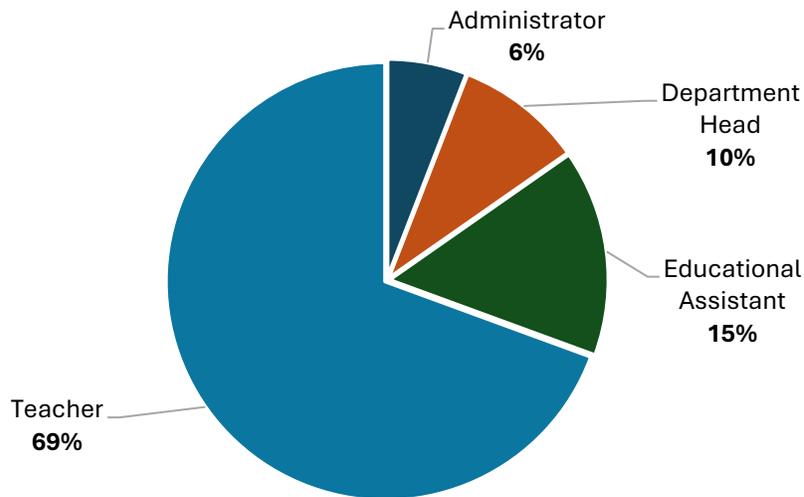
6.2.1 Data analysis

Frequencies and percentages were tabulated for all closed response questions (i.e., multiple choice and agreement questions). Written comments from open response questions were analyzed qualitatively to identify common themes. Quotes shared in the following sections reflect sentiments that were shared by multiple educator respondents.

6.2.2 Respondent characteristics

A total of 85 responses were received. As shown in Figure 6.1, the majority of responses (69%, 59) were received from teachers.

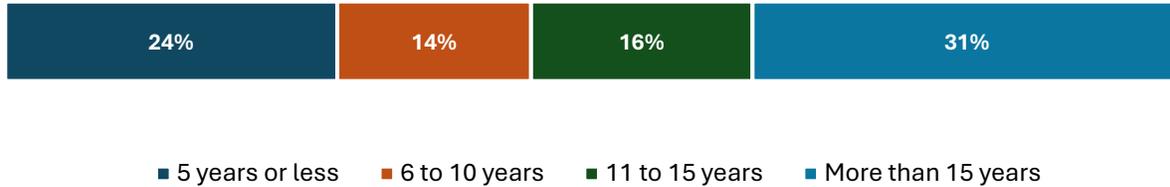
Figure 6.1: Educators' current roles in the Vocational 1 program (n = 85)



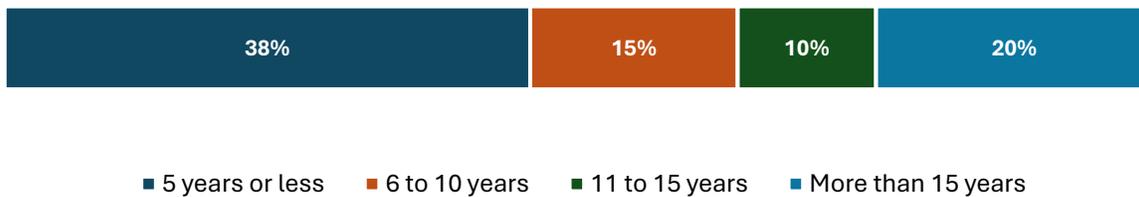
Educator respondents reported varying amounts of experience (Figure 6.2). The largest categories of educator respondents were those that had been in their current role for more than 15 years (36%, 31) and those who had been working in the Vocational 1 program for 5 years or less (46%, 38).

Figure 6.2: Educators' reported years of experience

A. Years working in current role (n = 85)



B. Years working in the Vocational 1 program (n = 83)



All educator respondents except for educational assistants were asked about which Special Education Additional Qualification (AQ) courses they had completed.¹ Special Education is offered as a three-session AQ program with Part 1, Part 2, and Specialist courses. A Special Education for Administrators AQ is offered separately.

As shown in Table 6.1, the majority of teachers, department heads, and administrators had completed at least one Special Education AQ (83%, 58). A greater percentage of department head/administrator respondents held Specialist level qualifications (69%) than did teacher respondents (37%). Responses for the Other category included related AQs such as *Teaching Students with Behavioural Needs* and *Teaching Students with Communication Needs (Autism Spectrum Disorders)*.

¹ [Additional Qualifications](#) (AQs) are accredited professional development courses that are offered for Ontario certified teachers after they complete their initial certification. Teachers typically pay fees to enroll in these courses and complete them outside of school hours.

Table 6.1: Special education Additional Qualifications of teachers, department heads, and administrators (n = 70)

Additional Qualification (AQ)	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
None	12	17%
Special Education, Part 1	56	80%
Special Education, Part 2	34	49%
Special Education, Specialist	30	43%
Special Education for Administrators	1	1%
Other	4	6%

Key Finding 6.9 – Educator Qualifications

83% of teachers, department heads, and administrators who responded to the online questionnaire had taken at least one Special Education Additional Qualification (AQ) course.

Educator respondents were presented with a series of statements about their understanding and perceptions of the Vocational 1 program. As shown in Table 7.2, they largely agreed that they understood the cognitive profiles of Vocational 1 learners (93%), understood OSSC requirements (83%) and post-secondary pathways (80%), and had effective strategies for teaching and/or supporting students in Vocational 1 (94%). Nearly half (47%) of educator respondents, however, disagreed with the statement ‘I believe that the Board values the Vocational 1 program’.

Table 6.2: Educators’ understanding and perceptions of the Vocational 1 program

Statement	N	Agree/ Strongly agree	Don’t agree or disagree	Disagree/ Strongly disagree
I understand the cognitive profiles of the exceptional learners in the Vocational 1 program	83	93%	7%	-
I have effective strategies for teaching and/or supporting students in Vocational 1*	78	94%	5%	1%
I understand the post-secondary pathways of students in Vocational 1	81	80%	11%	9%
I know the requirements of the Ontario Secondary School Certificate (OSSC)	83	83%	10%	7%
I believe that the Board values the Vocational 1 program	83	25%	28%	47%

Note. *This statement was not presented to Administrator respondents.

Key Finding 6.10 – Educators’ Understanding of the Vocational 1 Program

80-94% of educator respondents agreed that they understood the Vocational 1 program and pathway, and knew how to support students, but only 25% agreed that the Board values the program.

6.2.3 Program strengths and limitations

Educator respondents identified several strengths of the Vocational 1 program. They felt the small class sizes provided the opportunity to ‘meet students where they are’ and deliver tailored, appropriately-paced instruction that incorporated life skills and practical hands-on learning, as well as functional literacy and mathematics. They felt the Vocational 1 program offered varied opportunities for students to experience success and prepare for independent living and employment.

Small class sizes allow students to do more hands-on learning activities. The math and reading levels are adjusted to their level. More time is allowed to be dedicated to life skills and social behaviour that can enable them employable. (Teacher)

The program allows staff to tailor programming to better suit student needs to help them grow and experience success. Smaller class sizes provide more face time. (Teacher)

Allowing teachers the ability to meet students where they are to assist them acquiring the skills required to function as independently as possible in the home and in society.
(Teacher)

Caring and supportive staff were able to provide personalized support to address each student's individual needs in a way that would not be attainable in a mainstream/destreamed course environment.

Staff understand students' cognitive abilities and disabilities and respond appropriately to their needs. (Teacher)

The Voc 1 program provides our most vulnerable students opportunities to learn educational, life based and employment skills in a safe and supportive environment.
(Department Head)

The appropriate pace and opportunities to show success with their learning, which would otherwise be taken away from students at the destreamed level. (Teacher)

The opportunity to take a variety of courses and earn a certificate was seen as a way to provide a 'regular' high school experience similar to their neurotypical peers.

Offering an Ontario Certificate rather than a certificate of completion and a more typical high school experience than a contained program. (Teacher)

In terms of the student experience, educator respondents felt that students in Vocational 1 being placed together with peers who were at the same academic and social level helped to create a safe space where students felt valued and accepted. In this supportive community, students were able to form meaningful friendships with peers who shared similar learning challenges.

Opportunity for students to learn and grow with others who are at the same level as themselves. It offers the social, emotional and academic support that these students need.
(Teacher)

Having classes of students with the same social awareness and academic profiles allows for true friendships to emerge with peers. (Teacher)

Educator respondents also felt that the Vocational 1 program faced numerous limitations. There were consistent concerns raised about insufficient funding for effective program staffing and delivery. There were also many comments related to physical resource shortages including lack of educational materials, transportation, and facilities for hands-on learning:

Sections keep getting cut and we can't run the program as it was intended to run. This should be a program that is funded differently and appropriately to meet the needs of the students. (Department Head)

There is not enough programming/money/trained staff to support students in actual vocational learning environments like shops, green houses, kitchens etc. (Teacher)

The availability of educational assistants and trained staff was not sufficient to meet the diverse needs of students in Vocational 1. The lack of training and professional development specific to the

Vocational 1 program and learner portrait impacted their ability to effectively teach and support students:

Not enough staff available to support student daily needs, not enough training for teachers and EAs in the classroom. (Teacher)

The class sizes are too large to meet the complex learner portraits. (Department Head)

Not enough support staff for Voc. 1 employability programs. (Teacher)

Often times, teachers are placed into vocational level 1 courses without an understanding of the learners they are teaching or without a starting point on how best to serve them. (Teacher)

Educator respondents felt that there was at times a mismatch between student needs and program placement, which both impacted individual students' learning trajectories and the overall learning environment:

Some students who have higher needs (and may benefit from being in a DD program) are not being supported adequately because we don't have the resources for it. (Educational Assistant)

Some students are misplaced and some have strengths in one area but not another. The system is not structured to allow students to be in multiple levels which is a drawback. (Teacher)

Recently, there have been many more students who were recommended to DD programs due to impulse control/violence issues. This has made it extremely difficult to manage those behaviours while at the same time trying to deliver a quality program. (Teacher)

They thought the program should place more emphasis on life and work-related skills and offer more experiential learning opportunities. They also identified limited course options, long class times, and a lack of consistency in how student skills and abilities are assessed as limitations:

There need to be more courses that focus on developing independence and practical work-related skills that are specifically vocational level 1. (Teacher)

[A main limitation is] lack of hands on/life skill opportunities for the students. (Educational Assistant)

There has been a lack of clear direction on implementing curriculum. [...] In some ways, the curriculum limits us, for example, in geography there are particular expectations we should be structuring the course around but what might be more important is more life skills like learning the streets around us, and learning to take the bus. (Teacher)

Insufficient support for managing student behaviour was also a concern:

More EA support as the voc 1 classes are now almost at capacity and have students with higher behavioural needs and educational needs. (Department Head)

More support required in terms of TA and behavioural support for the increasing aggression and emotional dysregulation of students. Violence in the classroom should not be the norm. (Teacher)

Better supports and resources are needed to assist students and their families in the transition to life after high school.

Transitioning out of high school comes with lots of paperwork. There are forms, interviews that parents often need help with - ODSP, DSO etc. [...] There isn't enough time for staff to help parents fill out transition forms especially if you have many students applying. (Teacher)

Despite these challenges, educators felt strongly that the Vocational 1 program provided a necessary and valuable educational pathway for students with specific academic needs. They expressed that they found their work with students in Vocational 1 to be deeply rewarding.

The social-emotional benefits in a Vocational program are unparalleled elsewhere. Friendships, sports, proms, trips and academics that best suit the students allow for growth and confidence that can't be matched in a destreamed program. Communities, parents, colleagues need to celebrate the value in Voc. 1 students graduating to the world of community living and/or work (volunteer or paid). (Teacher)

When [students are] trained well and given the proper funding to provide resources, they can be highly effective and employable. [...] Every day is a new learning experience for you and for them. And if you haven't taught them and worked with them, you really have no idea how to plan for them. (Teacher)

Students in the Vocational 1 program are some of the most inspiring young adults I have ever worked with/met. I have learned so much from them and am a better educator and person because of them. (Teacher)

Key Finding 6.11 – Educators’ Feedback about Program Strengths and Limitations

Strengths included: small class sizes, varied opportunities for success, caring staff, safety and belonging, and a ‘regular’ high school experience.

Limitations included: insufficient funding, lack of EAs to meet diverse student needs, limited course options and experiential learning opportunities, and need for better transition support.

6.2.4 Educator strengths

Educator respondents were also asked about the strengths they bring to their roles. Figure 6.3 presents a word cloud of their responses. Patience (24) and experience (22) in addressing students' diverse and complex needs were frequently mentioned.

Figure 6.3: Word cloud of educator responses to 'What is a strength of yours that supports you in your role in the Vocational 1 program?' (n = 67)



6.2.5 Educators’ feelings of preparedness and support

As shown in Table 6.3, more educator respondents agreed that they felt prepared to work in the Vocational 1 program (80%, 57) than that they felt supported by their school (64%, 45). There was a notable gap in their feelings of support from the Board, with only 18% (12) of educator respondents agreeing to this statement. Administrators were asked about their feelings of preparedness and support to supervise the Vocational 1 program. While their data are not reported directly due to a small sample size (n = 4), their overall response pattern was similar.

Table 6.3: Teacher, EA, and department head feelings of preparedness and support

Statement	N	Agree/ Strongly agree	Don't agree or disagree	Disagree/ Strongly disagree
I feel prepared to work in the Vocational 1 program	71	80%	10%	10%
I feel supported by my school to work in the Vocational 1 program	70	64%	21%	14%
I feel supported by the Board to work in the Vocational 1 program	67	18%	25%	57%

Educator respondents were asked what they would need to make them feel more prepared and supported. Table 6.4 presents the main themes of their written comments.

Table 6.4: Main themes of educator responses on what they need to feel prepared and supported

Theme	Description and Examples
Resource Allocation and Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased funding to support the program, including hands-on learning materials, sensory items, technology, transportation, and physical space improvements. • Additional sections for guidance, monitoring, and co-op.
Professional Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tailored professional development that focuses on classroom strategies and Vocational 1 student needs. • More opportunities to connect and collaborate with colleagues from other schools. • More training for educational assistants to understand specific learning needs and help manage behavioural issues.
Staffing and Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge, understanding and support from administrators about the specific challenges and needs of students in Vocational 1. • More consistent staffing of educational assistants to improve student support. • Better compensation and safer working conditions for educational assistants.
Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of a more formal curriculum that includes clear learning goals, assessment criteria, and hands-on activities. • Access to a shared bank of templates and classroom-ready resources to enhance consistency of curriculum delivery and assessment.
Communication and Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed student profiles and background information should be shared with all educators who work with students in Vocational 1. • Clearer policies, definitions, and resources to inform program placement. • More multidisciplinary meetings and collaborative planning involving all relevant staff. • Improved access to community partners and post-secondary transition supports related to social services and employment.
Program Sustainability and Advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reassurance from the Board about the future and sustainability of Vocational 1, particularly in light of the phasing out of the Vocational 2 program. • More consideration of the needs of students in Vocational 1 in board-level decision making.

Key Finding 6.12 – What Educators Need to Feel Prepared and Supported

Only 18% of educators felt supported by the Board to work in the Vocational 1 program.

The main themes of what they said they needed to feel more prepared and supported were: Resource Allocation and Funding; Professional Development; Staffing and Support; Curriculum; Communication and Collaboration; and Program Sustainability and Advocacy.

6.2.6 Suggested program changes to support families

Educator respondents made several suggestions to enhance the Vocational 1 program experience for families by improving both program communication and access to community supports.

Program communication

Effective communication between schools and families is critical to ensure families are well-informed and can actively support their child's education. Educator respondents suggested that program communication could be improved through:

- **Consistent Messaging:** Centrally developed workshops, information sessions, and accessible resources were suggested to help families understand the program, transitions, and available supports. Educators felt that families also need to be informed about post-secondary pathways early on and regularly.
- **Realistic Expectations:** Educators identified a need for honest discussions about a child's strengths and limitations and the realistic outcomes of the program to manage family expectations.
- **Organizational Tools:** Implementing consistent systems, such as binders or communication books, to track student work and homework were suggested to help reinforce routines and improve home-school communication.

Access to community supports

Educator respondents identified that families often struggle with finding and accessing community support due to bureaucratic challenges. They recommended enhancing connections between schools and community service providers in the following ways:

- **Transition Resources:** Educators felt there was a need for clear and consistent guidance for families on post-secondary transitions including practical support for applications, funding, and access to community services.
- **Structured Events:** Opportunities for families to meet with educators and community service providers to understand available supports and pathways were seen as valuable.

- **Addressing Specific Challenges:** Educators recommended having supports available to address specific needs such as navigating the education system as newcomers to Canada or accessing supports to address food insecurity.

Key Finding 6.13 – Educators’ Suggested Changes to Support Families

Educators suggested that improving program communication and enhancing connections between schools and community service providers would enhance the Vocational 1 program experience for families.

6.3 Central staff interviews

Interviews were conducted with three key informants in the special education department in June 2024 to gather feedback on the Vocational 1 program from a central board perspective. Central staff identified several areas in need of support including placement practices, programming, professional development, and collaboration with elementary schools.

6.3.1 Placement practices

Central staff identified several issues with Vocational 1 placement practices that contributed to the high variability of student abilities and needs. The main criterion for Vocational 1 placement is typically a cognitive assessment score between the 1st and 5th percentile, as this aligns with eligibility criteria for support from Developmental Services Ontario (DSO). The phasing out of Vocational 2 has led to students with higher cognitive assessment scores being offered Vocational 1 placement based on family wishes for more support than available in a mainstream environment. Additionally, students with lower cognitive assessment scores were considered for Vocational 1 placement if other assessments demonstrated they could work at a Grade 1 to 3 level. The backlog in psychoeducational assessments meant that some students with an Autism exceptionality were being offered placement in Vocational 1 without a formal cognitive assessment.

Central staff shared that while adaptive functioning needs (e.g., social skills, independence, personal care, behaviour) are also considered in placement decisions, there are currently no structures in place to provide additional educational assistant support for students with high adaptive functioning needs.

Different processes for different exceptionalities (e.g., central vs school-based IPRC meetings) were also contributing to a lack of consistent messaging and decision making about Vocational 1 program placement.

6.3.2 Programming

Central staff recognized the need to transform the Vocational 1 program to increase student opportunities and enhance system accountability. They felt the program should continue to be structured around 0.5 credit courses towards an OSSC, but also that there was a need to be more explicit about the learning expectations and assessment criteria for these courses. The work being done to develop curricular maps, resources, and a skills continuum for compulsory courses should

include open-ended learning goals, skills, and tasks to balance the needs for both overall program structure and flexibility to accommodate individual students.

Central staff recognized the challenges faced by smaller school sites in offering co-op experiences for students in Years 5 to 7 due to limitations in available course sections, community connections, and transportation funding. There were differing viewpoints as to whether sites should be consolidated to offer students a more robust, but still self-contained, program or expanded to allow students to have more integration opportunities within their home school.

Central staff also acknowledged that with the phasing out of Vocational 2, there were currently no structures in place for students to transition to an OSSD pathway in a supported environment.

6.3.3 Professional development

Central staff felt there was a lack of consistent understanding of the Vocational 1 student portrait, particularly amongst new educators. They recommended that all educators who work in the Vocational 1 program should have access to professional development opportunities to learn about the spectrum of abilities and support needs associated with Mild intellectual disability and Autism, and evidence-based strategies for providing academic, social/emotional, and behavioural supports.

Central staff also emphasized the importance of protected opportunities for school teams to review and adapt the newly-developed curricular materials to meet the needs of their school and students. While there are regular meetings for administrators of Vocational 1 programs, this time was mostly spent on delivering updates rather than working to develop consistent practices. They felt that more cross-site collaboration opportunities for educators, special education department heads, and administrators would enhance the consistency of program delivery.

The lack of consistent staffing of centrally-based transition facilitators to support students and families meant school-based staff had to take on this function without the necessary support or training. In addition to creating extra workload, staff felt that this affected the morale of educators by signaling that the board didn't value this kind of support.

6.3.4 Collaboration with elementary schools

Central staff perceived that there was a widespread lack of knowledge and understanding about the Vocational 1 program as a possible secondary pathway for students. They felt that elementary school administrators, special education teachers, and guidance counsellors need more consistent and comprehensive information about the program to effectively support students and families. Discussions about secondary pathways need to begin as early as grade 5 to ensure that families can make informed decisions.

Central staff also noted the need to review the use of curricular modifications in elementary grades, as this has a direct impact on the eligible secondary pathways for students. It is important to ensure that opportunities for accommodations, early intervention, and supports have been pursued first and that families are fully informed about how curricular modifications will affect access to secondary and post-secondary pathways.

Key Finding 6.14 – Central Special Education Staff Perspectives

Central special education staff affirmed the need for system-wide changes in placement practices, programming, professional development, and collaboration with elementary schools.

7 List of Key Findings

7.1 Literature review

2.1 – Context: Students with autism, intellectual disability, and other developmental disabilities have been historically underserved in public education. Both in Canada and globally, there are persistent gaps in their education, employment, and income attainment.

2.2 – Type of Education Setting: While inclusive education settings are associated with better outcomes for all students, most school-age students with intellectual disabilities in North American and European countries continue to be educated separately from their peers for most of their school day.

2.3 – Overrepresentation of Students Marginalized by Institutional Systems: Data from multiple Ontario school boards show that students marginalized by institutional systems are overrepresented in self-contained special education settings.

2.4 – Curriculum: A curriculum for students with intellectual disabilities should address: academic skills; daily living skills; job and community skills; self-determination skills (e.g., choice making, self-management, problem solving); and social and communication skills. Evidence-based teaching strategies and interventions exist for each of these areas of focus.

2.5 – Alternative Curricula: Alternative curricula can be used to address specific student needs but are difficult to evaluate because they lack consistent implementation and assessment standards.

2.6 – Preparation for Employment: Effectively preparing students with intellectual disabilities for employment requires strong collaboration between students, families, schools, and employers.

2.7 – Educator Preparation and Support: Successful inclusive education requires supporting educators as well as students. This includes initial training and professional development, as well as supportive school administration and climate.

2.8 – Partnerships with Families: Families of students with intellectual disabilities struggle to achieve equal voice in decision making about their children’s educational opportunities. Strong school leadership at all levels is needed to achieve true partnership to equitably meet student needs.

2.9 – Additional Equity Challenges: Additional equity challenges for supporting students with intellectual disabilities include special education identification and transportation.

7.2 Program characteristics

3.1 – Exceptionality Designations: Consistent with broader system trends, there was an increase in the proportion of students in Vocational 1 identified with a Mild intellectual disability exceptionality (46% to 54%) and/or an Autism exceptionality (25% to 40%) between 2015 and 2023. The proportion of students in Vocational 1 identified with a Language impairment exceptionality decreased (43% to 35%) during this period.

3.2 – Enrolment Trends: In 2023-2024, there were considerable differences in the program size (17 to 172) and percentage of total school enrolment (2% to 43%) across the six schools with Vocational 1 programs.

3.3 – K-8 Practices: 80% of students enrolled in Vocational 1 in 2023-2024 had a full-time special education placement in a small class in grade 8.

3.4 – Graduation Outcomes: Across four cohorts of students who started grade 9 between 2015 and 2018 and were enrolled in Vocational 1 at some point, 45% achieved an OSSC and 32% transferred to Vocational 2 and achieved an OSSD.

3.5 – Post-secondary Destinations: The post-secondary destinations of students formerly in Vocational 1 are mostly unknown.

3.6 – Post-secondary Education: Across four cohorts of students in Vocational 1 who graduated with an OSSC, only 3% were found to have applied, confirmed, and registered to an Ontario community college.

3.7 – Social Demographics: Students who self-identify as Indigenous; African, Black, and Afro-Caribbean; Gender Diverse; and/or 2SLGBQ+; and students living in areas with high socioeconomic vulnerability are overrepresented in Vocational 1 programming.

7.3 Jurisdictional scan

4.1 – Jurisdictional Scan: PDSB can learn from other school boards' practices in the areas of employment skills training, consistency of program delivery, communication with families, and professional development offerings for educators.

7.4 Student and parent/guardian feedback

5.1 – Students' Feelings About School: 70% of students in Vocational 1 selected 'My friends/social time' as one of the things they liked best about school. 52% of students selected 'I don't get to choose what I learn' as one of the things they liked least about school.

5.2 – What Students Want to Do After High School: The majority (73%) of students in Vocational 1 wanted to work after they leave high school. They have a wide variety of career aspirations. Over half (56%) said they would like to do more school and 11% specifically mentioned college.

5.3 - How Schools Can Help Students Achieve Their Goals: Over half (53%) of students in Vocational 1 selected ‘Help me to volunteer or get work experience’ as something schools could do to help them achieve their goals.

5.4 – Parent/Guardian Feedback About the Placement Process: Parents shared mixed experiences of the Vocational 1 placement process. Several commented about the lack of comprehensive information about the program structure and intended outcome and how the placement was falsely presented as a ‘choice’.

5.5 – Parent/Guardian Feedback About the Vocational 1 Program: Many parents felt the Vocational 1 program was beneficial for their child, though some said it was not meeting their expectations and/or had not helped their child. Only 30-36% agreed that it was academically challenging for their child. Parents felt there was a lack of suitable academic opportunities to replace the Vocational 2 program. Overall, parents wanted more personalization and choice to meet their children’s individual needs, as well as more co-op opportunities and career-oriented employment training.

5.6 – Parent/Guardian Feedback About Their Children’s School Experience: Some parents felt the Vocational 1 setting offered an important and necessary alternative to a mainstream school environment, while others wanted to see more integration opportunities. Most parents agreed that their child had a good school experience. They appreciated opportunities for their child to participate in extra-curricular activities and school performances. Some parents felt that schools didn't adequately consider their child's developmental level when responding to behavioural incidents.

5.7 - Parent/Guardian Feedback About Their School Experience: Parents wanted more communication about what their child was doing in class, a better understanding of their learning progress, and more effective use of their IEPs. Exam closures presented significant disruptions to the routines of students in Vocational 1 and their families.

5.8 – Parent/Guardian Feedback About Staff: Parents shared that staff were largely supportive and encouraging, but also that they sometimes lacked training to problem-solve effectively when issues arose. Some parents shared negative experiences they or their children had with staff.

5.9 – Parent/Guardian Feedback About Transportation: 88-94% of students in Vocational 1 take the bus to school. While most travel 30 minutes or less to get to school, there are 5-7% of students whose travel time was over 45 minutes each way. Bussing was seen as critical, but parents also noted that it interfered with students’ ability to participate in extra-curricular activities. Some students have experienced bullying on the bus.

5.10 – Parent/Guardian Feedback About Post-Secondary Destinations: Parents wanted more support from their child’s school to help their child access post-secondary education and/or fulfilling employment.

5.11 – Parent/Guardian Feedback About Collaboration: Parents felt that schools and families need to work more effectively together for the benefit of the students.

7.5 Educator feedback

6.1 – Educator Feedback About Vocational 1 Program Strengths: According to staff at schools with Vocational 1 programs, program strengths included: caring adults who create a supportive and nurturing environment, emphasis on social and life skills, and strong collaboration between teachers and EAs.

6.2 – Educator Feedback About Lack of Curriculum: The lack of clear expectations and curriculum support documents has been a major barrier to program consistency both within and between school sites.

6.3 – Administrator Feedback About Staffing: Administrators wanted more flexibility to be able to staff Vocational 1 classes with teachers with an interest and aptitude for special education. They felt that the complex needs of students were not being accounted for in staffing allocations, both in terms of number of sections and educational assistant support.

6.4 – Educator Feedback About Co-op and Experiential Learning: Schools faced challenges in being able to provide robust co-op and experiential learning opportunities due to multiple factors including staffing, access to transportation, and specific student needs.

6.5 – Administrator Feedback About Phasing Out of Vocational 2: Administrators wanted guidance on available pathways for students who have progressed academically beyond Vocational 1 but may not yet be ready for mainstream classes.

6.6 – Educator Feedback About Supports and Challenges for Students: School staff reported that students in Vocational 1 have a strong sense of belonging within the program, though bussing limits their opportunities to participate in extracurricular activities with mainstream students. Many students struggle with the transition from grade 8 to grade 9 and students' adaptive functioning needs have increased in recent years. The needs of students in Vocational 1 are not considered in centrally-supported student initiatives.

6.7 – Educator Feedback About Supports and Challenges for Families: School staff reported good communication with families around placement and daily routines, while conversations around academic progress and post-secondary pathways were more difficult. They noted a particular need for strengthened central transition supports.

6.8 – Educator Preparation and Professional Development: Educators wanted more training and professional development opportunities to meet students' unique academic and social/emotional needs. They shared that learning about student portraits helped prepare them to teach and particularly valued opportunities for mentorship and collaboration both within and between Vocational 1 school sites. They did not feel that board-led professional learning was relevant for their students.

6.9 – Educator Qualifications: 83% of teachers, department heads, and administrators who responded to the online questionnaire had taken at least one Special Education Additional Qualification (AQ) course.

6.10 – Educators’ Understanding of the Vocational 1 Program: 80-94% of educator respondents agreed that they understood the Vocational 1 program and pathway, and knew how to support students, but only 25% agreed that the Board values the program.

6.11 – Educators’ Feedback about Program Strengths and Limitations: Strengths included: small class sizes, varied opportunities for success, caring staff, safety and belonging, and a ‘regular’ high school experience. Limitations included: insufficient funding, lack of EAs to meet diverse student needs, limited course options and experiential learning opportunities, and need for better transition support.

6.12 – What Educators Need to Feel Prepared and Supported: Only 18% of educators felt supported by the Board to work in the Vocational 1 program. The main themes of what they said they needed to feel more prepared and supported were: Resource Allocation and Funding; Professional Development; Staffing and Support; Curriculum; Communication and Collaboration; and Program Sustainability and Advocacy.

6.13 – Educators’ Suggested Changes to Support Families: Educators suggested that improving program communication and enhancing connections between schools and community service providers would enhance the Vocational 1 program experience for families.

6.14 – Central Special Education Staff Perspectives: Central special education staff affirmed the need for system-wide changes in placement practices, programming, professional development, and collaboration with elementary schools.

8 Concurrent Activities

Several initiatives were undertaken at the same time as the program review to improve programming and pathway options for students in the Vocational 1 program.

8.1 Curriculum resource development

In February 2024, a Special Education Resource Teacher (SERT) was hired to create curricular support materials in collaboration with Vocational 1 staff. Multiple curriculum documents were examined for the required courses in the following subject areas: English, Math, Geography, History, Science, Exploring Technology, Integrated Arts, and Physical Education. Overall expectations were identified and compared between the different levels of curriculum such as destreamed, applied, open, and PDSB locally developed. Using the appropriate curriculum, knowledge of the Vocational 1 learning portrait, and program pathway goals; overarching learning goals for all OSSC compulsory subjects were created.

Collaboration sessions were then held at all Vocational 1 program sites between March and May 2024. A few teachers at each school, with different teaching specializations, were involved in brainstorming skills/tasks for each different overarching learning goal in all the OSSC compulsory subject areas. Eleven course maps were developed along with an accompanying guide to help teachers to effectively use these resources. The guide includes suggested best practices in the following areas: the importance of getting to know the student and family, how to utilize the staff support team, classroom structures and routines, as well as instructional, environmental, and assessment strategies.

The resources are currently undergoing final review and approval and will be shared with the system in early 2025.

8.2 External partnerships

In April 2024, the special education department initiated a partnership with Imagine Consultations (<https://www.imagineconsultations.com/>) to improve employment opportunities upon graduation for students who qualify for ODSP support. Two Vocational 1 school sites (West Credit S.S., Turner Fenton S.S.) are also partnering with the Ontario Restaurant Hotel & Motel Association (<https://www.orhma.com/>) to help locate inclusive employers to support expanded co-op opportunities in the hospitality industry for students with disabilities.

9 Core Principles and Recommendations

The review committee established the following core principles by consensus. They represent aspirational directions for the Vocational 1 program. Any program changes should move PDSB closer to fully exemplifying them.

9.1 Core principles

1. Students in Vocational 1 are recognized as individuals with unique identities, strengths, interests, and aspirations.
2. Co-op and other experiential learning opportunities are recognized as a core element of the Vocational 1 program. Students have opportunities to explore and prepare for multiple types of careers, including trades and entrepreneurship.
3. Vocational 1 is staffed by educators who are compassionate, caring, and skilled; who believe in the worth of each individual student; and who are committed to continuous learning.
4. Educators working in the Vocational 1 program hold high expectations of students and challenge them to progress academically and reach their full potential.
5. Partnership with parents/guardians is viewed as integral to student success. This is reflected in processes and practices for communicating about the program, making placement decisions, sharing progress, planning for transitions, and resolving conflicts.
6. Post-secondary transition planning is foundational to the Vocational 1 program. Students will be prepared to transition to post-secondary education, the workplace and/or the community depending on student/family goals.
7. Vocational 1 is affirmed as a valuable and necessary program by the Board, as reflected in the provision of curriculum resources, section and staffing allocations, and networking and professional development opportunities for educators.
8. The Board makes ongoing commitments to:
 - a. Reduce/eliminate disproportionate negative impacts on historically underserved student groups.
 - b. Improve academic and social integration and inclusion opportunities for students in Vocational 1 with mainstream students.

9.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings from the program review, the following 30 recommendations are made to strengthen the Vocational 1 program and increase post-secondary options for students. Multiple factors may impact the operationalization of these recommendations, including staffing processes, collective agreements, and financial and operational feasibility.

9.2.1 Placement

1. Improve communication and education about the Vocational 1 program by developing standardized communication materials to clearly explain the program and post-secondary options for:
 - a. prospective students and their families;
 - b. elementary and secondary special education teachers, guidance counsellors, and administrators. (Key Findings: 2.8, 4.1, 5.4, 6.7, 6.13)
2. Develop a student information form as part of the Vocational 1 placement process that captures strengths, interests, and post-secondary goals. Share with classroom teachers and update annually with students and their families as part of the course selection process. (Key Findings: 2.6, 2.8, 5.2, 5.5, 5.11, 6.8)
3. Consider centralizing the IPRC meeting for initial Vocational 1 placement for all students and ensuring the availability of a psychoeducational consultant to support clinical interpretation of cognitive and adaptive skill assessments. (Key Findings: 2.8, 2.9, 3.2, 5.4, 6.14)
4. Consider offering a Vocational 1 partial integration placement option such that students can take full credit courses in areas of strength and interest without changing schools or giving up access to transportation. (Key Findings: 5.1, 5.5, 5.6, 6.5, 6.11)

9.2.2 Program and staffing

5. Expedite the approval process for the new Vocational 1 curriculum resources (see Section 8.1). (Key Findings: 2.4, 6.2, 6.12, 6.14)
6. Expand the criteria for allocating educational assistant support to schools with Vocational 1 programs to include consideration for students' social/emotional and adaptive skill needs. (Key Findings: 6.3, 6.6, 6.11, 6.12)
7. Provide dedicated funding to support the program, including hands-on learning materials, sensory items, technology, transportation, and physical space improvements. (Key Findings: 6.11, 6.12)
8. Allocate additional sections to support a transitional program focused on preparing students for employment and independent living in Years 5 to 7. Consider implementing a class cap of 10-12 with dedicated Level 4 EA support to align with the intensive employment training programs offered by other school boards. (Key Findings: 2.4, 2.6, 4.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.5, 5.10, 6.4, 6.11, 6.12)
9. Explore the possibility of flexible staffing options for Vocational 1 courses (e.g., special considerations for waiving subject qualifications, seniority rules). (Key Findings: 5.8, 6.3)
10. Encourage schools with Vocational 1 programs to connect with other board funding sources and programs that support students with special education needs to access

- experiential learning such as the Community Connected Experiential Learning (CCEL) Grant and internal social enterprise programs. (Key Findings: 2.4, 6.4, 6.11)
11. Explore connections to the updated [Ontario business curriculum](#) to expand student opportunities to learn about self-employment, entrepreneurship, and social enterprise. (Key Findings: 2.4, 5.2, 5.5)
 12. Explore the use of alternative curricula to address specific student needs with respect to daily living skills; job and community skills; self-determination skills (e.g., choice making, self-management, problem solving); and social and communication skills. Develop implementation guidelines that incorporate the use of evidence-based teaching strategies and consistent assessment standards. (Key Findings: 2.4, 2.5, 5.5)
 13. Discontinue the practice of having students repeat courses for which they have earned credits without being provided with new learning opportunities. (Key Findings: 2.4, 5.5)
 14. Develop a framework for earning 0.5 credits in Vocational 1 courses that facilitates transition to an OSSD pathway (e.g., a Part 1 and Part 2 course that combine to make a full credit). (Key Findings: 5.5, 6.5, 6.11)
 15. Develop a consistent set of system guidelines for counting 0.5 credit courses towards an OSSD for current students in Vocational 1 who wish to transition to an OSSD pathway. (Key Findings: 5.5, 6.5, 6.11)
 16. Develop a standardized transition portfolio to document student skills and achievements to support educators and families to track progress and prepare students for future opportunities. (Key Findings: 5.5, 5.7, 6.11)
 17. Leverage central transition staff to support students in Vocational 1 to trial post-secondary options such as social enterprise and trades before graduation and facilitate post-secondary transitions. (Key Findings: 5.2, 5.5, 5.10, 6.11)
 18. Strengthen central supports for post-secondary transition planning. Areas of responsibility would include:
 - a. Developing workshops, information sessions and accessible multi-lingual resources for families to share information about post-secondary pathways, transitions, and available supports.
 - b. Providing individualized support to assist families to access funding and community services.
 - c. Maintaining a voluntary contact list of graduated students to support improved tracking of post-secondary outcomes. (Key Findings: 3.5, 4.1, 6.7, 6.11, 6.13)

9.2.3 School experience

19. Work with elementary and secondary educators to enhance support for students in Vocational 1 and their families in the transition to secondary school. Encourage elementary educators to share teaching strategies and classroom practices they have found to be effective. (Key Findings: 6.6, 6.14)
20. Share curriculum resources and strategies with parents to increase opportunities for repetition and reinforcement of learning at home. (Key Findings: 2.4, 2.8, 5.7, 5.11, 6.7)

9.2.4 Professional development

21. Provide release time and training for Vocational 1 school teams to review and adapt the new Vocational 1 curriculum resources to meet the needs of their school and students. (Key Findings: 6.2, 6.8, 6.12, 6.14)
22. Provide professional learning opportunities for teachers and educational assistants focused on the academic and social/emotional needs of students in Vocational 1 with Mild intellectual disability and/or Autism. (Key Findings: 2.7, 3.1, 4.1, 5.8, 6.8)
23. Provide networking opportunities for PDSB staff who teach and work with students in Vocational 1 such as by re-establishing networks for Vocational 1 educators and administrators. (Key Findings: 6.8, 6.12)
24. Provide a dedicated online space for Vocational 1 educators to share resources and best practices. (Key Findings: 6.2, 6.8, 6.12)
25. Include explicit consideration for Vocational 1 educators and students in board-led professional learning and centrally-provided resources (e.g., learning about consent culture, system surveys like the Student Census) (Key Findings: 6.8, 6.12)
26. Establish a partnership between the Student Success and Pathways and Special Education departments to develop professional learning for educators about trades opportunities for students in Vocational 1. (Key Findings: 2.6, 5.2, 5.5, 5.10)

9.2.5 External partnerships and advocacy

27. Support School Student Success Teams (Department Head of Guidance, Department Head of Special Education, Student Success Teacher, and Co-op Teachers) to work collaboratively to secure partnerships with community organizations, industry associations, and local employers to expand post-secondary education and employment opportunities for students in Vocational 1. (Key Findings: 2.6, 4.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.5, 5.10, 6.4)
28. Advocate to the Ontario Ministry of Education for mandatory special education training to become a certified teacher in Ontario. (Key Findings: 2.7, 5.8)

9.2.6 Equity considerations

29. Monitor and work to reduce the overrepresentation of students marginalized by institutional systems in both elementary and secondary self-contained special education placements, particularly those who self-identify as Indigenous; African, Black, and Afro-Caribbean; Gender Diverse; and/or 2SLGBQ+; and students experiencing higher socioeconomic vulnerabilities by:
 - a. Examining identification processes for potential sources of bias.
 - b. Reviewing the process for making curricular modifications in early grades.
 - c. Ensuring families are fully informed about the impact of curricular modifications on access to secondary programming. (Key Findings: 2.2, 2.3, 2.8, 2.9, 3.3, 3.7, 6.14)
30. Explore the feasibility of offering the Vocational 1 program at a site in each superintendency to: a) enhance inclusion opportunities; b) reduce transportation time; and c) keep students closer to their home communities. (Key Findings: 2.2, 2.9, 5.6, 5.9)

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MOTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION: GOVERNANCE AND POLICY COMMITTEE

Arising from a meeting of the Governance and Policy Committee, held March 19, 2025, the following recommendations are brought for Board approval:

1. Selection of Architects Policy (Repeal)

That, the Selection of Architects Policy (FIN807, formerly Policy 34), attached as Appendix 1, be repealed. (APPENDIX I)

2. Parent/Guardian or Public Inquiries Policy

- (i) That, the Public Concerns Policy (LEG406, formerly Policy 85) attached as Appendix 1, be repealed, and
- (ii) That, the updated Parent/Guardian or Public Inquiries Policy, attached as Appendix 2, be approved. (APPENDIX II)

3. Amendment to Trustee Honoraria Policy 2024 - 2025

That, the revised Trustee Honoraria Policy pertaining to the year November 15, 2024, to November 14, 2025, attached as Appendix A, be approved. (APPENDIX III)

4. Amendments to the Trustee Code of Conduct: March 2025

That, the revised Trustee Code of Conduct, attached as Appendix B, be approved, with an effective date of August 28, 2024. (APPENDIX IV)

Prepared by:

Nicole Fernandes
Board Reporter

Submitted by:

Jasmine Vorkapic
Governance Officer

7.1

Governance and Policy Committee Meeting, March 19, 2025

Selection of Architects Policy (Repeal)

Strategic Alignment:

Procurement Policy

Broad Public Sector (BPS) Procurement Directive

Canadian Free Trade Agreement (CFTA)

Canada-EU Comprehensive Economic Trade Agreement (CETA)

Report Type:

Recommendation

Prepared by: Joginder Dhanjal, Senior Project Manager, Design & Construction
Mathew Thomas, Controller, Planning & Accommodation Support Services
Jaspal Gill, Chief Operating Officer and Associate Director, Operations and
Equity of Access

Submitted by: Rashmi Swarup, Director of Education

Overview

Recommendation:

That the Selection of Architects Policy (FIN807, formerly Policy 34), attached as Appendix 1, be recommended for repeal.

Highlights:

- The Selection of Architects Policy was reviewed by PDSB Staff.
- This Policy is no longer required as a result of the implementation of the Procurement Policy (FIN810, formerly Policy 80), which now governs all procurement-related activities of the PDSB.
- This Policy is also inconsistent with the current operational procedure, Procurement Regulations (CSS 5).
- A new Operating Procedure, Selection of Architect Consulting Services, is in development to provide specific guidance regarding the selection of architectural consulting services for all types of major PDSB school capital projects.
- No policy gap will be established as a result of this change.
- Staff are recommending the Selection of Architects Policy be repealed.

Background:

The Selection of Architects Policy was last reviewed in 2018.

This policy outlines a two-step process that is used for the PDSB to select architectural firms. The first step is for a pre-qualification committee to review all architectural firms that have expressed interest in working with the PDSB and select a list of pre-qualified firms which would be eligible to work on major capital projects based on established criteria. The second step is to select an architectural firm from the list of pre-qualified firms by evaluating their qualification statements and conducting interviews.

While the Design and Construction Department currently follows a process to select and qualify architectural firms that is similar in principle to what is set in this policy, many aspects of the process have evolved based on the requirements of procurement regulations, availability of new procurement technology, best procurement practices and market conditions, resulting in some divergence from the policy. For example:

- Rather than two separate steps, the pre-qualification and selection are now combined into one step where all interested architectural firms can express their interest by submitting a response. A list of qualified architectural firms will be selected upon the conclusion of the process;
- The selection committee usually consists of the Controller of Planning and Accommodation Support Services, along with the Manager and the Senior Project

Manager in Design and Construction, working in partnership with the Manager of Purchasing or Designate;

In January 2024, the Board of Trustees approved the revised Procurement Policy (FIN810) that has been updated to be compliant with new procurement regulatory requirements. The Board procurement operating procedure, Procurement Regulations (CCS 5), is currently being reviewed and updated to align with this new Procurement Policy.

It would be redundant to update the Selection of Architects Policy as a standalone policy based on the following considerations:

- 1) PDSB's new Procurement Policy, FIN810, governs all procurement-related activities of the PDSB, therefore, a standalone policy concentrating on the selection of architects would be redundant;
- 2) A new Operating Procedure is in development to provide specific guidance regarding the selection of architectural consulting services for all types of major PDSB school capital projects;
- 3) The procedures set out in the Selection of Architects Policy are no longer consistent with the current procurement processes which PDSB is using for architectural firm selection;
- 4) The Procurement Regulations are being updated to include the principles and requirements of competitive bidding and pre-qualification process; and
- 5) The respective technical details of the process will continue to evolve with new procurement practices and emerging trends.

The new Operating Procedure, Procedure for the Selection of Architect Consulting Services, will establish the procedure for selecting the required architectural services for the design and construction of PDSB's major capital projects.

The procedure applies to PDSB staff involved in the selection of architect consulting services. This procedure also applies to all architectural services required for major capital projects under the following categories:

Category 1: construction of new elementary and secondary schools using a new design not previously adopted by the PDSB

Category 2: construction of new elementary and secondary schools using a repeat design (i.e., a design previously adopted by the PDSB to construct a school)

Category 3: construction of additions to existing schools

Category 4: construction of renovations to existing schools or other PDSB facilities

Category 5: construction of new childcare centres located in existing PDSB schools

Category 6: demolition of existing school buildings or other PDSB facilities

As a result, staff are recommending that this policy be repealed.

Evidence

Findings/Key Considerations:

- Procurement Policy establishes that the thresholds for advertisement of bid document is \$121,200.
- Procurement Regulations sets out that bid document is posted (advertised) on the Board's Purchasing website [Peel District School Board \(bonfirehub.ca\)](http://Peel District School Board (bonfirehub.ca)) and Biddingo.com.
- BPS Procurement Directive, Canadian Free Trade Agreement (CFTA) and Canada-EU Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) all specify that open competitive procurements must be made through an electronic tendering system that is readily accessible by all vendors.
- BPS Procurement Directive sets out that organizations must conduct an open competitive procurement process where the estimated value of procurement of goods or services is \$121,200 or more.

Impact Analysis

Equity & Human Rights Review:

Repealing the Selection of Architects Policy does not affect the Board Procurement Policy and Procurement Regulations.

All Board procurement activities carried out under the Procurement Policy and Procurement Regulations continue to uphold and maintain the legal and mandated commitment to equity, anti-racism, and anti-oppression.

Board or Ministry Policy Alignment:

Procurement Policy
Broad Public Sector Procurement Directive
Canadian Free Trade Agreement (CFTA)
Canada-EU Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA)

Resource/Financial Implications:

There is no anticipated financial impact. All Board procurement activities are already consistent with the Board Procurement Policy.

Legal implications:

Repealing the Selection of Architects Policy will ensure the Board Procurement Policy is compliant with the updated BPS Procurement Directive and the CFTA and CETA.

Risk Assessment:

If the Selection of Architects Policy is not repealed, Board communities, including the vendor communities, might be confused over the Board's bid advertisement practices and may interpret that the Board is not following BPS procurement regulations, which might damage the Board's reputation.

Community Impact:

Repealing the Selection of Architects Policy will have a positive impact on the Board vendor communities by eliminating the inconsistency and redundancy between the Selection of Architects Policy, the Board Procurement Policy and Procurement Regulations.

Next Steps

Communications:

Remove the Selection of Architects Policy from the PDSB website.
Submit for approval by Executive Council, the Selection of Architect Consulting Services Procedure.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Selection of Architects Policy

PEEL DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD POLICY

Selection of Architects

POLICY ID: FIN807 (*formerly Policy 34*)

FUNCTIONAL CATEGORY: Finance

RESPONSIBILITY: Associate Director, Operations and Equity of Access

APPROVAL: Board of Trustees

APPROVAL DATE: 11/13/2018

EFFECTIVE DATE: 11/13/2018

PROJECTED REVIEW DATE: 2023-2024

REVIEW SCHEDULE: 5 years

Statement of Policy

It is the policy of this Board that Architects on New School Capital Designs initiated by the Peel District School Board, be recommended for Board approval by the Physical Planning and Building Committee every five years, as a result of interviews and in accordance with the procedures established by the Board.

This policy is aligned with and supports the principles and expectations of the Board's Human Rights policy and the Equity and Inclusive Education policy. At all times, this policy should be interpreted to be consistent with the Board's policies and the *Human Rights Code*.

Procedure for Selection

Out of the Board's file of Architects expressing written interest in a **commission** with the Peel District School Board, a Pre-selection Committee, comprised of the Associate Director of Operational Support Services, a Superintendent of Education, Controller of Planning and Accommodation Support Services, Controller of Facilities and Environmental Support Services, and Manager of Design & Construction, (or their designates), will review all submissions and choose a significant* number of Architectural Firms, based on the *Criteria for the Selection of Architects* (attached as appendix 1).

*A number which will afford the Architect Selection Committee a wide selection, but no more than twenty.

These firms will be notified that they have been chosen by the Prequalification Committee and they will be requested to prepare a specific proposal for the Committee's review. This proposal shall include the completion of the *Architect's Qualification Statement* (attached as Appendix 2) and shall include pictures, descriptions of previous work, design statements and other information chosen by the firms to describe their work.

Out of the original prequalified submissions, seven will be selected for each category of work. A report, including a brief resume on each of the architectural firms, will be prepared. These Architects shall be interviewed by the Prequalification Committee. The order of Architect interviews will be by a draw.

The Physical Planning and Building Committee will make its recommendation to the Board.

Revision History

Review Date	Approval Date	Description
	May 27, 1969	
February 1973		Revised.
December 1974		Revised.
January 1981		Revised.
July 1982		Revised.
August 1983		Revised.
February 1984		Revised.
April 9, 1991		Revised.
March 6, 1995		Revised.
January 1, 1998		Revised to reflect change in Board name.
December 2005		Revised.
December 11, 2001		Revised.
February 25, 2003		Revised.
February 25, 2014		Revised.
November 13, 2018		Revised.
November 27, 2023		Housekeeping amendment – template migration.

CRITERIA FOR THE SELECTION OF ARCHITECTS

Professional Qualifications:

Firm consultants must hold professional qualifications and be registered by the Ontario Architects Association in good standing and licensed to practice in Ontario.

Experience:

Preference will be given to firms with recent satisfactory experiences in school design and construction in Southern Ontario. However, consideration will be given to firms which have designed similar types of buildings and indicate potential ability to introduce superior design or achieve economies in school construction.

Control of Costs:

To be selected, Architects must produce evidence of their ability to control costs and design schools within the estimates approved by the Board. The finalists must indicate, in writing, that they agree to sign the *Board/Architect Agreement* which stipulates that they will redesign any of their projects, at their own expense, to bring the cost within the approved estimates.

Description of Firm:

Firms must provide a detailed description of their team hierarchy that will be dedicated to the school project. The ability of the firm's team to produce preliminary, final design drawings and prepare tender documents within tight timelines will be a consideration for selection.

Quality Control:

Preference will be given to Architectural Firms which have a proven record of maintaining quality work and cost control throughout the construction of the project. Firm must describe the quality control measures that will be enforced by the firm from the preliminary, final design drawings stage through to the document preparation stage of the project.

Approval Authorities:

Firm must be familiar with Ministry of Education and Municipal approval authorities. Firms will be required to provide a list of previous projects that complied with Ministry and Municipal approval requirements.

Fee:

The architects must be prepared to accept the fee schedule as approved by the Board and prepare all documentation according to the percentages as outlined in the *Board/Architect Agreement*.

Location of Office:

Other factors being equal, preference will be given to firms located within 35 km. of the Region of Peel.

Architect's Qualification Statement

2018 EDITION

1.1 SUBMITTED BY:

1.2 BUSINESS ADDRESS:

Telephone Number: ()
E-mail:

Fax Number: ()
Web Address:

1.3 PERSON TO CONTACT:

1.4 TYPE OF ORGANIZATION: [CHECK ONE]

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual or Sole Proprietorship | <input type="checkbox"/> Partnership |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Professional Association | <input type="checkbox"/> Joint Venture* |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Corporation | <input type="checkbox"/> Other* |

[If Joint Venture or Other, give details below.]*

1.5 RELATED PROFESSIONAL SERVICES:

[List the consultants and their primary representative your firm would most likely use on the PEEL DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD project(s).]

1.5.1 Mechanical:

1.5.2 Electrical:

1.5.3 Structural:

1.5.4 Landscaping:

Appendix 2

Related Professional Services: (continued)

- 1.5.5 Site Development:
- 1.5.6 Interior Design:
- 1.5.7 Cost Consulting:
- 1.5.8 Specification Preparation:
- 1.5.9 Others: [Please specify]

Appendix 2

1.6 CRITERIA FOR SELECTION OF ARCHITECTS:

[Use the space below to provide response directly underneath the request. Response is not to exceed one page. Single spacing between lines. A blank line (not an indent) before each new paragraph. Font Times New Roman 12].

1.6.1 Please provide a brief description of satisfactory experiences in school design and construction in Southern Ontario. Optionally (or in addition) please provide examples of other similar types of institutional buildings and indicate potential ability to introduce superior design, energy efficiencies or other economies in school design and construction.

Appendix 2

[Use the space below to provide response directly underneath the request. Response is not to exceed one page. Single spacing between lines. A blank line (not an indent) before each new paragraph. Font Times New Roman 12].

1.6.2 Please describe the firm's plan to control costs and design schools within the estimates approved by the Board.

Appendix 2

[Use the space below to provide response directly underneath the request. Response is not to exceed one page. Single spacing between lines. A blank line (not an indent) before each new paragraph. Font Times New Roman 12].

1.6.3 Provide your firm's team hierarchy that will be dedicated to the school project. Include the proposed personnel for the assignment detailing titles and credentials.

Appendix 2

[Use the space below to provide response directly underneath the request. Response is not to exceed one page. Single spacing between lines. A blank line (not an indent) before each new paragraph. Font Times New Roman 12].

1.6.4 Please describe the quality control measures that will be enforced by the Firm from the preliminary, final design drawings through to the document preparation stage of the project.

Appendix 2

[Use the space below to provide response directly underneath the request. Response is not to exceed one page. Single spacing between lines. A blank line (not an indent) before each new paragraph. Font Times New Roman 12].

1.6.5 Describe your Firm's familiarity with Ministry of Education and Municipal approval authorities and provide a list of projects that complied with approval requirements.

Appendix 2

2. PROJECT REFERENCE #_____

Provide three (3) projects that have been completed within the last three (3) years for school board(s) in Ontario using below format. Copy Section 2 to provide Project Reference #2 and Project Reference #3. All projects must be from school board(s) in Ontario and may include this Board. Project values must be reflective of the Price Schedule for which your firm is applying.

2.1 NAME OF SCHOOL:

2.2 NAME OF SCHOOL BOARD:

2.3 NAME(S) OF PERSONS LIAISING WITH THE BOARD:

2.3.1 Design:

2.3.2 Contract Documentation:

2.3.3 Tender Process:

2.3.4 Construction Management:

2.4 REFERENCES:

[Please include, a letter of reference from the Board office representative who dealt with your firm as well as the principal of the school.]

2.4.1 Name of Board Representative:

2.4.2 Title:

2.4.3 Name of Principal:

2.4.3.1 Date of Tender:

2.4.3.2 List the Number of Addenda issued for this project:

Appendix 2

2.4.3.3 The major portion of these Addenda were due to the following:

- Architect Consulting Engineer(s)
Board Other*

*[Check one or more (*Please specify)]*

2.4.3.4 Give date when the building permit was issued for this project:

- Before tender was received During tender process
After tender was received*

*[*If after tender, specify length of time and provide explanation below]*

2.5 CONTRACT:

2.5.1 Name of Contractor:

2.5.2 Cost of Construction:

Building:	\$	Cost / Sq. Ft:	\$
Site Work:	\$	Cost / Sq. Ft:	\$
TOTAL:	\$	Cost / Sq. Ft:	\$

Provide a brief rationale for the cost being higher than the tendered price:

2.6 CONSTRUCTION DETAILS:

Briefly indicate the following:

- 2.6.1 Selected structural design (i.e. steel structure, masonry low bearing, etc.)
2.6.2 Roofing type:
2.6.3 Selection of preferred finishing material:
2.6.4 HVAC system:
2.6.5 Building system controls:

Appendix 2

2.7 CHANGE ORDERS:

2.7.1 The number of Change Orders on this project was:

2.7.2 The Change Orders were attributable to the following:

Authorities Having Jurisdiction:	Number of Change Orders: Total Cost (Credit): Total Cost (Extra):
Owner:	Number of Change Orders: Total Cost (Credit): Total Cost (Extra):
Consultant(s):	Number of Change Orders: Total Cost (Credit): Total Cost (Extra):
Architect:	Number of Change Orders: Total Cost (Credit): Total Cost (Extra):

2.8 CONTINGENCY AND ALLOWANCES:

2.8.1 Indicate the sum of the contingency: \$

2.8.2 Indicate the sum of the allowances: \$

2.8.3 Indicate the sum of the contingency remaining after the contract was completed:
\$

2.8.4 Indicate the sum of the allowances remaining after the contract was completed:
\$

2.9 CONSTRUCTION SCHEDULE:

2.9.1 This project took months to secure full permits (SPA and BP)

2.9.2 This project took months to complete.

2.9.3 Substantial completion was achieved within the scheduled time

2.9.4 Substantial Completion was achieved(weeks) after scheduled time.

2.9.5 It took weeks to correct deficiencies and obtain 100% completion after substantial completion.

2.9.6 Did the Authorities Having Jurisdiction issue a Stop Work Order on this Project?

YES

NO

[If yes, please describe circumstances below]

Appendix 2

2.9.7 Did your Firm issue a *Stop Work Order* on this Project?

YES

NO

[If yes, please describe circumstances below]

2.9.8 Has your Firm forced the Contractor on this Project to rebuild any portion of the work which did not meet your quality standards?

YES

NO

[If yes, provide details below]

Governance and Policy Committee Meeting, March 19, 2025

Parent/Guardian or Public Inquiries Policy

Strategic Alignment:

This updated policy aligns with the Peel District School Board's (PDSB) mission to address parent/guardian inquiries or public inquiries in an effective and timely manner.

Report Type:

Recommendation

<i>Prepared by:</i>	Ebby Chukwuonwe, Acting Legal Counsel Paul da Silva, Associate Director - School Improvement & Equity Jaspal Gill, Chief Operating Officer and Associate Director, Operations and Equity of Access
<i>Submitted by:</i>	Rashmi Swarup, Director of Education

Overview

Recommendation:

That the old Public Concerns Policy (LEG406, formerly Policy 85) attached as Appendix 1, be repealed.

That the updated Parent/Guardian or Public Inquiries Policy, attached as Appendix 2, be recommended for approval by the Board of Trustees.

Highlights:

The updated Parent/Guardian or Public Inquiries Policy ensures that consistent and reliable information is provided and made available to a parent/guardian or member of the public for greater transparency and accountability in the education system.

This updated policy being submitted introduces mandatory timelines required by the PPM 170 for addressing parents/guardians' inquiries. It includes updates discussed below to the old policy (last revised November 13, 2018) and incorporates feedback from the union, parents, senior staff and school administrators, and the PDSB community.

Background:

The old Public Concerns Policy was last revised in 2018 and did not reflect best practices in communicating with parents/guardians, or the Ministry of Education's PPM 170 requirements, which sets clear expectations for responding to parents/guardians' inquiries.

The updated Parent/Guardian or Public Inquiries Policy builds on the principles of the old policy and provides a clearer process for addressing parents/guardians' inquiries and public inquiries. This policy revision was initiated to comply with PPM 170 and enhance the effectiveness of addressing parents/guardians' inquiries or public inquiries across all levels of the Board.

Evidence

Findings/Key Considerations:

- There was a lack of response timelines in the old policy which led to inconsistencies in how parent/guardian's inquiries or public inquiries were handled. The updated policy introduces a 2-day acknowledgment and 5-day response timeline or an estimated response timeline for parent/guardian inquiries.
- The old policy focused broadly on "public concerns" without distinguishing between parent/guardian inquiries and public inquiries. In the updated policy, public inquiries are distinguished from parent/guardian inquiries, and the former does not include mandatory timelines.
- There was no guidance on frivolous, vexatious or abusive complaints in the old policy. The updated policy defines and addresses these complaints, ensuring that staff are protected while maintaining open communication.

-
- The updated policy reflects the Board’s commitment to inclusion by incorporating provisions to accommodate diverse language and accessibility needs.
 - Finally, it streamlines the escalation process to ensure that parent/guardian inquiries and public inquiries are addressed at the appropriate level.

Impact Analysis

Equity & Human Rights Review:

This policy was developed with an equity and human rights lens to ensure fair and accessible communication for all parties. It includes language and accessibility support for parents/guardians or members of the public with disabilities or language barriers. The policy also requires the use of plain language in addressing inquiries.

Board or Ministry Policy Alignment:

This updated policy aligns with the Education Act, PPM 170, existing PDSB policies including Human Rights Policy, Equity and Inclusive Education Policy, Safe and Caring Schools Policy.

Resource/Financial Implications:

No significant financial costs are expected.

Legal implications:

Having an updated policy ensures compliance with PPM 170, minimizes legal risks associated with addressing parent/guardian inquiries and protects staff from abusive or harassing communication.

Risk Assessment:

In addition to the legal risks outlined above, failure to implement clear response timelines could lead to a violation of PPM 170 with respect to addressing parents/guardians’ inquiries in a timely manner. Also, inconsistent handling of parents/guardians’ inquiries could damage trust between families and schools. Additionally, the lack of clarity around frivolous, abusive or vexatious complaints could lead to staff being subjected to inappropriate communications. This policy mitigates these risks by establishing structured response timelines and specifying communication expectations.

Community Impact:

The updated policy recognizes the importance of forming positive relationships between families and educators by promoting constructive dialogue. It benefits the PDSB community by providing a clear process for addressing inquiries and ensuring timely responses to those inquiries.

Next Steps

Action Required:

Approval of the updated Parent/Guardian or Public Inquiries Policy by the Board of Trustees. There will be a development of a communication protocol at the classroom, school and board levels that sets out standards for acknowledging and responding to parent/guardian inquiries, and to ensure all PDSB staff, parents/guardians and public members are aware of the new expectations. These protocols will be posted on the PDSB website as required by PPM 170.

Communications:

Once approved, the updated policy will be posted on the internal and external PDSB website.

References:

See updated policy for references.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Public Concerns Policy (LEG406, formerly Policy 85) (old policy).

Appendix 2 – Parent/Guardian or Public Inquiries Policy (updated policy).

PEEL DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD POLICY

Public Concerns

POLICY ID: LEG406 (*formerly Policy 85*)

FUNCTIONAL CATEGORY: Legal

RESPONSIBILITY: General Counsel and Governance Officer, Legal and Governance Services

APPROVAL: Board of Trustees

APPROVAL DATE: 11/13/2018

EFFECTIVE DATE: 11/13/2018

PROJECTED REVIEW DATE: 2023-2024

REVIEW SCHEDULE: 5 years

Statement of Policy

The Peel District School Board is committed to developing strong relationships with parents, students and the community. Together, we create safe, positive climates for learning and working. Therefore, it is the policy of the Peel District School Board to address public concerns in a fair, respectful and effective manner.

This policy is aligned with and supports the principles and expectations of the Board's Human Rights policy and the Equity and Inclusive Education policy. At all times, this policy should be interpreted to be consistent with the Board's policies and the *Human Rights Code*.

Guiding Principles

1. The Board is guided by the values and character attributes that form the foundation of positive and productive relationships (caring, cooperation, honesty, inclusiveness, responsibility and respect) while addressing public concerns.
2. The Board believes that the process of addressing public concerns is an opportunity to improve relationships with our parents, students and community.
3. It is the practice of the Board that public concerns and questions should be dealt with at the level closest to the issue.
4. The Board will continue to comply with all relevant legislation as it relates to privacy for all members of the community.

Role of Trustees

Trustees play a very important role in education. As representatives of their communities and advocates for students, parents and community members, the local

Trustee can greatly assist to facilitate communication between the parent/guardian and the appropriate staff member at the school or Board level. In the case of community member issues, the Trustee can facilitate communication directly with the Principal. Parents/guardians/community members may contact trustees at any time.

Trustees will direct the parent/guardian/community member to the process which should be followed in resolving any concerns or to the appropriate person or step in the process (dependent on the steps the parents/guardians/community member have already undertaken to resolve the concerns at the time the trustee is contacted) but shall not act as a representative opposing the policy of the Board.

Procedure

If a parent/guardian/community member has a concern about a school matter, they are advised to follow these steps in resolving the issue. At all times, the parent/guardian/community member is encouraged to speak to the local Trustee who can assist in reviewing school matters

and provide explanations of Board policy and procedure. The Trustee can also assist in referring the parent/guardian/community member to appropriate Board personnel for resolution of the matter. In the case of a concern expressed by a community member, contact should be initiated with the Principal of the school rather than classroom teachers.

Step 1: Review of the issue with the child's teacher

The parent/guardian should discuss a concern or issue with the classroom teacher at a mutually convenient time.

Step 2: Review of the issue with the school Principal

If the parent/guardian and the teacher are not able to resolve the issue, it should be discussed with the school principal (or designate). Again, in the case of a concern expressed by a community member, the first point of contact should always be the school principal. The principal (or designate) will gather facts from everyone involved to clarify the problem and work to resolve the matter as quickly as possible. Basic to every investigation is the Board's expectation that employees and students will follow school and Board policies and procedures.

Step 3: Review of the issue with the Superintendent of Education

If the parent/guardian/community member and the school principal are not able to resolve the issue, they may request that the matter be reviewed by the school's Superintendent of Education. The superintendent will review the matter as it relates to established policies and procedures and will respond to the parent/guardian about his/her concern.

Step 4: Review of the issue with a member of the Director's Office

If the parent/guardian/community member and the Superintendent of Education are not able to resolve the issue, they may request that the matter be reviewed by a member of the Director's Office Team who will review the matter and respond to the parent/guardian/community member about the concerns.

Step 5: Register as a Delegation and Present to the Board of Trustees

If the parent/guardian/community member and the Director's Office are not able to resolve the issue, they are encouraged once again to discuss the matter with their local Trustee. In the end, should they wish to discuss the matter in a more public forum, the parent/guardian/community member may register as a delegation and make a presentation to trustees at a meeting by contacting the Executive Assistant to the Director of Education to set up a mutually convenient time. Depending on the nature of the issue to be presented, this delegation will take place at either In-Committee (when personal matters require discussion) or at a public meeting of the Board.

Representative of the Parent(s)/Guardian(s)

The Board understands that the parent/guardian may need support in order to adequately address their child's interests (for example, a translator). This support may be necessary while parents/guardians are attending meetings with the staff employed by the Board.

Parents/guardians have the right to have a representative of their choosing in attendance at meetings with staff, subject to any limitations established in these procedures. Any costs/expenses associated with such a representative are the responsibility of the parents/guardians.

Principals, staff and parents/guardians shall be notified in advance of a meeting as to who is anticipated to be in attendance.

Matters That Should Not Be Discussed By Staff

Although the subject matter of meetings between parents/guardians and staff may be fairly broad, these meetings will generally relate to the education of the parents'/guardians' students(s) at the school in question. However, there are certain matters that staff members are unable to discuss with parents/guardians/community members, including personal details or disciplinary measures concerning other student(s), and matters related to staff performance issues.

In the event that discussion cannot be limited to the subject matter that led to the meeting (generally the education of the child of the parent/guardian at the school in question), staff will bring closure to any meeting that becomes a discussion of personal details concerning other students or matters related to staff performance issues.

Role of School Councils

School Councils are established to advise Principals on matters such as the implementation of school curriculum and code of student behaviour. They are not a forum to discuss individual issues related to teachers, other staff members, specific students or their parent/guardian. Any of these matters brought to a school council member or any school council meeting should be referred immediately to the Principal.

Related Policies:

Human Rights

Safe and Caring Schools

Equity & Inclusive Education

Revision History

Review Date	Approval Date	Description
	May 26, 2015	
November 13, 2018		Revised.
November 27, 2023		Housekeeping amendment – template migration

PEEL DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD POLICY

Parent/Guardian or Public Inquiries

POLICY ID:

FUNCTIONAL CATEGORY: Legal

RESPONSIBILITY:

APPROVAL: Board of Trustees

APPROVAL DATE: Click for date

EFFECTIVE DATE: Click for date

PROJECTED REVIEW DATE: 2028-2029

REVIEW SCHEDULE: 5 years

1. Purpose

The Peel District School Board (“PDSB”) is committed to developing strong relationships with parents, students, and the community. Together, we create safe, positive climates for learning and working. Therefore, it is the policy of the Peel District School Board to address parent/guardian inquiries or public inquiries in a fair, respectful, effective, and timely manner.

2. Application and Scope

This policy applies to all parent(s), guardian(s) or members of the public, Trustees, and PDSB employees within the Peel District School Board. This policy should be read and interpreted consistently with the *Education Act* and its regulations, Ontario’s Ministry Policy and Program Memoranda (PPMs) and guidance documents, the Ontario *Human Rights Code*, other government regulations, PDSB policies and the associated procedures, and PDSB’s Human Rights Policy, Equity and Inclusive Education Policy, Anti-Racism Policy and Safe and Caring Schools Policy.

Exclusions

This policy **does not** apply to:

- Internal PDSB employee matters: Inquiries related to the performance or behaviour of employees, or working conditions, which are governed by the PDSB's human resource policies and procedures.
- Issues related to other students: The PDSB cannot discuss personal or confidential matters about other students with parent(s)/guardian(s).
- Legal disputes or claims: Any legal disputes between individuals and the PDSB must be handled through appropriate legal channels. Allegations of criminal activity will be referred to appropriate legal authorities.

3. Definitions

- 3.1 **Ombudsman:** refers to an independent official who investigates complaints from the public about maladministration in government. The Ombudsman is an officer of the provincial legislature, independent of the government and all political parties, who is appointed for a five-year term.
- 3.2 **Parent/Guardian Inquiries:** refers to any issue, question, complaint, or inquiry raised by parent(s)/guardian(s) of students enrolled in the PDSB. Specific timelines and protocols apply to parent(s)/guardian(s) who make inquiries related to their child(ren)'s education.
- 3.3 **Public Inquiries:** refers to any issue, question, complaint, or inquiry raised by members of the public related to the school or PDSB operations. Members of the public may make inquiries, but these are not subject to the same mandatory timelines for acknowledgment and response as outlined for Parent/Guardian Inquiries. The PDSB will make reasonable efforts to address public inquiries promptly, but there are no formal timelines for the broader public.
- 3.4 **Fully address:** Fully addressing Parent/Guardian Inquiries refers to understanding the concern or issue or inquiry in its entirety, communicating a clear course of action or decision to the parent/guardian, and ensuring that the parent or guardian is informed of next steps. While full resolution may not always align with the parent/guardian's desired outcome, the process will emphasize transparency, timeliness, and fairness.

- 3.5 **Frivolous, Abusive or Vexatious complaints:** refers to complaints that are inappropriate, unnecessary, and/or brought forward without sufficient merit, solely to harass, annoy, distress, demean, embarrass, and/or humiliate the PDSB, staff, or a member of the PDSB community. Complaints of such nature are an abuse of this Policy.

4. Policy

Guiding Principles

- 4.1 The PDSB values positive relationships built on respect, trust, and transparency. Public Inquiries and Parent/Guardian Inquiries should be addressed through collaboration and open communication with parent(s)/guardian(s), students and community.
- 4.2 It is the practice of the PDSB that Parent/Guardian Inquiries or Public Inquiries should be addressed at the level closest to the issue.
- 4.3 The PDSB shall comply with all relevant privacy and access to information legislation when responding to Parent/Guardian Inquiries or Public Inquires.
- 4.4 The PDSB shall ensure equitable access to information, thereby accommodating all members of the PDSB community including those with accessibility and diverse language needs through available PDSB supports.
- 4.5 Parent(s)/guardian(s) may bring a representative or a support person to meetings with school staff to support their child's interests. All parties involved in the meeting will be notified in advance regarding who will be in attendance.
- 4.6 Employees shall not discuss certain topics with parent(s)/guardian(s) or members of the public, including personal details or disciplinary actions concerning other students and staff performance issues, except in so far as is necessary to comply with the *Education Act* and other applicable Board policies and procedures. Meetings will focus solely on the education and well-being of the parent(s)/guardian(s)' child(ren). If discussions extend beyond these limits, staff will bring the meeting to a close.

- 4.7 Parent(s)/guardian(s) may choose to raise their inquiry as a group or as an individual. Such inquiries may be addressed on a case-by-case basis.

Responding to Parent(s)/Guardian(s) Inquiries

- 4.8 The PDSB will acknowledge any Parent/Guardian Inquiries within 2 business days. In the event of staff unavailability, an auto-response will be provided with details of when to expect a reply.
- 4.9 The PDSB will make best efforts to fully address Parent/Guardian Inquiries within 5 business days. If further time is needed, parent(s)/guardian(s) will be provided with an estimated timeline for response. All responses will be communicated in a clear and understandable manner.
- 4.10 The PDSB will ensure that all responses to Parent/Guardian Inquiries are clear, relevant, and accurate, and may reference relevant Board policies, procedures, or Ministry regulations for transparency in decision-making.

Responding to Public Inquiries

- 4.11 The PDSB may develop a communications protocol to address Public Inquiries.
- 4.12 While every effort will be made to respond promptly to members of the public, the acknowledgment and response timelines outlined for Parent/Guardian Inquiries above are not mandatory for Public Inquiries.

Steps for Addressing Inquiries

- a) Step 1: Review the Issue with the Child's Teacher
- (i) Parent(s)/guardian(s) should first raise their inquiry with their child's teacher at a mutually convenient time.
- b) Step 2: Review the Issue with the School Principal
- (i) If unresolved, Parent/Guardian Inquiries should be escalated to the school principal (or designate), who will gather facts and attempt to resolve the issue.

- (ii) Public Inquiries should be raised with the school principal (or designate), who is their first point of contact.
 - c) Step 3: Escalation to the Superintendent of Education
 - (i) If the Parent/Guardian Inquiry or Public Inquiry is not resolved at the school level, it can be escalated to the school's Superintendent of Education (or designate).
 - d) Step 4: Director's Office Review
 - (i) Should the Parent/Guardian Inquiry or Public Inquiry remain unresolved after being reviewed by the Superintendent (or designate), it may be referred to the Director's Office for further review.
 - e) Step 5: Board of Trustees
 - (i) As a final step, parent(s)/guardian(s) or members of the public may request to present their unresolved inquiries to the Board of Trustees as a delegation.
- 4.13 For raising inquiries that are administrative or operational in nature:
- a) Inquiries related to Client services (e.g. administrative inquiries) should be raised with the employee who provided the service, then escalating to their supervisor, the relevant PDSB Department or Superintendent (or designate), and ultimately the Director's office if necessary.
 - b) Inquires relating to the safety of the school, school property, facilities, or equipment should first be raised to the school principal (or designate) or to the appropriate PDSB Department.
 - c) Parent(s)/guardian(s) or members of the public shall direct inquiries about student transportation by contacting the Student Transportation of Peel Region (STOPR).

Communication Protocol for Responding to Parent(s)/guardian(s) Inquiries

4.14 The PDSB shall develop, and comply with, a communication protocol at the classroom level, school level and Board level that sets out standards for acknowledging and responding to Parent/Guardian Inquiries.

Anonymous or Pseudonymous Complaints

4.15 The PDSB may receive anonymous or pseudonymous inquiries or complaints. Anonymous or pseudonymous inquiries or complaints will not be considered, copied, distributed, repeated, responded to, or entertained by the PDSB, unless it is believed that such an inquiry or complaint relates to a legal matter. Such anonymous or pseudonymous complaints will be addressed on a case-by-case basis.

Frivolous, Abusive or Vexatious Complaint

4.16 Where a Parent/Guardian Inquiry or a Public Inquiry is repeatedly made despite already being addressed, such inquiry may be considered to be a Frivolous, Abusive or Vexatious complaint.

4.17 Where there is a concern that a Parent/Guardian Inquiry or Public Inquiry is a Frivolous, Abusive or Vexatious complaint, PDSB employees will consult with a Superintendent (or designate) or other relevant PDSB Department to determine how best to deal with the complaint.

4.18 Where a Parent/Guardian Inquiry or Public Inquiry is deemed a Frivolous, Vexatious or Abusive complaint, the relevant individuals or groups will be informed and will be advised that such action will not be condoned or tolerated by the PDSB.

4.19 If the behavior persists, the PDSB may implement communication restrictions for the Parent/Guardian Inquiry or Public Inquiry (e.g., restricting communication to written form only).

4.20 In extreme cases, the PDSB may implement measures to safeguard PDSB employees from Frivolous, Abusive or Vexatious complaints, including but not limited to legal action, restricted access, or involving legal counsel or law enforcement as necessary.

- 4.21 The PDSB may advise individuals or groups of their right to contact the Office of the Ombudsman if the Parent/Guardian Inquiry or Public Inquiry is unresolved.

Development and Monitoring

- 4.22 In developing and reviewing its communication protocols, the PDSB is encouraged to consult broadly with parent organizations, for example, Parent Involvement Committee, school councils, Indigenous Education Council, Special Education Advisory Committee, as well as representative organizations and community organizations, to identify the diversity of parent needs.
- 4.23 The PDSB is encouraged to conduct regular reviews of their protocols and make updates as necessary.

Implementation

- 4.24 Any existing PDSB policies or guidelines related to communication with parent(s)/guardian(s) must be in accordance with this policy.
- 4.25 The PDSB shall post the communication protocol on its public website and must make parent(s)/guardian(s) aware of the protocol and how to access it upon registration of new students and at the start of each school year.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

- 5.1 Parent(s)/guardian(s) or members of the public shall:
- a) Adhere to the expectations of the School Code of Conduct when presenting an inquiry to PDSB employees.
 - b) Present Parent/Guardian Inquiries or Public Inquiries to PDSB employees or Trustees in a respectful manner which allows the opportunity for due consideration of the inquiry.
 - c) Adhere to the steps for raising Parent/Guardian Inquiries or Public Inquiries set out in this Policy.
 - d) Allow for a reasonable timeline for addressing and resolving the Parent/Guardian Inquiries or Public Inquiries.

- e) Direct relevant Parent/Guardian Inquiries or Public Inquiries to the school council as appropriate.
- f) Maintain an openness to receiving the information and advice that may be offered by PDSB employees or Trustees as possible resolutions to the Parent/Guardian Inquiries or Public Inquiries.
- g) Ensure that confidentiality is maintained concerning personal or private matters of all parties.
- h) Contribute to a climate of understanding and mutual respect, free from discrimination, harassment, bullying, or any form of violence.
- i) Refrain from Frivolous, Abusive or Vexatious complaints.

5.2 Employees shall:

- a) Adhere to the expectations of the Staff Code of Conduct when responding to Parent/Guardian Inquiries or Public Inquiries.
- b) Examine their own identities, social location, and biases in relation to the diversity within the PDSB community and continuously develop and act on their critical consciousness to foster inclusive environments in all communications.
- c) Acknowledge Parent/Guardian Inquiries within 2 business days, follow the established timelines for response, and facilitate communication between the school and families.
- d) Seek support from their manager or supervisor as needed.
- e) Acknowledge Public Inquiries as appropriate.
- f) Foster a climate of respect and trust, focusing on working towards mutually acceptable solutions.
- g) Ensure that Parent/Guardian Inquiries are provided with an adequate opportunity to be fully expressed Encourage the addressing of Parent/Guardian Inquiries or Public Inquiries at the level at which it is related, except where circumstances warrant otherwise.

- h) Maintain a written record of all Parent/Guardian Inquiries or Public Inquiries.
- i) Provide parent(s)/guardian(s) with timely updates, as needed, about the progress made in addressing their concerns.
- j) Adhere to relevant PDSB policies and procedures.

5.3 Principals shall:

- a) Gather all relevant information, including by contacting relevant individuals or groups, to clarify Parent/Guardian Inquiries or Public Inquiries to determine the facts and circumstances, and to seek prompt resolution.
- b) Consult with relevant PDSB employees, Superintendents of Education (or designate), other relevant Board staff, or the Board's Legal Services, as appropriate, to assist in addressing Parent/Guardian Inquiries or Public Inquiries.
- c) Endeavor to address Parent/Guardian Inquiries or Public Inquiries at the school level in accordance with Board policies as appropriate.
- d) Refer the parent(s)/guardian(s) to the classroom teacher where prior discussion with the teacher has not taken place to address classroom or teacher-related inquiries.
- e) Refer the matter to the Superintendent of Education (or designate) if Parent/Guardian Inquiries or Public Inquiries cannot be addressed at the school level.
- f) Advise the parent(s)/guardian(s) or members of the public of the appropriate person(s) to whom an inquiry about a policy or program beyond the scope or jurisdiction of the school should be directed, and assist the parent(s)/guardian(s) with the referral where necessary.

5.4 Superintendents of Education shall:

- a) Gather any relevant information to determine the facts and circumstances and understand the Parent/Guardian Inquiries or Public Inquiries.

- b) Consult with the school principal (or designate) and/or other appropriate PDSB employees or resources to address Parent/Guardian Inquiries or Public Inquiries.
- c) Refer the parent(s)/guardian(s) to the school principal (or designate) where prior discussion with the school principal has not taken place, and follow up with the school principal on the outcome.
- d) Advise the school principal (or designate) of options to consider or make recommendations to the school principal to address the Parent/Guardian Inquiries or Public Inquiries.
- e) Make a final decision about the Parent/Guardian Inquiries or Public Inquiries in consultation with the school principal (or designate) and inform the parent(s)/guardian(s) or members of the public about the outcome, as required.
- f) Take appropriate action if the steps for raising Parent/Guardian Inquiries or Public Inquiries are not adhered to by referring the inquiry to the appropriate school principal (or designate), Superintendent of Education (or designate), or other PDSB Department for their attention.

5.5 The Director's Office shall:

- a) Allocate staff and resources to support the policy.
- b) Refer Parent/Guardian Inquiries or Public Inquiries to the appropriate Superintendent(s) of Education (or designate), PDSB Department or Board Trustee(s) for their attention.
- c) Review any unresolved Parent/Guardian Inquiries or Public Inquiries escalated from the Superintendent's level and provide guidance or final decisions on the matter.
- d) Act as the final decision-maker in addressing Parent/Guardian Inquiries or Public Inquiries before matters reach the Board of Trustees.

5.6 Legal and Privacy Services shall:

- a) Provide guidance and support to staff when legal questions or inquiries arise regarding the application of this policy, particularly when Parent/Guardian Inquiries or Public Inquiries involve potential legal disputes, privacy concerns, or Frivolous, Abusive or Vexatious complaints.
- b) Assist in reviewing Parent/Guardian Inquiries or Public Inquiries to determine if they fall under legal or regulatory frameworks requiring special attention (e.g., Human Rights Code violations, privacy breaches, or criminal matters) and coordinate with law enforcement or external legal counsel when necessary.
- c) Advise staff on appropriate next steps when Parent/Guardian Inquiries or Public Inquiries are deemed Frivolous, Abusive or Vexatious complaints.
- d) Collaborate with Communications & Community Relations Support Services and other PDSB Departments to ensure legal compliance in the Board's communications with parent(s)/guardian(s), and members of the public.
- e) Support PDSB employees in drafting legally compliant responses to complex or high-stakes inquiries.
- f) Ensure that the PDSB's handling of Parent/Guardian Inquiries and Public Inquiries aligns with all relevant legislative requirements, including but not limited to the Education Act, Ontario Human Rights Code, and applicable privacy laws (e.g., MFIPPA).

5.7 Trustees shall:

- a) Facilitate communication between the parent(s)/guardian(s) or members of the public and appropriate PDSB employee.
- b) Direct the parent(s)/guardian(s) or members of the public to the appropriate process for the specific inquiry.
- c) Promote and support adherence to Board policies in their communication with constituents.

- d) Acknowledge that they are not representatives of the parent(s)/guardian(s), students or members of the public.
- e) Ensure that language and accessibility needs of parent(s)/guardian(s) or members of the public are taken into account by working with PDSB employees to provide appropriate translation services or accessible formats where necessary.

6. Reference Documents

Legislation

Accepting Schools Act, Ontario

Education Act, Ontario

Human Rights Code of Ontario

Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, Ontario

The Teaching Profession Act, Ontario

Ontario Regulation 429/07 Accessibility Standards for Customer Service

Ontario Regulation 610/00 School Councils and Parent Involvement Committees

Ontario Regulation 181/98 Identification Placement of Exceptional Pupils

PPM 128: The Provincial Code of Conduct and School Board Codes of Conduct

PPM 170: School Board Communication with Parents

Ontario Ministry of Education publication: Shared Solutions, A Guide to Preventing and Resolving Conflicts Regarding Programs and Services for Students with Special Education Needs

Ontario Ministry of Education publication: Your child's education: a parent guide to our school system

Policies

Accessibility Policy

Anti-Racism Policy

Child Abuse and Protection Policy

Community Engagement Policy

Equity and Inclusive Education Policy

Human Rights Policy

Information, Access and Privacy Policy

Occupational Health and Safety Policy

Safe and Caring Schools Policy

School Councils Policy

Staff Code of Conduct Policy

Student Trustees Policy

Transportation Policy

Trustee Code of Conduct

Whistleblower Policy

School Code of Conduct under Safe and Caring Schools Policy

7. Revision History

Review Date	Approval Date	Description
	May 26, 2015	
November 13, 2018		Revised.
November 27, 2023		Housekeeping amendment – template migration
		Updated to align with PPM 170

7.4

Governance and Policy Committee Meeting, March 19, 2025

Amendment to Trustee Honoraria Policy 2024 - 2025

Strategic Alignment:

Ontario Regulation 357/06 - Honoraria for Board Members

Ontario Regulation 7/07 - Student Trustees

Report Type:

Recommendation

<i>Prepared by:</i>	LaShawn Murray, Policy Analyst Jasmine Vorkapic, Governance Officer
<i>Submitted by:</i>	Rashmi Swarup, Director of Education

Overview

Recommendation:

That the revised Trustee Honoraria Policy pertaining to the year November 15, 2024, to November 14, 2025, attached as Appendix A, be approved.

Highlights:

- Ontario Regulation 357/06 directs for the annual revision of the Trustee Honoraria Policy to reflect the updated enrolment amount.
- Policy 72 – Trustee Honoraria has been revised and reflects the honoraria for members of the Board of Trustees for the period November 15, 2024, to November 14, 2025.

Background:

Ontario Regulation 357/06 – Honoraria for Board Members sets out the method for calculating the limits on honoraria paid under section 191 of the Education Act. The regulation directs that school boards establish a policy on trustee honoraria on or before October 15 of the calendar year in which the next term of office for board members begins and that this policy is revised annually to reflect the updated enrolment amount.

Effective January 1, 2025, Ontario Regulation 357/06 was amended by setting out a reduction from a Trustee's honorarium for breach of the code of conduct. The Regulation states:

Reduction for breach of code of conduct

13. For the purposes of paragraph 2 of subsection 218.3.1 (1) of the Act, the maximum amount of a reduction from a member's honorarium for a breach of the board's code of conduct is 25 per cent of the member's combined base and enrolment amount for the year of the term of office in which the breach occurred.

In accordance with relevant legislation, the Trustee Honoraria Policy has been revised.

Next Steps

Action Required:

Once approved, the Policy will be posted on PDSB internal and external websites.

Appendices

Appendix A – Trustee Honoraria Policy

PEEL DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD POLICY

Trustee Honoraria

POLICY ID: GOV103 (*formerly Policy 72*)

FUNCTIONAL CATEGORY: Governance

RESPONSIBILITY: Chief Operating Officer & Associate Director of Operations and Equity of Access

APPROVAL: Board of Trustees

APPROVAL DATE: XX/XX/2024

EFFECTIVE DATE: 11/15/2024

PROJECTED REVIEW DATE: 2024-2025

REVIEW SCHEDULE: Annually

1. Purpose

To set out calculations of the limits for honoraria for members of the Board of Trustees in accordance with Ontario Regulation 357/06 Honoraria for Board Members paid under section 191 of the *Education Act*.

2. Application and Scope

This policy applies to members of the Peel District School Board (PDSB) Board of Trustees, including student trustees.

3. Definitions

- 3.1 Trustee: member of the Board of Trustees, excluding student trustees.
- 3.2 Student Trustee: a PDSB student elected by fellow students to be a member of the Board of Trustees for a one-year term.
- 3.3 Year of a member's term of office begins on November 15 and ends on the following November 14.

4. Policy

General

- 4.1 Ontario Regulation 357/06 - Honoraria for Board Members sets out the method for calculating the limits on honoraria paid under section 191 of the *Education Act*. The trustee honoraria will be funded by the Province of Ontario. The Regulation directs school boards to establish a policy on trustee honoraria on or before October 15 of the calendar year in which the next term of office for board members begins.
- 4.2 Further, Ontario Regulation 7/07 - Student Trustees, sets out the honorarium amount for student trustees which differs from the base amount for members of the Board of Trustees.
- 4.3 The honorarium for a member of the Board of Trustees, not including student trustees, shall consist of the following components:
 - a) Base amount for the year
 - b) Enrolment amount for the year
 - c) Attendance amounts payable to the trustee for the year.
- 4.4 In accordance with Ontario Regulation 357/06, the PDSB does not pay out a distance amount as the eligibility criteria are not met.
- 4.5 The honorarium for a trustee who serves for a partial year will be determined in accordance with Ontario Regulation 357/06.
- 4.6 This policy will be revised each year to reflect the updated enrolment amount and reviewed in its entirety in the Fall, prior to the next municipal election.
- 4.7 The board may, at any time, change this policy, subject to Ontario Regulation 357/06.

Trustee Honoraria for the Four-Year Term December 1, 2022, to November 14, 2026

4.8 Base Amount

- a) For each trustee, the base amount paid will be \$5,900.
- b) Ontario Regulation 357/06 recognizes the additional duties of the Chair and Vice Chair by increasing the basic trustee honoraria by \$5,000 for the Chair and \$2,500 for the Vice Chair.
- c) In accordance with section 9 of Ontario Regulation 7/07, student trustees will receive a base amount of \$2,500.

4.9 Enrolment Amount

- a) The enrolment amount is calculated in each year of a trustee's term of office. Trustees will receive 100% of the allowable enrolment amount permitted by section 6(1) of Ontario Regulation 357/06.
- b) For each year of the term, trustees will receive \$1.75 per Average Daily Enrolment (ADE) divided by the number of trustees.
- c) Ontario Regulation 357/06 recognizes the additional duties of the Chair and Vice Chair, allowing an additional amount based on enrolment to a maximum of \$5,000 for the Chair and \$2,500 for the Vice-Chair.
- d) Student trustees are not entitled to an enrolment amount and will only receive the base amount as determined by Ontario Regulation 7/07.

4.10 The trustee honoraria for the year November 15, 2024, to November 14, 2025, is as follows:

	Member	Chair	Vice-Chair	Student Trustee
Base Amount	\$ 5,900.00	\$ 10,900.00	\$ 8,400.00	\$ 2,500.00
Enrolment Amount	\$ 21,644.00	\$ 26,644.00	\$ 24,144.00	-
Total Amount	\$ 27,544.00	\$ 37,544.00	\$ 32,544.00	\$ 2,500.00

Based on 2023-2024 Estimates ADE enrolment of 148,416.

Basic Trustee Enrolment Calculation: $\$1.75 \times 148,416 = \$259,728$ divided by 12 = \$21,644.

Meeting Attendance

- 4.11 In addition to the honorarium, the meeting attendance amount will be paid to Trustees in accordance with the *Education Act*, its regulations, and the Trustee Expense Policy.
- 4.12 Student trustees are not eligible to receive any meeting attendance payments.

Reduction for breach of the Trustee Code of Conduct

- 4.13 The maximum amount of a reduction from a Trustee's honorarium for a breach of the Trustee Code of Conduct is 25 per cent of the Trustee's combined base and enrolment amount for the year of the term of office in which the breach occurred.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

Director of Education

- 5.1 Authorize the implementation of operating procedures.

6. Appendices

7. Reference Documents

Education Act

Ontario Regulation 357/06 – Honoraria for Board Members

Ontario Regulation 7/07 – Student Trustees

Student Trustees Policy

Trustee Expenses Policy

8. Revision History

Review Date	Approval Date	Description
	September 12, 2006	
October 14, 2014		Revised.

November 9, 2015		Revised.
January 24, 2017		Revised.
November 14, 2017		Revised.
October 9, 2018		Revised.
October 10, 2019		Revised.
October 13, 2020		Revised.
October 27, 2021		Revised.
September 28, 2022		Revised.
September 27, 2023		Revised.
November 27, 2023		Housekeeping amendment – template migration
September 25, 2024		Revised.

Governance and Policy Committee Meeting, March 19, 2025

Amendments to the Trustee Code of Conduct: March 2025

Strategic Alignment:

Education Act

Ontario Regulation 312/24: Members of School Boards – Code of Conduct

Report Type:

Recommendation

<i>Prepared by:</i>	LaShawn Murray, Policy Analyst Jasmine Vorkapic, Governance Officer
<i>Submitted by:</i>	Rashmi Swarup, Director of Education

Overview

Recommendation:

That the revised Trustee Code of Conduct, attached as Appendix B, be recommended for approval by the Board of Trustees, with an effective date of August 28, 2024.

Highlights:

- In spring 2024, Trustees provided feedback to inform a review of the Peel District School Board (PDSB) Trustee Code of Conduct.
- In July 2024, the Ministry of Education revoked *Ontario Regulation 246/18: Members of School Boards – Code of Conduct* and replaced it with *Ontario Regulation 312/24: Members of School Boards – Code of Conduct*.
- Ontario Regulation 312/24 codifies requirements that must be included within a school board's Trustee Code of Conduct.
- The PDSB Trustee Code of Conduct has been revised in consultation with external counsel to ensure compliance with the legislation and incorporate related feedback from Trustees and the Integrity Commissioner themselves.
- Next steps: A separate review of the Trustee Code of Conduct is required with respect to the Complaint Protocol to ensure compliance with *Ontario Regulation 306/24: Integrity Commissioners and Process for Alleged Breaches of the Code of Conduct*, which comes into force at a later date.

Background:

Effective governance is grounded in the fundamental principles of transparency, accountability and public confidence. The Trustee Code of Conduct represents the Board's commitment to meeting high standards of conduct and professionalism while upholding a culture of anti-racism and anti-oppression.

In July 2024, *Ontario Regulation 246/18* was revoked and replaced with *Ontario Regulation 312/24: Members of School Boards – Code of Conduct*. *Ontario Regulation 312/24* codifies a mandatory code of conduct to support effective governance and leadership while advancing the delivery of provincial education priorities. The Trustee Code of Conduct was amended in August 2024 to reflect these changes.

Since that time, there have been further regulatory changes. In response, the Trustee Code of Conduct and corresponding Complaint Protocol have been updated to ensure compliance with the following:

- *Ontario Regulation 306/24: Integrity Commissioners and Process for Alleged Breaches of the Code of Conduct* is a new regulation that came into force on January 1, 2025. *Ontario Regulation 306/24* establishes mandatory provisions for addressing alleged breaches of the Code of Conduct and qualifications for the appointment of an integrity commissioner.
- Amendments to Section 218.3 Breach of the Code of Conduct of the *Education Act* came into force on January 1, 2025.

Evidence

Findings/Key Considerations:

Amendments to the Trustee Code of Conduct

A marked-up version tracking changes to the Trustee Code of Conduct is provided as Appendix A. External legal counsel was consulted to review and update the Trustee Code of Conduct and Complaint Protocol. This review focused on amendments to:

- Ensure compliance with the requirements of *Ontario Regulation 306/24* and Section 218.3 of the *Education Act*.
- Consider the feedback of the Trustees provided in spring 2024 (Appendix C).

Changes to the Trustee Code of Conduct include:

- Update to enabling legislation including *Ontario Regulation 306/24* regarding the appointment of an integrity commissioner as well as the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.
- Update to the application and scope. The Code of Conduct applies to municipally elected Trustees and members of the Audit Committee (as per *Ontario Regulation 361/10*). While student trustees are not considered members of the board under the *Education Act*, student trustees and other committee members are expected to be guided by the Code of Conduct. However, they are not bound by the Trustee Code of Conduct. As a result, they cannot be subject to any complaint, investigation or enforcement measures.
- Amendments to the BPS Code of Ethics to recognize the operational nature of supply chain activities which would not typically fall within the purview of Trustees.
- Update to references regarding the role of the integrity commissioner.

Changes to Complaint Protocol

The Complaint Protocol has been rewritten to ensure compliance with the regulatory changes.

The new complaint protocol outlines:

- Update to the notification of alleged breach section regarding individuals to receive notice and information required in notice
- Update to the timeline of resolution of Notice of Breach regarding a deadline of resolution after receipt and referral to Integrity Commissioner
- Update to Appointment of Integrity Commissioner respecting a roster of Integrity Commissioners created by the Minister of Education
- Updates to the Investigations section including timelines, defining scope and responding to allegations
- Additions to processes regarding Refusal to Commence Investigation, Discovery of Breach, Powers of Integrity Commissioner, Decisions, Sanctions and Appeals
- Clarification regarding Records and Information where the report of and Integrity Commissioner is published

Prior provisions pertaining to suspension of the Code of Conduct and/or enforcement measures prior to an election have been removed as these provisions are contrary to the Education Act

and are not supported by law. Additionally, the PDSB is not authorized by statute to reimburse legal costs incurred in alleging or defending against a Code of Conduct complaint. Prior provisions pertaining to legal costs have also been removed.

Reporting Processes for Staff, Public and Non-Trustees

Section 218.3 of the Education Act provides that only “a member of a Board” may bring forward a complaint of a breach of the Code of Conduct. As a result, there is no statutory authority for expanding the process to allow members of the public, staff or any other non-trustee to submit a Trustee Code of Conduct complaint.

Impact Analysis

Equity & Human Rights Review:

In accordance with *Ontario Regulation 312/24*, the Trustee Code of Conduct requires Trustees to conduct themselves in a manner that would not discredit or compromise the integrity of the board. Further, all board members shall treat persons equally without discrimination based on a person’s race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, marital status, family status or disability. Trustees are also expected to comply with applicable board policies include the Human Rights Policy and the Anti-Racism Policy.

Board or Ministry Policy Alignment:

Education Act

Ontario Regulation 312/24: Members of School Boards - Code of Conduct

Ontario Regulation 306/24: Integrity Commissioners and Process for Alleged Breaches of the Code of Conduct

Resource/Financial Implications:

External legal counsel was consulted to review the existing Trustee Code of Conduct and Complaint Protocol regarding the legislative changes and prior feedback provided by Trustees.

Legal implications:

The completion of this work aligns with the legislated obligations and responsibilities of *Ontario Regulation 312/24*, *Ontario Regulation 306/24* and the *Education Act*.

Risk Assessment:

There is a risk of legal non-compliance and reputational risk if the Trustee Code of Conduct is not reviewed and approved by resolution.

Community Impact:

Adopting a Trustee Code of Conduct increases public trust and confidence in the Peel District School Board and provides guidance and standards for Trustee behaviour.

Next Steps

Communications:

The revised Trustee Code of Conduct, once approved, will be posted on the Peel websites. A publicly accessible archive will be created in accordance with the regulation.

References:

King's Printer for Ontario. (2024, July 10). Ontario Regulation 312/24: Members of School Boards – Code of Conduct. Retrieved from <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/R24312>

Appendices

Appendix A – Trustee Code of Conduct (Tracked Changes)

Appendix B – Trustee Code of Conduct

Appendix C – Trustee Feedback on Code of Conduct (Spring 2024)

Appendix D – Complaint Protocol

Appendix E – Ontario Regulation 312/24 – Members of Schools Board – Code of Conduct

Appendix F – Ontario Regulation 306/24 – Integrity Commissioners and Process for Alleged Breaches of the Code of Conduct

PEEL DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD POLICY

Trustee Code of Conduct

POLICY ID: GOV108

FUNCTIONAL CATEGORY: Governance

~~**RESPONSIBILITY:** General Counsel and Governance Officer~~ **RESPONSIBILITY:**
Governance Officer

APPROVAL: Board of Trustees

APPROVAL DATE: 8/28/2024

EFFECTIVE DATE: 8/28/2024

PROJECTED REVIEW DATE: 2026-2027

REVIEW SCHEDULE: Every four (4) years after May 15, 2023

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 This Trustee Code of Conduct ("Code of Conduct") supports both legislated requirements and Board established By-Laws, Governance Directives, policies and procedures that set out the governance and accountability framework at the Peel District School Board (PDSB or the Board). The *Education Act and Ontario Regulation 312/24 (Members of School Boards-Code of Conduct)* requires school boards to adopt codes of conduct that apply to board members (also referred to as Trustees). This Code of Conduct supports the Board's commitment to meeting high standards of conduct by Trustees which uphold and advance principles of equity and human rights while providing good governance in the interests of all students of the Board. This Code of Conduct is to be interpreted in a manner that is consistent with the Board's Human Rights Policy (Policy 51) and the Equity and Inclusive Education Policy (Policy 54) along with the *Ontario Human Rights Code*.
- 1.2 A Trustee position is an elected position which carries with it the understanding that the electorate will decide at election time its support for the effectiveness of a Trustee. It is important to recognize the public trust and responsibility the collective body carries. This trust and responsibility is honoured through determining and enforcing norms of acceptable behaviour. These encompass principles of intersectional equity and human rights and a commitment to promoting a welcoming and safe environment for all students while eliminating systemic barriers to student success. This also includes confronting all forms of hate or bias including without limitation anti-Black and anti-Indigenous racism, anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, and homophobia.

1.3 A code of conduct policy contributes to confidence in public education and respect for the integrity of Trustees in the community. It promotes acceptable and respectful behaviours of members of the Board of Trustees when engaging with one another and with the richly diverse community the Board serves.

1.4 Trustees will also support the Mission, Vision and Values, and any strategic plan of the Peel District School Board.

~~1.5~~ The Appointment, Selection and Jurisdiction of ~~an~~the Integrity Commissioner shall be in accordance with ~~is set out in~~ O. Regulation 306/24 "Integrity Commissioners and Process for Alleged Breaches of the Code of Conduct".

~~1.6~~ Trustees and members of the Audit Committee who are not Trustees shall sign the Trustee Code of Conduce Acknowledgement and Undertaking, set out as Appendix A, at the beginning of their the term of office or the inaugural meeting of the Board, as applicable.

~~1.5~~ the *Appointment Selection and Jurisdiction of Integrity Commissioner* protocol and the complaint protocol is set out in the *Board Member Code of Conduct Complaint Protocol*.

~~1.6~~ Trustees and members of the Audit Committee who are not Trustees shall sign the Trustee Code of Conduct Acknowledgement and Undertaking, set out at Appendix 1, at the beginning of the term of office or the inaugural meeting of the Board, as applicable.

2.0 Objective

2.1 To establish governing principles and standards for acceptable behaviour by Trustees which encompass the Board's obligation and commitment to upholding principles of human rights, equity, and inclusion, and to promote a welcoming and safe environment for all students and members of the public.

3.0 Responsibility

3.1 The Board of Trustees, the PDSB's Integrity Commissioner, Director of Education and Governance Officer.

4.0 Application and Scope

- 4.1 ~~This Code of Conduct applies to all Trustees, and members of the PDSB Audit Committee who are not Trustees, in relation to their functions, powers and duties as members of that committee in accordance with Regulation 361/10. The Trustee Code of Conduct, and Complaint Protocol attached as Appendix A, apply to all municipally elected members of the Board of Trustees currently in office, and to members of the Board's Audit Committee in relation to their functions, powers and duties as members of the committee. Student Trustees, and members of other Committees of the Board, are also expected to comply with the provisions herein.~~

5.0 Definitions

“Board” means the Peel District School Board, which is also referred to as the PDSB.

“Discrimination” means discriminatory behaviour as defined by the PDSB workplace violence and harassment prevention policies, human rights policy and anti-racism policy, and the Ontario Human Rights Code.

“Harassment” means harassing behaviour as defined by the PDSB workplace violence and harassment prevention policies, the Ontario Human Rights Code, and the Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Act, and includes engaging in a course of vexatious comment or conduct that is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome.

“Inquiry” includes an investigation.

“Integrity Commissioner” means the Integrity Commissioner appointed by the Board of Trustees in accordance with the ~~Compliant Protocol attached hereto as Appendix A. Peel District School Board By-Laws.~~

“Official Business” means duties and responsibilities of Trustees as prescribed by the *Education Act* and regulations thereunder, Board By-Laws, and Governance Directives, policies and procedures.

“Presiding Officer” means the person who presides over a meeting of the Board or Committee of the Board. ~~Meeting~~

“Staff Members” means any employee or contractor of the Peel District School Board.

“Supply Chain Activities” means all activities directly or indirectly related to the Board’s planning, sourcing, procurement, moving, and payment processes.

“Trustee” means a member fo the board, as defined in the Education Act~~all members of the Board, whether elected or appointed, including student trustees and non-Trustee members of the Audit Committee in relation to their functions, powers and duties as members of that committee in accordance with Regulation 361/10.~~

“Trustees Office” means the authority and public duties attached to the position of being elected or appointed as a PDSB Trustee ~~or student trustee.~~

“Supply Chain Activities” means all activities whether directly or indirectly related to organizational planning, sourcing, procurement, moving, and payment processes.

6.0 Code of Conduct

- 6.1 Transparency, accountability, and public confidence are fundamental components for the effective governance of school boards as public bodies responsible to their communities and to the provincial government. The conduct of Trustees must be of the highest standard to maintain the confidence of the public. This Code of Conduct represents the Board’s commitment to meeting high standards of conduct, professionalism and upholding a culture of anti-racism and anti-oppression.
- 6.2 Every Trustee shall comply with this Code of Conduct and any applicable Board by-law, resolution, policy, or procedure, and shall behave in a manner that is consistent with human rights principles and which promotes equity and inclusion at all times. When acting or holding themselves out as a Trustee, the Trustee: (1) shall treat people equally without discrimination based on a person’s race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, marital status, family status, or disability; and (2) shall conduct themselves in a manner that would not discredit or compromise the integrity of the board.

Integrity and Dignity of Office - Principles

- 6.3 Trustees of the Board shall discharge their duties loyally, faithfully, respectfully, impartially, in the spirit of equity, and in a manner that will inspire public confidence in the abilities and integrity of the Board.
- 6.4 Trustees of the Board shall recognize that the expenditure of school board funds is a public trust and endeavour to see that the funds are expended efficiently, and in the best interests of the students.
- 6.5 Trustees of the Board recognize their obligation to promote equality, diversity, and inclusion for all students, with specific recognition for the historical and systemic oppression faced by Black, Indigenous, and other racialized students.
- 6.6 Trustees of the Board must uphold the dignity of the office and conduct themselves in a professional manner and act with decorum at all times, whether in person or through virtual or electronic communications including on social media platforms. Trustees must conduct themselves in a professional manner and act with decorum especially when attending Board events, when engaging with each other or with the community in their capacity as a Trustee, or while on Board property.
- 6.7 Trustees shall ensure that their comments are issue-based and not personal, demeaning, discriminatory, or disparaging with regard to any person, including Staff Members or fellow Trustees and shows respect for their differing points of view.
- 6.8 No Trustee shall engage in conduct that would discredit or compromise the integrity of the Board or Trustees, or be inconsistent with the Board's values of antiracism and anti-oppression. Trustees are expected to work with other Trustees and Staff Members in a spirit of equity, respect, openness, courtesy, and co-operation.
- 6.9 A Trustee shall not advance allegations of misconduct and/or give notice of an alleged breach of this Code of Conduct that are trivial, frivolous, vexatious, made in bad faith, or vindictive in nature against another Trustee of the Board.
- 6.10 Trustees shall serve and be seen to serve their school communities in an equitable, constructive, respectful, conscientious and diligent manner.

- 6.11 Trustees shall be committed to performing their functions with integrity and to avoid the improper use of the influence of their office, and conflicts of interest, both apparent and real.
- 6.12 Trustees are expected to perform their duties in office and arrange their private lives, including any digital content, whether on social media or otherwise, in a manner that promotes public confidence and can be upheld under close public scrutiny.
- 6.13 Trustees shall seek to serve the public interest by upholding both the letter and the spirit of the laws of the Federal Parliament and Ontario Legislature, and the ByLaws,; Governance Directives,; policies,; and procedures adopted by the Board, including the Board’s human rights and anti-racism policies.
- 6.14 A Trustee shall discharge their duties in accordance with the *Education Act* and any regulations, directives or guidelines thereunder and in adherence to human rights principles. This shall include respecting and understanding the roles and duties of individual Trustees, the Board of Trustees as a whole, the Director of Education, Staff Members, the community and the Chair of the Board.

6.15 Trustees acknowledge that this Code of Conduct ~~operates as a supplement to the following~~ provincial and federal legislation- which also govern the conduct of Trustees, including:

- (a) Charter of Rights and Freedoms
- ~~(a)~~(b) Criminal Code of Canada
- ~~(b)~~(c) Education Act
- ~~(c)~~(d) Municipal Conflict of Interest Act
- ~~(d)~~(e) Municipal Elections Act, 1996
- ~~(e)~~(f) Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act
- ~~(f)~~(g) Occupational Health and Safety Act
- ~~(g)~~(h) Ombudsman Act
- ~~(h)~~(i) Ontario Human Rights Code

Trustees recognize that the Integrity Commissioner does not have any authority to receive or investigate complaints to the extent that the complaints ~~request any determination or remedy related to any~~ requires adjudication with respect to any alleged contravention of the above legislation.

Respect for Confidentiality

- 6.16 Confidential Information includes,
- (a) information in the custody and/or control of the PDSB that is subject to the privacy provisions of the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA)* or other legislation, including, but not limited to personal information of staff and students (including the contents of a student's OSR), third party corporate, commercial, scientific, or technical information, solicitor-client advice or litigation privileged information;
 - (b) information in respect of litigation or potential litigation affecting the Board, and information that is subject to solicitor-client privilege;
 - (c) information discussed during closed sessions of the Board pursuant to section 207 of the *Education Act*;
 - (d) intimate, personal, health or financial information of a Trustee, staff member or prospective staff member, student, parent or guardian;
 - (e) Information related to the acquisition or disposal of the Board's real property, including a school site;
 - (f) decisions in respect of negotiations with staff members; and
 - (g) investigations by the Ombudsman
- 6.17 No Trustee shall disclose or release by any means to anyone not authorized, any confidential information obtained or made available to them in their role as Trustee, in either oral or written form (including online and social media platforms), except as authorized by law or by the Board to do so. This is an indefinite continuous obligation that extends beyond the Trustee's term of office.
- 6.18 No Trustee shall use confidential information in a manner that would be detrimental to the interests of the Board or for the purpose of personal gain, including for the gain of the Trustee's parent, spouse, or child. In this section, "child", "parent" and "spouse" have the same meaning as in section 1 of the *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act*.

- 6.19 Trustees should not access or attempt to gain access to confidential information in the care, control or custody of the Board unless it is necessary for the performance of their [governance](#) duties and not prohibited by law or Board policy.
- 6.20 Every Trustee shall keep confidential any information or documents disclosed or discussed at a meeting of the Board or committee of the Board, or part of a meeting of the Board or committee of the Board, that was closed to the public, and keep confidential the substance of deliberations of a meeting closed to the public, unless required to divulge such information or documents by law or authorized by the Board to do so. Under no circumstances should the substance of deliberations of a meeting closed to the public be recorded without advance permission.
- 6.21 Individual Trustees are only entitled to information in the possession of the PDSB that is relevant to matters before the Board or a committee of the Board. Otherwise, an individual Trustee enjoys the same level of access rights to information as any other member of the community.
- 6.22 If there is uncertainty about whether information is confidential, the Trustee should check with the appropriate Staff Member, which includes the Governance Officer or Privacy Officer, consult with the Director of Education or seek the advice of the Integrity Commissioner.

Upholding Decisions

- 6.23 All Trustees of the Board shall accept that authority rests with the Board, and that a Trustee has no individual authority other than that delegated by the Board.
- 6.24 Each Trustee shall uphold the implementation of any Board resolution after it is passed by the Board. A proper motion for reconsideration or rescission, if permitted by the Board's Rules of Order, can be brought by a Trustee.
- 6.25 Subject to section 6.27, a Trustee should be able to explain the rationale for a resolution passed by the Board. A Trustee may respectfully state his or her position on a resolution provided it does not in any way undermine the implementation of the resolution or [confidence in](#) the Board as a whole.

- 6.26 Each Trustee shall comply with Board policies, procedures, By-Laws, Governance Directives and Rules of Order, as well as all applicable legislation.
- 6.27 In accordance with section 218.4 (e) of the *Education Act*, the Chair of the Board is the spokesperson to the public on behalf of the Board, unless otherwise determined by the Board. No other Trustee shall act as spokesperson to the public or on behalf of the Board unless expressly authorized by the ~~Chair of the Board or whole~~ Board of Trustees to do so. When individual Trustees express their opinions in public, including when expressing opinions on online or social media platforms, they must make it clear that they are not speaking on behalf of the Board.

Ontario Broader Public Sector (BPS) Supply Chain Code of Ethics

(The ~~BPS is~~ Code of Ethics does not supersede the Code of Conduct but supplements the Code of Conduct with standards of practice specific to the supply chain.)

- 6.28 Personal Integrity and Professionalism— ~~—~~ To the extent that Trustees may have any involvement with Supply Chain Activities they must act, and be seen to act, with integrity and professionalism. Honesty, care and due diligence must be integral to all Supply Chain Activities within and between the Board, suppliers and other stakeholders. Respect must be demonstrated for each other and for the environment. Confidential information must be safeguarded. Trustees must not engage in any activity that may create, or appear to create, a conflict of interest, such as accepting gifts or favours, providing preferential treatment, or publicly endorsing suppliers or products.
- 6.29 Accountability and Transparency - Supply Chain Activities must be open and accountable. In particular, contracting and purchasing activities must be fair, transparent and conducted with a view to obtaining the best value for public resources. Trustees must ensure that Board resources are used in a responsible, efficient and effective manner.
- 6.30 Compliance and Continuous Improvement - Trustees who are directly or indirectly involved with purchasing or other Supply Chain Activities must comply with this Code of Ethics and the laws of Canada and Ontario. The Board must ~~Trustees should~~ continuously work to improve supply chain policies and procedures, to improve ~~their~~ supply chain knowledge and skill levels.

Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality

6.31 Trustees are expected to carry out their duties with impartiality and objectivity. No Trustee shall accept a gift, benefit, or service from any person, group or entity that has dealings with the Board if a reasonable person might conclude that the gift, benefit, hospitality or services could influence the Trustee when performing their duties to the Board.

6.32 For greater certainty, prohibited gifts, benefits, or services includes, but is not limited to, tickets or admission to a charity event, professional development or training sessions or anything of monetary value. Trustees will not be in violation of section 6.31 if:

- i. _____the gift, benefit, or service if of nominal value, meaning valued at no more than \$25,
- ii. the gift, benefit, or service is given as an expression of courtesy or hospitality, and
- iii. _____accepting the gift, benefit, or service is reasonable in the circumstances.

Trustees shall report all gifts, benefits, or services received to the Chair of the _____Board and the Governance Officer.

6.33 For these purposes, a gift, benefit, or service provided with the Trustee's knowledge to a Trustee's spouse, child, or parent, as defined in the *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act*, is deemed to be provided to that Trustee.

6.34 _____Trustees shall not use their position for personal gain or improper advantage.

6.35 An invitation to attend or participate in an event or a function directly connected with the performance of a Trustee's duties of office where the Trustee has a ceremonial, presentational or representational official role is not considered by this Code of Conduct, to be a gift. This type of attendance is considered to be fulfillment of official public duties.

~~6.36 —Trustees should consult with the Integrity Commissioner and review any relevant Integrity Commissioner Interpretation Bulletins issued by the Integrity Commissioner on this subject.~~

Use of Board Property, Services and Other Resources

- 6.37 No Trustee should use, or permit the use of Board resources, including but not limited to the time and/ or services of Staff Members, Board events, Board facilities, Board funds, Board information and Board infrastructure or other resources (e.g., Board-owned materials, websites, and social media platforms) for activities other than the business of the PDSB. No Trustee may obtain personal financial gain from the use or sale of Board-developed intellectual property (e.g., inventions, creative writings and drawings), computer programs, technical innovations, or other items capable of being patented, or from the sale of Board provided mobile phones and all other technological equipment, since all such property remains exclusively that of the Board.

Election Campaign Work

- 6.38 Election activity refers to campaigns for municipal, provincial and federal office or campaigns on a question on a ballot.
- 6.39 No Trustee shall use the facilities, equipment, supplies, services, staff or other resources of the Board (including Board logos, newsletters, social media sites or profiles and websites linked through the Board's website, contact information including email addresses obtained as a result of the member's performance of their duties as a Trustee) for any election campaign or campaign-related activities. No Trustee shall undertake campaign-related activities on Board property or during Board-hosted meetings (whether in person or virtual) ~~unless permitted by Board policy~~. No Trustee shall use the services of staff for election-related purposes during hours in which those persons receive any compensation from the Board. All Trustees shall comply with the PDSB Board Resources Policy.

Improper Use of Influence

- 6.40 A Trustee shall not use their office to advance the Trustee's interests or the interests of any family member or person or organization with whom or with which the Trustee is related or associated.
- 6.41 No Trustee shall use their office to obtain employment with the Board for the Trustee or a Trustee family member. This rule includes, but is not limited to, the prohibition of holding out the prospect or promise of future advantage through a Trustee's purported influence within the Board in return for any present action or inaction to the private advantage of the Trustee, their family members or any person or organization with whom the Trustee is related or associated.

- 6.42 No Trustee shall use the influence of their office for any purpose other than for the exercise of their official duties.

Conduct Regarding Current and Prospective Employment

- 6.43 No Trustee shall allow any current employment or the prospect of their future employment by a person or entity to improperly or for personal gain affect the performance of their duties to the Board.

Discreditable Conduct

- 6.44 All Trustees have a duty to treat members of the public, one another, and Staff Members respectfully and without abuse, bullying or intimidation, and to ensure that the work environment at the Board is free from discrimination and harassment. This provision applies to all forms of written and oral communications, including via social media.

Reprisals and Obstruction

- 6.45 Harassing or discriminatory behavior, ~~(as defined indicated in the PDSB's Human Rights Policy (Policy 51), and the Equity and Inclusive Education Policy (Policy 54), in addition the Ontario *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, and the Ontario *Human Rights Code*),~~ which occurs in the course of, or is related to, the performance of official business and duties of the Trustees, ~~is constitutes a contravention of subject to~~ this Code of Conduct.
- 6.46 Trustees must respect the integrity of this Code of Conduct and cooperate with inquiries conducted in accordance with the Trustee Code of Conduct Complaint Protocol and any other procedures set by the Board for addressing complaints of a breach of this Code of Conduct. Any reprisal or threat of reprisal against a complainant or anyone else for providing information to the Integrity Commissioner is prohibited. It is a violation of this Code of Conduct to obstruct the Integrity Commissioner in the carrying out of their responsibilities, for example, by destroying documents or erasing electronic communications.

6.47 -Trustees have a duty to respond to and comply with all reasonable requests of the Integrity Commissioner and a failure to do so is a violation of this Code of Conduct.

6.48 _____ Trustees shall be respectful of the role of the office of the Integrity Commissioner.

Acting On Advice of Integrity Commissioner

6.49 -If there is uncertainty about whether an action or activity constitutes a breaches of this Code of Conduct, a Trustee may directly seek the guidance advice of the Board's General Counsel, Legal and Governance Services. ~~Integrity Commissioner. This shall not constitute an inquiry or investigation by the Integrity Commissioner pursuant to the Complaint Protocol. Where a Trustee has received written advice from the Integrity Commissioner on a particular matter, the advice is binding on the Board in any subsequent consideration of the conduct of the Trustee in the same~~

~~matter as long as the Trustee disclosed all relevant facts to the Integrity Commissioner before the advice was provided.~~

~~- Integrity Commissioner.~~

~~6.50 — The Integrity Commissioner will work with Board General Counsel, Legal and Governance Services when providing advice to Trustees, particularly in the areas of school board governance, Board By Laws, Governance Directives, policies and, procedures and applicable education legislation.~~

Chair/Presiding Officer

6.51 Nothing in this Code of Conduct prevents the Chair of the Board or Presiding Officer of any meeting of the Board or Committee of the Board from exercising their power pursuant to s. 207(3) of the *Education Act* to expel or exclude from any meeting any person who has demonstrated improper conduct at the meeting. For greater certainty, this may be done at the discretion of the Chair or Presiding Officer as the case may be, and without the necessity of a complaint or conducting an inquiry before an expulsion or exclusion from a meeting. The rationale for this provision is that a Chair or Presiding Officer must have the ability to control a meeting. Any Trustee who does not abide by a reasonable expulsion or exclusion from a meeting is deemed to have breached this Code of Conduct.

6.52 -The Chair of the Board or Presiding Officer of any meeting of the Board or Committee of the Board shall exercise their powers in a fair and impartial manner having due regard for

every Trustee's opinion or view, the PDSB's Human Rights Policy (Policy 51) and the Equity and Inclusive Education Policy (Policy 54), and the Ontario *Human Rights Code*.

- 6.53 -The Chair of the Board or Presiding Officer shall follow the special rules of order of the Board and/or the adopted Rules of Order and meeting procedures contained in any Policy or By-Laws of the Board. A breach of a rule of order or meeting/parliamentary procedure should be dealt with at the meeting in question by a Trustee rising to a point of order or appealing a ruling of the Chair in accordance with any applicable rule of order. Once such a motion is dealt with by the Board of Trustees, all Trustees shall abide by that decision and no further action shall be undertaken pursuant to the Board Member Code of Conduct Complaint Protocol, except for persistent improper use of the applicable rules of order by the Chair or Presiding Officer.

7.0 Review and Public Availability of the Code of Conduct

- 7.1 This Code of Conduct is to be reviewed and updated by the Board as required in accordance with [the Education Act and Regulations made there under. Regulation 312/24](#). Specifically, the Board will review the Code of Conduct ~~within 30 days of the coming into force of Regulation 312/24 (July 28, 2024) and then again by~~ no later than May 15, 2027. Each subsequent review shall be completed in the fourth year following the previous review and no later than May 15 in that year. After each review, the Board shall pass a resolution setting out any required changes or, if no changes are required, confirming the Code of Conduct. If one or more changes are set out in a Board resolution, the Board shall update its Code of Conduct to reflect the changes no later than August 31 in the year of the review.
- 7.2 -The Board shall make this Code of Conduct publicly available on its website and shall indicate on its website the effective date of every change it makes to this Code of Conduct, other than changes of a typographical or similar nature. The Board shall also maintain an archive of all previous versions of its Code of Conduct, indicating the period during which each version applied, and shall ensure that the versions are publicly accessible.

8.0 Appendices

[Appendix A: Trustee Code of Conduct Acknowledgement and Undertaking](#)

[Appendix B: Board Member Trustee Code of Conduct Complaint Protocol](#)

~~[Appointment Selection and Jurisdiction of Integrity Commissioner](#)~~

9.0 Reference Documents

Policies:

- Anti-Racism Policy
- Trustee Expenses Policy 75
- Trustee Honoraria Policy 72
- Human Rights Policy 51
- Use of Board Resources Policy



10.0 By-Laws and Governance Directives

- Peel District School Board By-Laws and Governance Directives

Procedures:

- Workplace Violence EHS 4.1
- Workplace Harassment EHS 4.2

Legislation:

- Charter of Rights and Freedoms
- Criminal Code of Canada
- Education Act
- Municipal Conflict of Interest Act
- Municipal Elections Act, 1996
- Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act
- Occupational Health and Safety Act
- Ombudsman Act
- Ontario Human Rights Code

Revision History

Review Date	Approval Date	Description
	October 19, 2022	
November 27, 2023		Housekeeping Amendment – template migration
August 28, 2024		Revised to reflect change in legislation.

Appendix 1 Acknowledgement and Undertaking

Trustee Code of Conduct
Acknowledgement and Undertaking

I, _____, as Trustee of the Board, shall uphold this
Code of Conduct.

I confirm that I have read, understood, and agree to abide by the PDSB's Trustee
Code of Conduct Policy and Complaint Protocol and agree to abide by any
applicable Board resolution, policy or procedure.

TRUSTEE SIGNATURE: _____

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

I confirm that I have read, understand and agree to abide by the Board's Code of Conduct and that I
understand the Board Member Code of Conduct Complaint Protocol for complaints made to the
Integrity Commissioner.

DATE: _____ SIGNATURE: _____

Please Print Name: _____

~~PEEL DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD – BOARD MEMBER CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINT PROTOCOL (“Complaint Protocol”)~~

~~1.0 – Rationale~~

~~The Board has established a Board Member Code of Conduct (“**Code of Conduct**”) to govern the conduct of Trustees and to provide transparency, accountability, and public confidence in its governance. This Protocol supports the implementation of the Code of Conduct, particularly as related to the complaints process, including the reporting, investigation and resolution of complaints.~~

~~2.0 – Objective~~

~~To outline the processes for initiating, investigating, resolving and reporting on the outcomes of complaints made under the Code of Conduct.~~

~~3.0 – Definitions~~

~~**Board** means the~~

APPENDIX A

~~Peel District School Board, which is also referred to as the PDSB.~~

Trustee Code of Conduct Complaint Protocol

~~**Complaint** means a formal written statement of allegations in the form of Appendix 1 to this Complaint Protocol or any informal complaint process contemplated by this Complaint Protocol alleging a Trustee has breached the~~

~~*An Alleged breach of the Trustee Code of Conduct.*~~

~~**Formal Complaint** means a formal written statement of allegations in the form of Appendix 1 to this Complaint Protocol.~~

~~**Informal Complaint** means any informal complaint process contemplated in this Complaint Protocol.~~

~~**Inquiry** includes an investigation.~~

~~**Integrity Commissioner** means the Integrity Commissioner appointed by the Board of Trustees shall be addressed in accordance with the Peel District School Board By-Laws.~~

~~**Trustee** means a member of the Board elected or appointed in accordance with the *Municipal Elections Act* and/or the *Education Act*, and includes student trustees.~~

~~4.0 Responsibility~~

~~The Board of Trustees, the PDSB's Integrity Commissioner, the Governance Officer and the Director of Education.~~

~~5.0 Application and Scope~~

~~This Complaint Protocol applies to all Trustees.~~

~~The Complaint Protocol outlines a number of ways by which concerns related to the conduct of Trustees are addressed. The Formal Complaint process must comply with s.218.3 of the Ontario *Education Act*.~~

~~The Code of Conduct and Complaint Protocol apply to:~~

- ~~(a) Trustees who have made the Declaration and filed it as outlined in Section 209 of the Ontario *Education Act* and only while they hold their seat; and~~
- ~~(b) Student trustees once they are elected or appointed to the Board of Trustees and only while they hold their seat.~~

~~Subject to the municipal election period described below, conduct by a Trustee outside of the above timeframe will not be the subject of a Complaint under the Code of Conduct and will not be investigated pursuant to the Complaint Protocol.~~

~~6.0 Limitations~~

~~6.1 Timelines~~

~~Any allegation of a breach of the Code of Conduct must be brought forward no later than six (6) months after the breach comes to the knowledge of a Trustee.~~

~~6.2 Suspension of Code During Municipal Election Period~~

~~In a municipal election year for Trustees, Complaints about the conduct of a sitting Trustee shall not be brought during the suspended period commencing on nomination day for a regular election pursuant to the Ontario *Municipal Elections Act* (currently the third Friday in August in the year of an election) and ending on the day of the first Board meeting following the regular election (known as the inaugural meeting in accordance with the Board by-laws) (the "**Suspended Period**"). The limitation period for bringing a complaint shall be ~~extended~~ as necessary.~~

~~If the Trustee accused of a breach of the Code of Conduct is not re-elected or acclaimed, no inquiry into the alleged breach of the Code of Conduct by procedures set out in the paragraphs that Trustee during their term in office shall be undertaken follow.~~

~~Trustees and Community Members may engage in the informal resolution process during this period, without the participation of the Integrity Commissioner.~~

~~During the Suspended Period, any open Formal Complaint investigation(s) shall be suspended, including the release of any final investigation reports to the Board, and only continued if the Trustee accused of a breach of the Code of Conduct is re-elected or acclaimed.~~

~~6.3 Anonymity~~

~~Anonymous Complaints will not be accepted or investigated by the Integrity Commissioner.~~

~~6.4 Statutory Powers Procedure Act~~

~~The Ontario *Statutory Procedures Act* does not apply to anything done regarding the enforcement of the Code of Conduct. No formal trial-type hearing will be conducted.~~

~~6.5 Removal from Office or Suspension of Honorarium~~

~~The Board of Trustees has no power to remove a Trustee from their elected seat or suspend their honorarium for a breach of the Code of Conduct.~~

~~7.0 Enforcement of the Code of Conduct~~

~~**NOTICE**~~

~~A Trustee who has reasonable grounds to believe that another Trustee has breached this Code of Conduct may bring notify the following persons in writing of the alleged breach to the attention of the Board of Trustees in accordance with the Informal or Formal Complaint processes below.~~

~~Any allegation of the breach of the Code of Conduct shall be investigated and/or resolved as outlined in the Informal Complaint process or Formal Complaint process described below.~~

- ~~— Only serious and/or reoccurring breaches of the Code of Conduct should be investigated as outlined in the Formal Complaint process. It is expected that whenever possible, allegations of a breach of the Code of Conduct shall be investigated following the Informal Complaint process. the Vice Chair, if the notice relates to the conduct of the Chair;~~
- ~~— another Trustee, who is neither the complainant nor the subject of the complaint, if the notice relates to the conduct of both the Chair and Vice-Chair;~~
- ~~— In all other situations, the Chair.~~

~~A Trustee who submits a written notification of an alleged breach of the Code shall provide a copy of the notification to the Director of Education.~~

~~A person receiving a written notification of an alleged breach shall immediately provide a copy of the notice to the Trustee who is alleged to have breached the Code.~~

~~A written notification alleging a breach of the code of conduct shall include,~~

- ~~(a) the name and contact information of the member alleging the breach;~~
- ~~(b) the name and contact information of the Trustee whose conduct is the subject of the notification;~~
- ~~(c) the date of the alleged breach;~~
- ~~(d) a description of the alleged breach; and~~
- ~~(e) the provision of the Code of Conduct that was allegedly breached.~~

~~Any complaint of an alleged breach that does not satisfy all of the above requirements will not be accepted.~~

~~**INFORMAL RESOLUTION**~~

~~It is recognized that from time to time a contravention of the Code may occur that is trivial, or committed through inadvertence, or an error of judgment made in good faith. In the spirit of collegiality and the best interests of the Board, the first purpose of alerting a Trustee to a breach of the Code is to assist the Trustee in understanding their obligations under the Code of Conduct. Only serious and/or reoccurring breaches of the Code should be investigated following the Formal Complaint process. Trustees are encouraged, but not required, to make best efforts to resolve such matters informally.~~

~~7.1 Informal Complaint Process~~

~~Trustees are encouraged to use informal means first Informal resolution is conducted in private and shall remain confidential, and may involve some or all of the following steps:~~

- ~~— seeking legal advice with respect to whether an Integrity Commissioner would be likely to address find that the conduct prohibited by the Code of Conduct. With the consent amounts to a breach of the complaining Trustee Code;~~
- ~~— Requesting assistance from the Chair, Vice Chair, Governance Officer or a neutral third party who may be able to mediate any outstanding concerns.~~
- ~~(a) Facilitating a meeting between the Trustee who brought the complaint, and the Trustee who is alleged to have breached the Code of Conduct, the Integrity Commissioner or the Chair of the Board may be a part of any informal process.;~~

~~The purpose of the Informal Complaint process is to bring the allegation of the beach directly to the attention of the discussing possible remedial measures with the Trustee who is alleged to have breached the Code of Conduct and to discuss possible remedial measures to correct the offending behavior. The Informal Complaint process is conducted in private and is to remain confidential.~~

- ~~(b) Trustees who have identified, for example an apology or witnessed conduct by a Trustee that they believe is in contravention of the Code of Conduct may address the prohibited conduct as follows: access to professional development training;~~

~~advise **REFERRAL TO INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER**~~

~~If the matter has not been resolved informally within twenty (20) business days of the providing a copy of the notice to the Trustee who is alleged to have breached the Code, the person to whom the notice was originally submitted shall refer the matter to an Integrity Commissioner, as recommended by the Director and appointed by resolution of the Board. If the Minister of Education has created a roster of Integrity Commissioners, the person appointed by the Board shall be from the roster.~~

~~If the Minister has not created a roster of Integrity Commissioners, the Board shall appoint a person who meets the criteria for Integrity Commissioners outlined in O. Regulation 306/24 “Integrity Commissioners and Process for Alleged Breaches of the Code of Conduct”.~~

INVESTIGATION

~~The Integrity Commissioner appointed by the Board shall conduct an investigation into the alleged breach of the Board’s Code of Conduct, to commence no later than fourteen (14) days after their appointment.~~

~~The Integrity Commissioner may refuse to conduct an investigation if:~~

~~The complaint was submitted more than sixty (60) days after the later of the date that the alleged breach occurred, or was discovered,^(H) unless the Integrity Commissioner is satisfied that the delay was in good faith and no substantial prejudice will result to any person affected by the delay; or~~
~~In the opinion of the Integrity Commissioner, the complaint is made in bad faith, or is frivolous or vexatious;~~

~~A breach is deemed to have been discovered on the earlier of:~~

~~The day on which~~

~~^(H) If a breach relates to a series of incidents the 60-day period runs from the day the last incident in the series was discovered.~~

- ~~(a) — the Trustee that the conduct contravenes the Code of Conduct with an explanation as to why;~~
- ~~(b) — encourage the Trustee to stop the prohibited conduct;~~
- ~~(c) — discuss remedial measures to correct the offending behaviour with the Trustee who is alleged to have breached the Code of Conduct;~~
- ~~(d) — keep a written record of the incidents including dates, times, locations, other persons present, and any other relevant information;~~
- ~~(e) — advise the Integrity Commissioner about the concerns related to the Trustee and any response of the Trustee;~~
- ~~(f) — if applicable, confirm to the Trustee who is alleged to have breached the Code of Conduct, the satisfaction with the response of the Trustee; or, if applicable, advise the Trustee of the dissatisfaction with the response;~~
- ~~(g) — if the parties agree, the Integrity Commissioner can participate in resolving or attempting to resolve the issues relating to the complaint; and (h) — consider the need to pursue a Formal Complaint.~~

The Trustee may seek advice or assistance from the Director of Education, the Governance Officer or the Integrity Commissioner for the above. The Informal Complaint process is encouraged; however, it is not required prior to beginning the formal complaint process.

7.2- Formal Complaint and Request for Inquiry Process

Initiating a Formal Inquiry

A Trustee who has reasonable grounds to believe that a Trustee has breached the Code of Conduct may bring the breach to the attention of the Board by first filing with the Integrity Commissioner the Formal Complaint that is signed by the complainant, setting out the following information:

- (a) the name of the Trustee who is alleged to have breached the Code of Conduct;
- (b) the alleged breach or breaches of the Code of Conduct;
- (c) information as to when the breach came to the complainant's attention;
- (d) the grounds for the belief by the complainant that a breach of the Code of Conduct has occurred; and
- (e) the names and contact information of the complainant and any witnesses to the breach or any other persons who have relevant information regarding the alleged breach.

7.3 Initial Assessment of Complaint by the Integrity Commissioner

- (a) The original written complaint shall be filed with the Integrity Commissioner for initial assessment to determine if the matter is a complaint with respect to noncompliance with the Code of Conduct. For greater certainty, the views or positions of a Trustee on matters to be determined by the Board of Trustees, including how they vote on a matter is not a code of conduct issue.
- (b) If the complaint is not a complaint with respect to non-compliance with the Code of Conduct or the complaint is covered by other legislation the Integrity Commissioner shall advise the complainant in writing as follows and that the Inquiry will not proceed:

- ~~i. — if the complaint is an allegation of a criminal nature consistent with the Criminal Code of Canada, the complainant shall be advised that if the complainant wishes to pursue any such allegation, the complainant must pursue it with the appropriate police force;~~
 - ~~ii. — if the complaint is with respect to non-compliance with the Municipal Conflict of Interest Act, the complainant shall be advised to review the matter with the complainant's own legal counsel;~~
 - ~~iii. — if the complaint is with respect to non-compliance with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, the complainant shall be referred to the appropriate Board department; or~~
 - ~~iv. — in other cases, the complainant shall be advised that the matter, or part of the matter, is not within the jurisdiction of the Integrity Commissioner to consider, with any additional reasons and referrals as the Integrity Commissioner considers appropriate.~~
- ~~(c) — If the Integrity Commissioner is of the opinion that the Formal Complaint and request for an Inquiry is out of time, frivolous, vexatious, or not made in good faith, or that there are no grounds or insufficient grounds for an investigation, the Integrity Commissioner shall not initiate an investigation, or, where any of the foregoing becomes apparent in the course of an investigation, the Integrity Commissioner shall terminate the investigation. The complainant and Trustee who is alleged to have breached the Code of Conduct, as appropriate, shall be advised of the decision with a rationale.~~
- ~~(d) — Where the complainant breaches the integrity of an investigation, including the confidentiality requirement referred to in section 7.4 (f) below, which confidentiality requirement includes, by sharing the details on social or any kind of media, or publicly discussing details of the Inquiry, the Integrity Commissioner may terminate the investigation and summarily dismiss a complaint. No report shall be presented to the Board of Trustees except if appropriate, to report that a Formal Complaint will not proceed for this reason.~~
- ~~(e) — If the Integrity Commissioner determines that they would be biased or have a conflict of interest regarding the subject matter of the Formal Complaint, Board General Counsel, Legal and Governance Services will select an independent outside investigator to conduct the Inquiry, including the initial assessment. The investigator will have the powers and duties of the Integrity Commissioner set out herein to conduct the Inquiry of the Formal Complaint.~~

7.4 Formal Complaint Inquiries by the Integrity Commissioner

- (a) — If after the initial assessment by the Integrity Commissioner, a Formal Complaint is proceeding, the Integrity Commissioner shall proceed with an investigation as follows, unless the complainant subsequently withdraws the Formal Complaint or agrees that it may be dealt with in accordance with the Informal Complaint process:
- (i) — Provide the Formal Complaint or any reformulation of the complaint prepared by the Integrity Commissioner to ensure that it accurately identifies and formulates an alleged breach or breaches of the Code of Conduct and protects the identity of any witnesses where appropriate to the Trustee who is alleged to have breached the Code of Conduct; and
 - (ii) — The Trustee shall provide to the Integrity Commissioner a written response to the complaint within ten (10) business days of receiving it or such period of time as the Integrity Commissioner deems appropriate in the circumstances.
- (b) — The Integrity Commissioner may conduct such Inquiry as they consider necessary, including interviewing the parties and witnesses in the order they see fit and to receive both oral or written statements from them.
- (c) — The Integrity Commissioner may speak to anyone relevant to the complaint and any Trustees or Board employees will cooperate in that regard, access and examine any relevant information, documents or electronic materials and enter any Board work location relevant to the complaint for the purposes of the Inquiry.
- (d) — Procedural fairness shall govern the Inquiry.
- (e) — The Formal Complaint will remain confidential and only be disclosed at the time of a public report by the Integrity Commissioner and to the Trustee alleged to have breached the Code of Conduct.
- (f) — Any Inquiry will be conducted in private and all parties and participants/witnesses in the Inquiry will preserve the confidentiality of all matters discussed and disclosed during the Inquiry, unless otherwise required to be disclosed by law and as determined by the Integrity Commissioner.

- (g) — If the Trustee who is alleged to have breached the Code of Conduct refuses to participate in the Inquiry, the Inquiry will proceed in their absence, including a final public report of the Integrity Commissioner.
- (h) — At any time following receipt and review of the Formal Complaint, or at any time during the Inquiry, where the Integrity Commissioner believes there is an opportunity to successfully resolve the matter without a formal investigation, and both the complainant and the Trustee alleged to have breached the Code agree, an informal resolution may be pursued.
- (i) — If, during the course of the Inquiry, the Integrity Commissioner discovers that the subject-matter is being investigated by police, that a charge has been laid, or is being dealt with in accordance with a procedure established under other legislation, the formal Inquiry shall be suspended until the police investigation, charge or matter under other legislation has been finally disposed of. This shall be reported in confidence to the Board.

7.5- Reports to the Board of Trustees

- (a) — At the conclusion of an investigation of a Formal Complaint that has not been resolved, the Integrity Commissioner shall prepare a written report to the Board of Trustees outlining the finding of facts and a recommendation or opinion as to whether or not the Code of Conduct was breached with reasons, and if so, recommend any sanctions (the “**Final Report**”). This shall be completed within 90 days after receipt of the Formal Complaint unless the Integrity Commissioner determines that a longer period of time is required to complete the Final Report and the reason is explained in the Final Report. The parties will be advised of the expected date of delivery of the Final Report.
- (b) — The Integrity Commissioner may make interim reports to the Board of Trustees where necessary and as required to address any instances of interference, obstruction, delay, or retaliation encountered during the Inquiry.
- (c) — The Final Report will be considered by the Board of Trustees in a public meeting, unless the meeting is closed to the public as follows:
 - In accordance with section 207(2) of the *Education Act*, a Final Report of a Formal Complaint investigation may be considered in a meeting closed to the public when the subject matter under consideration involves:
 - (i) — the security of the property of the Board;

- ~~(ii) — the disclosure of intimate, personal or financial information in respect of a member of the Board or Committee, an employee or prospective employee of the Board or a pupil or his or her parent or guardian;~~
- ~~(iii) — the acquisition or disposal of a school site;~~
- ~~(iv) — decisions in respect of negotiations with employees of the Board; or~~
- ~~(v) — litigation or any potential litigation affecting the Board and information that is subject to solicitor-client privilege.~~

~~In accordance with s.218.3 (11) of the *Education Act*, even if a meeting is closed to the public to consider the Final Report, the vote on the motion to determine whether or not the Code of Conduct was breached and any sanction imposed must be done at a public Board meeting.~~

~~7.6 - Board of Trustees Decision~~

- ~~(a) — The Final Report of the Integrity Commissioner shall be delivered to the Board of Trustees, including the Trustee alleged to have breached the Code of Conduct, through the General Counsel, Legal and Governance Services.~~
- ~~(b) — A decision by the Board of Trustees as to whether or not the Code of Conduct has been breached and the sanction, if any, shall be made as soon as practical after receipt of the Final Report by the Board of Trustees.~~
- ~~(c) — Trustees shall consider only the findings in the Final Report and as supplemented by the Integrity Commissioner, if necessary, when voting on the decision and sanction. No Trustee shall undertake their own investigation of the matter, including questioning the Integrity Commissioner, complainant, Trustee who is alleged to have breached the Code or any witnesses or persons participating in the Inquiry.~~
- ~~(d) — If the Board of Trustees determine that there has been no breach of the Code of Conduct or that a contravention occurred, although the Trustee alleged to have breached the Code took all reasonable measures to prevent it, or that a contravention occurred that was trivial, or committed through inadvertence, or an error of judgment made in good faith, no sanction shall be imposed. While the Board of Trustees makes the determination, the Integrity Commissioner may provide an opinion in the Final Report on these matters.~~
- ~~(e) — The determination of a breach of the Code of Conduct and the imposition of a sanction with respect to a Formal Complaint investigated in accordance with the Formal Inquiry process must be done by resolution of the Board of Trustees at a public Board meeting as~~

~~specified in the Ontario *Education Act*. Both resolutions shall be decided by a vote of at least two-thirds (2/3) of Trustees who are present and voting.~~

- ~~(f) — The results of the vote and reason(s) for the Board of Trustee’s decision shall be recorded in the minutes of the Board meeting.~~
- ~~(g) — The Trustee who is alleged to have breached the Code of Conduct shall not vote on a resolution to determine whether or not there is a breach or the imposition of a sanction. The Trustee who brought the complaint to the attention of the Board may vote on those resolutions.~~
- ~~(h) — The Trustee who is alleged to have breached the Code of Conduct may be present during the deliberations regarding the above but shall not participate in the deliberations or be required to answer any questions.~~
- ~~(i) — The Trustee who is alleged to have breached the Code of Conduct shall not in any way, after the Final Report is completed, influence the vote on the decision of breach or sanction, except as permitted during the review set out below after the Board of Trustees have made their original decision(s).~~

7.7 Sanctions

- ~~(a) — If the Board of Trustees determine that the Trustee has breached the Code of Conduct, the Board of Trustees may impose one or more of the following sanctions:

 - ~~(i) — Censuring the Trustee.~~
 - ~~(ii) — Barring the Trustee from attending all or part of a meeting of the Board or a meeting of the committee of the Board.~~
 - ~~(iii) — Barring the Trustee from sitting on one or more committees of the Board, for the period of time specified by the Board.~~~~
- ~~(b) — The Board of Trustees shall not impose a sanction which is more onerous than the above but may impose one that is less onerous such as a warning or requirement to complete specified professional development at the expense of the Board. The Board of Trustees has no power to declare the Trustee’s seat vacant or withhold the Trustee’s honorarium.~~
- ~~(c) — A Trustee who is barred from attending all or part of a meeting of the Board or a meeting of a committee of the Board is not entitled to receive any materials that relate to that meeting or that part of the meeting and that are not available to members of the public.~~
- ~~(d) — The imposition of a sanction barring a Trustee from attending all or part of a meeting of the Board shall be deemed to be authorization for the Trustee to be absent from the~~

meeting and therefore, not in violation of the Ontario *Education Act* and the Regulations thereunder regarding absences from meetings.

7.8 Required Steps After the Board's Decision

- (a) If the Board of Trustees determines that a Trustee has breached the Code of Conduct the Board of Trustees shall:
- (i) give the Trustee written notice of the determination, the reasons for the decision and any sanction imposed by the Board of the Trustees;
 - (ii) the notice shall inform the Trustee that they may make written submissions to the Board of Trustees in respect of the determination or sanction by the date specified in the notice that is at least fourteen (14) days after the notice is received by the Trustee; and
 - (iii) consider any submissions made by the Trustee and shall confirm or revoke the determination or sanction within 14 days after the submissions are received.
- (b) If the Board revokes a determination, any sanction imposed by the Board is revoked.
- (c) If the Board confirms a determination, the Board shall, within the fourteen (14) days above, confirm, vary or revoke the sanction.
- (d) If a sanction is varied or revoked, the variation or revocation shall be deemed to be effective as of the date the original determination was made.
- (e) The Board of Trustee's decision(s) to confirm or revoke a determination or confirm, vary or revoke a sanction shall be done by resolution at a meeting of the Board and the vote on the resolution shall be open to the public. Both resolutions shall be decided by a vote of at least a two-thirds majority the Trustees present and voting. The resolutions shall be recorded in the minutes of the meeting together with the reasons for confirming or revoking a determination.
- (f) The Board of Trustees shall provide to the Trustee alleged to have breached the Code of Conduct written notice of the decision to confirm or revoke the determination together with reasons for the decision and written notice of any decision to confirm, vary or revoke a sanction.
- (g) The Trustee alleged to have breached the Code of Conduct may be present during the deliberations regarding the above but shall not participate in the deliberations or be

required to answer any questions and shall not vote on the resolutions. The Trustee who brought the initial Formal Complaint may vote.

- ~~(h) — If appropriate, the original sanction may be stayed pending the review by the Board of Trustees of the determination or sanction. If the original sanction was stayed, the stay will be lifted and any sanction imposed will commence immediately after the Board’s decision on the review.~~

~~7.9- Payment of Legal Costs~~

- ~~(a) — Subject to subsection 7.9 (d) and (e), a Trustee who is the subject of a Formal Complaint under the Code of Conduct shall be reimbursed for actual and reasonable legal and related expenses (“Legal Costs”) up to a maximum of \$5,000.~~
- ~~(b) — In the case of an application under the *Judicial Review Procedure Act* by a Trustee who was the subject of a Formal Complaint under the Code of Conduct for judicial review of actions taken on a complaint against the Trustee by the Board of Trustees, the Trustees Legal Costs not covered by an award of costs by the court, up to a maximum of \$20,000 shall be reimbursed to them by the Board if the Trustee is successful on the application.~~
- ~~(c) — The Board of Trustees may consider the reimbursement of Legal Costs above the limit in subsection 7.9(b) on a case by case basis.~~
- ~~(d) — The Board of Trustees may consider an advance payment to the Trustee for Legal Costs prior to completion of an investigation for a maximum amount of \$5,000. The Trustee must repay to the Board all unused funds upon completion of an investigation. The Trustee will not be required to reimburse the spent funds if, upon completion of the investigation 7.9(e) below applies. Otherwise, all advanced funds must be repaid to the Board immediately upon conclusion of the investigation.~~
- ~~(e) — Legal Costs shall only be reimbursed under this section to the Trustee, if the Board of Trustees concludes that there has been no contravention of the Code of Conduct by the Trustee or that it was found that the Trustee took all reasonable steps to prevent the contravention, or that a contravention occurred that was trivial, or committed through inadvertence, or an error of judgment made in good faith, and the Board of Trustees conclusion is not overturned on judicial review.~~
- ~~(f) — Any award of costs under subsection 7.9(e) shall be contingent on a report to the Board of Trustees from the Board’s General Counsel, Legal and Governance Services and the Associate Director of Operations and Equity of Access to Support Services.~~

~~8.0 Evaluation~~

~~This procedure is to be reviewed and updated as required but at a minimum every four (4) years.~~

~~8.0 Appendices / Reference Documents~~

~~Appendix 1: Complaint Form (Form 708A)~~

- ~~• Legislative Acts and Regulations: Judicial Review Procedure Act~~
- ~~• Municipal Elections Act~~
- ~~• Education Act and Regulations~~

~~- Reference Documents~~

- ~~• Appointment, Selection, and Jurisdiction of the Integrity Commissioner~~
- ~~• Board Member Code of Conduct~~

~~Appendix 1~~

~~Peel District School Board Board Member Code of Conduct – Formal
Complaint Form~~

~~Nature of Complaint:~~

~~_____,
_____, (full name), of the
(City, Town, of residence etc.) _____ in the
Province of Ontario.~~

~~**STATE THE FOLLOWING:**~~

~~1. I have personal knowledge of the facts as outlined below, because:~~

[Empty rectangular box for text entry]

(insert reasons e.g., I work for.....I attended a meeting at which...etc.)

2. I have reasonable and probable grounds to believe that: _____ (specify name of Trustee) a member of the Peel District School Board, has

contravened Section(s) _____

– _____ (specify section(s) of the Board Member Code of Conduct)

3. Date of the alleged breach _____ and Date of when the alleged breach came to my attention _____

The particulars of which are as follows in attached Schedule "A":

(Set out the statements of fact in consecutively numbered paragraphs in the attached Schedule "A", with each paragraph being confined, as far as possible, to a particular statement of fact. You may refer to documents in this complaint and attach them to support this complaint. Please provide the names and contact information of any witnesses or persons with relevant information.

DATED THIS _____ DAY OF _____, 20 __, _____ Schedule "A"

Schedule "A" to the Board Member Code of Conduct – Formal Complaint Form

(If more than one page is required, please photocopy this blank page and mark each additional page as 2 of #, 3 of #, etc. in the top right corner.)

[Large empty rectangular box with horizontal lines for writing the details of the complaint]

(Signature of person making the complaint)

Appointment, Selection, and Jurisdiction of the Integrity Commissioner

7.01 Objective

7.01.1 To establish the office of the Integrity Commissioner to provide advisory support and education to Trustees in matters of ethics and the application of the Board Member Code of Conduct and to investigate Code of Conduct Complaints.

7.02 Definitions

———— In this Directive,

7.02.1 Board means the Peel District School Board.

7.02.2 Complaint means a formal written statement of allegations in the form of Appendix A to Board Member Code of Conduct Complaint Protocol or any informal complaint contemplated by the Complaint Protocol alleging a Trustee has breached Board Member Code of Conduct.

7.02.3 Staff Member means an employee of the Peel District School Board.

7.02.4 Trustee means a member of the Board elected or appointed in accordance with the *Municipal Elections Act* and/or the *Education Act*, and includes student trustees.

7.03 — Responsibility

7.03.1 The Board of Trustees:

7.04 Appointment of the Integrity Commissioner

7.04.1 The Board of Trustees shall appoint, terminate, or renew an Integrity Commissioner by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of Trustees present and voting at a regular or special meeting of the Board.

7.04.2 The initial term of the Integrity Commissioner shall be for three (3). The term may be extended by the Board of Trustees for up to two (2) additional terms of two (2) years each.

~~7.05 Selection of the Integrity Commissioner~~

~~**7.05.1** The selection process for the Integrity Commissioner shall be conducted in accordance with the procurement policies of the Board and overseen by a selection committee of Trustees appointed by the Board of Trustees and chaired by the Chair of the Board or designate.~~

~~**7.05.2** The selection committee shall recommend a candidate for the office of the Integrity Commissioner for approval by the Board of Trustees.~~

~~7.06 Role of the Integrity Commissioner~~

~~**7.06.1** The Integrity Commissioner has the following responsibilities:~~

- ~~(a) — providing timely advice to Trustees about their obligations under the Board Member Code of Conduct and the application of the Board Member Code of Conduct Complaint Protocol;~~
- ~~(b) — providing general information to Trustees about their duties and obligations under the Municipal Conflict of Interest Act but not providing legal advice;~~
- ~~(c) — reviewing and making inquiries related to Complaints of alleged breaches by Trustees of the Board Member Code of Conduct in accordance with the Board Member Code of Conduct Complaint Protocol;~~
- ~~(d) — providing educational programs to Trustees on issues of ethics and integrity;~~
- ~~(e) — issuing interpretation bulletins, including examples of activities that contravene the Board Member Code of Conduct and activities that are permissible and do not contravene the Code of Conduct;~~
- ~~(f) — all documents generated in the course of an investigation or inquiry, informal resolution of Complaints or the giving of advice to Trustees, including without limitation, notes, recordings of interviews, draft reports or opinions, etc. are the property of the Integrity Commissioner and not the Board and will not be produced unless required by law, statute or court/tribunal order and, on completion of their term, will transfer any open files related to ongoing matters to the incoming Integrity Commissioner;~~
- ~~(g) — ensuring the secure collection, use, disclosure; retention; and destruction of records containing personal or confidential information in their custody or control as required by all applicable privacy laws, including the *Municipal Freedom of*~~

~~Information and Protection Act as if they were an institution within the meaning of that Act; and~~

~~(h) providing such other duties respecting ethical and conduct matters as assigned by the Board.~~

~~7.06.2 The Integrity Commissioner does not have jurisdiction over complaints about Staff Members.~~

~~7.06.3 The Integrity Commissioner shall carry out their duties independently.~~

~~7.06.4 The Integrity Commissioner does not have jurisdiction to investigate or make inquiries in respect of Complaints that are related to the Criminal Code, the Municipal Conflict of Interest Act, the Municipal Elections Act, or the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.~~

~~7.07 Accountability of the Integrity Commissioner~~

~~7.07.1 The Integrity Commissioner is accountable to and reports to the Board of Trustees.~~

~~7.07.2 The Integrity Commissioner shall prepare a written annual report to the Board of Trustees which will be made available to the public. The report will include for the preceding year:~~

- ~~(a) the number and general nature of the Complaints, made pursuant to the Board Member Code of Conduct (formal and informal) to the Integrity Commissioner and the disposition of those Complaints;~~
- ~~(b) the number of inquiries and general nature of them, received by the Integrity Commissioner regarding the application of the Board Member Code of Conduct;~~
- ~~(c) the number of Trustees requesting advice regarding the application of the Board Member Code of Conduct, and of that number how many of the Integrity Commissioner's responses were informal opinions and how many were formal opinions;~~
- ~~(d) other activities undertaken by the Integrity Commissioner to support the Board of Trustees to achieve high standards of ethical conduct and thereby enhance public confidence in the effective governance of the Board (for example, training, education, reports, interpretation bulletins, etc.); and~~

~~(c) any other relevant information regarding the position of the Integrity Commissioner as requested by the Board of Trustees.~~

~~7.08 Powers of Integrity Commissioner on Inquiry~~

~~**7.08.1** The Integrity Commissioner is entitled to have free and unencumbered access, for the sole purpose of an inquiry or investigation undertaken by the Integrity Commissioner pursuant to the Board Member Code of Conduct Complaint Protocol, to all records or documents, both paper and electronic, including, but not limited to books, accounts, financial records, electronic records and communications, files, papers, things or property belonging to or used by the Board or Trustees that the Integrity Commissioner believes are necessary for an inquiry or investigation of a~~

~~Complaint made in accordance with the Board Member Code of Conduct Complaint Protocol. The Board Director of Education, or designate will facilitate such access where permitted in law.~~

PEEL DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD POLICY

Trustee Code of Conduct

POLICY ID: GOV108

FUNCTIONAL CATEGORY: Governance

RESPONSIBILITY: Governance Officer

APPROVAL: Board of Trustees

APPROVAL DATE: 8/28/2024

EFFECTIVE DATE: 8/28/2024

PROJECTED REVIEW DATE: 2026-2027

REVIEW SCHEDULE: Every four (4) years after May 15, 2023

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 This Trustee Code of Conduct ("Code of Conduct") supports both legislated requirements and Board established By-Laws, Governance Directives, policies and procedures that set out the governance and accountability framework at the Peel District School Board (PDSB or the Board). The *Education Act and Ontario Regulation 312/24 (Members of School Boards-Code of Conduct)* requires school boards to adopt codes of conduct that apply to board members (also referred to as Trustees). This Code of Conduct supports the Board's commitment to meeting high standards of conduct by Trustees which uphold and advance principles of equity and human rights while providing good governance in the interests of all students of the Board. This Code of Conduct is to be interpreted in a manner that is consistent with the Board's Human Rights Policy (Policy 51) and the Equity and Inclusive Education Policy (Policy 54) along with the *Ontario Human Rights Code*.
- 1.2 A Trustee position is an elected position which carries with it the understanding that the electorate will decide at election time its support for the effectiveness of a Trustee. It is important to recognize the public trust and responsibility the collective body carries. This trust and responsibility is honoured through determining and enforcing norms of acceptable behaviour. These encompass principles of intersectional equity and human rights and a commitment to promoting a welcoming and safe environment for all students while eliminating systemic barriers to student success. This also includes confronting all forms of hate or bias including without limitation anti-Black and anti-Indigenous racism, anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, and homophobia.
- 1.3 A code of conduct policy contributes to confidence in public education and respect for the integrity of Trustees in the community. It promotes acceptable and respectful behaviours

of members of the Board of Trustees when engaging with one another and with the richly diverse community the Board serves.

- 1.4 Trustees will also support the Mission, Vision and Values, and any strategic plan of the Peel District School Board.
- 1.5 The Appointment, Selection and Jurisdiction of an Integrity Commissioner shall be in accordance with O. Regulation 306/24 *"Integrity Commissioners and Process for Alleged Breaches of the Code of Conduct"*.
- 1.6 Trustees and members of the Audit Committee who are not Trustees shall sign the Trustee Code of Conduct Acknowledgement and Undertaking, set out as Appendix A, at the beginning of their the term of office or the inaugural meeting of the Board, as applicable.

2.0 Objective

- 2.1 To establish governing principles and standards for acceptable behaviour by Trustees which encompass the Board's obligation and commitment to upholding principles of human rights, equity, and inclusion, and to promote a welcoming and safe environment for all students and members of the public.

3.0 Responsibility

- 3.1 The Board of Trustees, the PDSB's Integrity Commissioner, Director of Education and Governance Officer.

4.0 Application and Scope

- 4.1 The Trustee Code of Conduct, and Complaint Protocol attached as Appendix A, apply to all municipally elected members of the Board of Trustees currently in office, and to members of the Board's Audit Committee in relation to their functions, powers and duties as members of the committee. Student Trustees, and members of other Committees of the Board, are also expected to comply with the provisions herein.

5.0 Definitions

“Board” means the Peel District School Board, which is also referred to as the PDSB.

“Discrimination” means discriminatory behaviour as defined by the PDSB workplace violence and harassment prevention policies, human rights policy and anti-racism policy, and the Ontario Human Rights Code.

“Harassment” means harassing behaviour as defined by the PDSB workplace violence and harassment prevention policies, the Ontario Human Rights Code, and the Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Act, and includes engaging in a course of vexatious comment or conduct that is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome.

“Inquiry” includes an investigation.

“Integrity Commissioner” means the Integrity Commissioner appointed by the Board of Trustees in accordance with the Compliant Protocol attached hereto as Appendix A.

“Official Business” means duties and responsibilities of Trustees as prescribed by the *Education Act* and regulations thereunder, Board By-Laws, and Governance Directives, policies and procedures.

“Presiding Officer” means the person who presides over a meeting of the Board or Committee of the Board.

“Staff Members” means any employee or contractor of the Peel District School Board.

“Supply Chain Activities” means all activities directly or indirectly related to the Board’s planning, sourcing, procurement, moving, and payment processes.

“Trustee” means a member fo the board, as defined in the Education Act.

“Trustees Office” means the authority and public duties attached to the position of being elected or appointed as a PDSB Trustee.

“Supply Chain Activities” means all activities whether directly or indirectly related to organizational planning, sourcing, procurement, moving, and payment processes.

6.0 Code of Conduct

- 6.1 Transparency, accountability, and public confidence are fundamental components for the effective governance of school boards as public bodies responsible to their communities and to the provincial government. The conduct of Trustees must be of the highest standard to maintain the confidence of the public. This Code of Conduct represents the Board’s commitment to meeting high standards of conduct, professionalism and upholding a culture of anti-racism and anti-oppression.
- 6.2 Every Trustee shall comply with this Code of Conduct and any applicable Board by-law, resolution, policy, or procedure, and shall behave in a manner that is consistent with human rights principles and which promotes equity and inclusion at all times. When acting or holding themselves out as a Trustee, the Trustee: (1) shall treat people equally without discrimination based on a person’s race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, marital status, family status, or disability; and (2) shall conduct themselves in a manner that would not discredit or compromise the integrity of the board.

Integrity and Dignity of Office - Principles

- 6.3 Trustees of the Board shall discharge their duties loyally, faithfully, respectfully, impartially, in the spirit of equity, and in a manner that will inspire public confidence in the abilities and integrity of the Board.
- 6.4 Trustees of the Board shall recognize that the expenditure of school board funds is a public trust and endeavour to see that the funds are expended efficiently, and in the best interests of the students.
- 6.5 Trustees of the Board recognize their obligation to promote equality, diversity, and inclusion for all students, with specific recognition for the historical and systemic oppression faced by Black, Indigenous, and other racialized students.
- 6.6 Trustees of the Board must uphold the dignity of the office and conduct themselves in a professional manner and act with decorum at all times, whether in person or through virtual or electronic communications including on social media platforms. Trustees must conduct themselves in a professional manner and act with decorum especially when

attending Board events, when engaging with each other or with the community in their capacity as a Trustee, or while on Board property.

- 6.7 Trustees shall ensure that their comments are issue-based and not personal, demeaning, discriminatory, or disparaging with regard to any person, including Staff Members or fellow Trustees and shows respect for their differing points of view.
- 6.8 No Trustee shall engage in conduct that would discredit or compromise the integrity of the Board or Trustees, or be inconsistent with the Board's values of antiracism and anti-oppression. Trustees are expected to work with other Trustees and Staff Members in a spirit of equity, respect, openness, courtesy, and co-operation.
- 6.9 A Trustee shall not advance allegations of misconduct and/or give notice of an alleged breach of this Code of Conduct that are trivial, frivolous, vexatious, made in bad faith, or vindictive in nature against another Trustee of the Board.
- 6.10 Trustees shall serve and be seen to serve their school communities in an equitable, constructive, respectful, conscientious and diligent manner.
- 6.11 Trustees shall be committed to performing their functions with integrity and to avoid the improper use of the influence of their office, and conflicts of interest, both apparent and real.
- 6.12 Trustees are expected to perform their duties in office and arrange their private lives, including any digital content, whether on social media or otherwise, in a manner that promotes public confidence and can be upheld under close public scrutiny.
- 6.13 Trustees shall seek to serve the public interest by upholding both the letter and the spirit of the laws of the Federal Parliament and Ontario Legislature, and the ByLaws,; Governance Directives,; policies,; and procedures adopted by the Board, including the Board's human rights and anti-racism policies.
- 6.14 A Trustee shall discharge their duties in accordance with the *Education Act* and any regulations, directives or guidelines thereunder and in adherence to human rights principles. This shall include respecting and understanding the roles and duties of individual Trustees, the Board of Trustees as a whole, the Director of Education, Staff Members, the community and the Chair of the Board.

6.15 Trustees acknowledge that this Code of Conduct complies with provincial and federal legislation which also govern the conduct of Trustees, including:

- (a) Charter of Rights and Freedoms
- (b) Criminal Code of Canada
- (c) Education Act
- (d) Municipal Conflict of Interest Act
- (e) Municipal Elections Act, 1996
- (f) Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act
- (g) Occupational Health and Safety Act
- (h) Ombudsman Act
- (i) Ontario Human Rights Code

Trustees recognize that the Integrity Commissioner does not have any authority to receive or investigate complaints to the extent that the complaint requires adjudication with respect to any alleged contravention of the above legislation.

Respect for Confidentiality

6.16 Confidential Information includes,

- (a) information in the custody and/or control of the PDSB that is subject to the privacy provisions of the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA)* or other legislation, including, but not limited to personal information of staff and students (including the contents of a student's OSR), third party corporate, commercial, scientific, or technical information, solicitor-client advice or litigation privileged information;
- (b) information in respect of litigation or potential litigation affecting the Board, and information that is subject to solicitor-client privilege;
- (c) information discussed during closed sessions of the Board pursuant to section 207 of the *Education Act*;

- (d) intimate, personal, health or financial information of a Trustee, staff member or prospective staff member, student, parent or guardian;
 - (e) Information related to the acquisition or disposal of the Board's real property, including a school site;
 - (f) decisions in respect of negotiations with staff members; and
 - (g) investigations by the Ombudsman
- 6.17 No Trustee shall disclose or release by any means to anyone not authorized, any confidential information obtained or made available to them in their role as Trustee, in either oral or written form (including online and social media platforms), except as authorized by law or by the Board to do so. This is an indefinite continuous obligation that extends beyond the Trustee's term of office.
- 6.18 No Trustee shall use confidential information in a manner that would be detrimental to the interests of the Board or for the purpose of personal gain, including for the gain of the Trustee's parent, spouse, or child. In this section, "child", "parent" and "spouse" have the same meaning as in section 1 of the *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act*.
- 6.19 Trustees should not access or attempt to gain access to confidential information in the care, control or custody of the Board unless it is necessary for the performance of their governance duties and not prohibited by law or Board policy.
- 6.20 Every Trustee shall keep confidential any information or documents disclosed or discussed at a meeting of the Board or committee of the Board, or part of a meeting of the Board or committee of the Board, that was closed to the public, and keep confidential the substance of deliberations of a meeting closed to the public, unless required to divulge such information or documents by law or authorized by the Board to do so. Under no circumstances should the substance of deliberations of a meeting closed to the public be recorded without advance permission.
- 6.21 Individual Trustees are only entitled to information in the possession of the PDSB that is relevant to matters before the Board or a committee of the Board. Otherwise, an individual Trustee enjoys the same level of access rights to information as any other member of the community.

- 6.22 If there is uncertainty about whether information is confidential, the Trustee should check with the appropriate Staff Member, which includes the Governance Officer or Privacy Officer, consult with the Director of Education or seek the advice of the Integrity Commissioner.

Upholding Decisions

- 6.23 All Trustees of the Board shall accept that authority rests with the Board, and that a Trustee has no individual authority other than that delegated by the Board.
- 6.24 Each Trustee shall uphold the implementation of any Board resolution after it is passed by the Board. A proper motion for reconsideration or rescission, if permitted by the Board's Rules of Order, can be brought by a Trustee.
- 6.25 Subject to section 6.27, a Trustee should be able to explain the rationale for a resolution passed by the Board. A Trustee may respectfully state his or her position on a resolution provided it does not in any way undermine the implementation of the resolution or confidence in the Board as a whole.
- 6.26 Each Trustee shall comply with Board policies, procedures, By-Laws, Governance Directives and Rules of Order, as well as all applicable legislation.
- 6.27 In accordance with section 218.4 (e) of the *Education Act*, the Chair of the Board is the spokesperson to the public on behalf of the Board, unless otherwise determined by the Board. No other Trustee shall act as spokesperson to the public or on behalf of the Board unless expressly authorized by the Board of Trustees to do so. When individual Trustees express their opinions in public, including when expressing opinions on online or social media platforms, they must make it clear that they are not speaking on behalf of the Board.

Ontario Broader Public Sector (BPS) Supply Chain Code of Ethics

(The BPS Code of Ethics does not supersede the Code of Conduct but supplements the Code of Conduct with standards of practice specific to the supply chain.)

- 6.28 Personal Integrity and Professionalism – To the extent that Trustees may have any involvement with Supply Chain Activities they must act, and be seen to act, with integrity and professionalism. Honesty, care and due diligence must be integral to all Supply Chain Activities within and between the Board, suppliers and other stakeholders. Respect must be demonstrated for each other and for the environment. Confidential information must be safeguarded. Trustees must not engage in any activity that may create, or appear to create, a conflict of interest, such as accepting gifts or favours, providing preferential treatment, or publicly endorsing suppliers or products.
- 6.29 Accountability and Transparency - Supply Chain Activities must be open and accountable. In particular, contracting and purchasing activities must be fair, transparent and conducted with a view to obtaining the best value for public resources. Trustees must ensure that Board resources are used in a responsible, efficient and effective manner.
- 6.30 Compliance and Continuous Improvement - Trustees who are directly or indirectly involved with purchasing or other Supply Chain Activities must comply with this Code of Ethics and the laws of Canada and Ontario. The Board must continuously work to improve supply chain policies and procedures, to improve supply chain knowledge and skill levels.

Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality

- 6.31 Trustees are expected to carry out their duties with impartiality and objectivity. No Trustee shall accept a gift, benefit, or service from any person, group or entity that has dealings with the Board if a reasonable person might conclude that the gift, benefit, hospitality or services could influence the Trustee when performing their duties to the Board.
- 6.32 For greater certainty, prohibited gifts, benefits, or services includes, but is not limited to, tickets or admission to a charity event, professional development or training sessions or anything of monetary value. Trustees will not be in violation of section 6.31 if:
- i. the gift, benefit, or service is of nominal value, meaning valued at no more than \$25,
 - ii. the gift, benefit, or service is given as an expression of courtesy or hospitality, and
 - iii. accepting the gift, benefit, or service is reasonable in the circumstances.

Trustees shall report all gifts, benefits, or services received to the Chair of the Board and the Governance Officer.

- 6.33 For these purposes, a gift, benefit, or service provided with the Trustee's knowledge to a Trustee's spouse, child, or parent, as defined in the *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act*, is deemed to be provided to that Trustee.
- 6.34 Trustees shall not use their position for personal gain or improper advantage.
- 6.35 An invitation to attend or participate in an event or a function directly connected with the performance of a Trustee's duties of office where the Trustee has a ceremonial, presentational or representational official role is not considered by this Code of Conduct, to be a gift. This type of attendance is considered to be fulfillment of official public duties.

Use of Board Property, Services and Other Resources

- 6.37 No Trustee should use, or permit the use of Board resources, including but not limited to the time and/ or services of Staff Members, Board events, Board facilities, Board funds, Board information and Board infrastructure or other resources (e.g., Board-owned materials, websites, and social media platforms) for activities other than the business of the PDSB. No Trustee may obtain personal financial gain from the use or sale of Board-developed intellectual property (e.g., inventions, creative writings and drawings), computer programs, technical innovations, or other items capable of being patented, or from the sale of Board provided mobile phones and all other technological equipment, since all such property remains exclusively that of the Board.

Election Campaign Work

- 6.38 Election activity refers to campaigns for municipal, provincial and federal office or campaigns on a question on a ballot.
- 6.39 No Trustee shall use the facilities, equipment, supplies, services, staff or other resources of the Board (including Board logos, newsletters, social media sites or profiles and websites linked through the Board's website, contact information including email addresses obtained as a result of the member's performance of their duties as a Trustee) for any election campaign or campaign-related activities. No Trustee shall undertake campaign-related activities on Board property or during Board-hosted meetings (whether in person or virtual). No Trustee shall use the services of staff for election-related purposes during

hours in which those persons receive any compensation from the Board. All Trustees shall comply with the PDSB Board Resources Policy.

Improper Use of Influence

- 6.40 A Trustee shall not use their office to advance the Trustee's interests or the interests of any family member or person or organization with whom or with which the Trustee is related or associated.
- 6.41 No Trustee shall use their office to obtain employment with the Board for the Trustee or a Trustee family member. This rule includes, but is not limited to, the prohibition of holding out the prospect or promise of future advantage through a Trustee's purported influence within the Board in return for any present action or inaction to the private advantage of the Trustee, their family members or any person or organization with whom the Trustee is related or associated.
- 6.42 No Trustee shall use the influence of their office for any purpose other than for the exercise of their official duties.

Conduct Regarding Current and Prospective Employment

- 6.43 No Trustee shall allow any current employment or the prospect of their future employment by a person or entity to improperly or for personal gain affect the performance of their duties to the Board.

Discreditable Conduct

- 6.44 All Trustees have a duty to treat members of the public, one another, and Staff Members respectfully and without abuse, bullying or intimidation, and to ensure that the work environment at the Board is free from discrimination and harassment. This provision applies to all forms of written and oral communications, including via social media.

Reprisals and Obstruction

- 6.45 Harassing or discriminatory behavior, as defined in the PDSB's Human Rights Policy (Policy 51), the Equity and Inclusive Education Policy (Policy 54), the Ontario *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, and the Ontario *Human Rights Code*, which occurs in the course of, or is related to, the performance of official business and duties of the Trustees, constitutes a contravention of this Code of Conduct.
- 6.46 Trustees must respect the integrity of this Code of Conduct and cooperate with inquiries conducted in accordance with the Trustee Code of Conduct Complaint Protocol and any other procedures set by the Board for addressing complaints of a breach of this Code of Conduct. Any reprisal or threat of reprisal against a complainant or anyone else for providing information to the Integrity Commissioner is prohibited. It is a violation of this Code of Conduct to obstruct the Integrity Commissioner in the carrying out of their responsibilities, for example, by destroying documents or erasing electronic communications.
- 6.47 Trustees have a duty to respond to and comply with all reasonable requests of the Integrity Commissioner and a failure to do so is a violation of this Code of Conduct.
- 6.48 Trustees shall be respectful of the role of the office of the Integrity Commissioner.

Acting On Advice of Integrity Commissioner

- 6.49 If there is uncertainty about whether an action or activity constitutes a breach of this Code of Conduct, a Trustee may seek the guidance of the Integrity Commissioner.

Chair/Presiding Officer

- 6.51 Nothing in this Code of Conduct prevents the Chair of the Board or Presiding Officer of any meeting of the Board or Committee of the Board from exercising their power pursuant to s. 207(3) of the *Education Act* to expel or exclude from any meeting any person who has demonstrated improper conduct at the meeting. For greater certainty, this may be done at the discretion of the Chair or Presiding Officer as the case may be, and without the necessity of a complaint or conducting an inquiry before an expulsion or exclusion from a meeting. The rationale for this provision is that a Chair or Presiding Officer must have the

ability to control a meeting. Any Trustee who does not abide by a reasonable expulsion or exclusion from a meeting is deemed to have breached this Code of Conduct.

- 6.52 The Chair of the Board or Presiding Officer of any meeting of the Board or Committee of the Board shall exercise their powers in a fair and impartial manner having due regard for every Trustee's opinion or view, the PDSB's Human Rights Policy (Policy 51) and the Equity and Inclusive Education Policy (Policy 54), and the Ontario *Human Rights Code*.
- 6.53 The Chair of the Board or Presiding Officer shall follow the special rules of order of the Board and/or the adopted Rules of Order and meeting procedures contained in any Policy or By-Laws of the Board. A breach of a rule of order or meeting/parliamentary procedure should be dealt with at the meeting in question by a Trustee rising to a point of order or appealing a ruling of the Chair in accordance with any applicable rule of order. Once such a motion is dealt with by the Board of Trustees, all Trustees shall abide by that decision and no further action shall be undertaken pursuant to the Board Member Code of Conduct Complaint Protocol, except for persistent improper use of the applicable rules of order by the Chair or Presiding Officer.

7.0 Review and Public Availability of the Code of Conduct

- 7.1 This Code of Conduct is to be reviewed and updated by the Board as required in accordance with the Education Act and Regulations made there under. Specifically, the Board will review the Code of Conduct by no later than May 15, 2027. Each subsequent review shall be completed in the fourth year following the previous review and no later than May 15 in that year. After each review, the Board shall pass a resolution setting out any required changes or, if no changes are required, confirming the Code of Conduct. If one or more changes are set out in a Board resolution, the Board shall update its Code of Conduct to reflect the changes no later than August 31 in the year of the review.
- 7.2 The Board shall make this Code of Conduct publicly available on its website and shall indicate on its website the effective date of every change it makes to this Code of Conduct, other than changes of a typographical or similar nature. The Board shall also maintain an archive of all previous versions of its Code of Conduct, indicating the period during which each version applied, and shall ensure that the versions are publicly accessible.

8.0 Appendices

Appendix A: Trustee Code of Conduct Acknowledgement and Undertaking

Appendix B: Trustee Code of Conduct Complaint Protocol

9.0 Reference Documents

Policies:

- Anti-Racism Policy
- Trustee Expenses Policy 75
- Trustee Honoraria Policy 72
- Human Rights Policy 51
- Use of Board Resources Policy

10.0 By-Laws and Governance Directives

- Peel District School Board By-Laws and Governance Directives

Procedures:

- Workplace Violence EHS 4.1
- Workplace Harassment EHS 4.2

Legislation:

- Charter of Rights and Freedoms
- Criminal Code of Canada
- Education Act
- Municipal Conflict of Interest Act
- Municipal Elections Act, 1996

- Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act
- Occupational Health and Safety Act
- Ombudsman Act
- Ontario Human Rights Code

Revision History

Review Date	Approval Date	Description
	October 19, 2022	
November 27, 2023		Housekeeping Amendment – template migration
August 28, 2024		Revised to reflect change in legislation.

Trustee Code of Conduct Acknowledgement and Undertaking

I, _____, as Trustee of the Board, shall uphold this Code of Conduct.

I confirm that I have read, understood, and agree to abide by the PDSB's Trustee Code of Conduct Policy and Complaint Protocol and agree to abide by any applicable Board resolution, policy or procedure.

TRUSTEE SIGNATURE: _____

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

July 2024

Trustee Feedback on the Trustee Code of Conduct

Reporting Process

- The requirement for Trustees to contact the Trustee in question first puts Trustees in a bad place and creates an unsafe environment for reporting.
- Recommendation: For informal and formal complaints, Trustees should be able to report directly to the Integrity Commissioner (IC).
- The Code of Conduct requires greater clarity on processes for informal/formal complaints and how to get from one complaint process to the other.
- The Code of Conduct needs to outline different gradations of informal/formal processes. For example, there could be a review of the formal complaint by the IC who may subsequently advise that the informal process may be more suitable. The ultimate decision to pursue a formal or informal complaint will still rest with the Trustee filing the complaint. Further, the IC's recommendation may be reflected in their report.

Staff Reporting Mechanisms

- Where staff believe a Trustee has breached the Code of Conduct with respect to themselves, there should be an opportunity for an informal complaint process. Staff should be comfortable making a complaint in a safe environment.
- The current process is a barrier for staff as they must present a compelling case to a Trustee for the Trustee to file a report to the IC on their behalf.
- Informal complaint process for staff should be confidential and anonymous where the identity of the staff member is held confidential to protect against reprisal (or fear of) for filing a complaint. Where the interaction is between two individuals (staff member and the Trustee), it is recognized that upholding confidentiality may be difficult, but it should be maintained where possible.
- The informal complaint process for staff should not involve the Chair of the Board.
- The IC can support a resolution for an informal staff complaint process but no formal report or consequences. Formal reports can only be made by Trustees. Anonymity could be maintained in a formal reporting process that involves staff due to fear of reprisal.

Annual Reporting by the Integrity Commissioner

- The annual report by the Integrity Commissioner should contain non-identifiable information, and information should be reported in aggregate form. For example, “There were seven informal complaints.”
- Further disaggregation should be presented through an in-committee/closed session report. For example, “There were seven informal complaints. Three complaints were from staff and four complaints were from Trustees.”
- Staff complaints are only to be presented in closed session meetings with anonymized information.
- Regarding encounters between Trustees and staff as well as instances where Trustees engage in repetitive behaviour against staff:
 - The Director of Education should be provided with a summary report from the IC. This would allow for the Director to respond, as an employer, and take the necessary steps to ensure a safe and healthy workplace.

Role of the Chair of the Board

- The Chair should not be policing Trustees when receiving complaints directly from Staff. This reiterates the need for an informal complaint process for staff directly to the IC, who can report back to the Director to address any employer considerations.
- The Chair should not be engaged in a complaint process where the Chair is receiving staff complaints. This could create a conflict of interest if the Chair is the Trustee in question and compromise safety in the reporting process.

Informal Resolution

- Informal resolution is a helpful process that offers breathing room to reassess the incident, provides an opportunity for advice from the IC, and creates the conditions for respectful conversations between Trustees in a private context, and can foster relationship building. This should continue.

Enforcement

- Clear consequences for violation of the Code of Conduct are required.
- The IC needs to act on Code of Conduct violations that are brought to their attention.

**Peel District School Board
Trustee Code of Conduct Complaint Protocol**

An alleged breach of the Trustee Code of Conduct shall be addressed in accordance with the procedures set out in the paragraphs that follow.

NOTICE

A Trustee who has reasonable grounds to believe that another Trustee has breached this Code of Conduct may notify the following persons in writing of the alleged breach:

- (a) the Vice-Chair, if the notice relates to the conduct of the Chair;
- (b) another Trustee, who is neither the complainant nor the subject of the complaint, if the notice relates to the conduct of both the Chair and Vice-Chair;
- (c) In all other situations, the Chair.

A Trustee who submits a written notification of an alleged breach of the Code shall provide a copy of the notification to the Director of Education.

A person receiving a written notification of an alleged breach shall immediately provide a copy of the notice to the Trustee who is alleged to have breached the Code.

A written notification alleging a breach of the code of conduct shall include:

- (a) the name and contact information of the member alleging the breach;
- (b) the name and contact information of the Trustee whose conduct is the subject of the notification;
- (c) the date of the alleged breach;
- (d) a description of the alleged breach; and
- (e) the provision of the Code of Conduct that was allegedly breached.

Any complaint of an alleged breach that does not satisfy all of the above requirements will not be accepted.

INFORMAL RESOLUTION

It is recognized that from time to time a contravention of the Code may occur that is trivial, or committed through inadvertence, or an error of judgment made in good faith. In the spirit of collegiality and the best interests of the Board, Trustees are encouraged, but not required, to make best efforts to resolve such matters informally.

Informal resolution is conducted in private and shall remain confidential, and may involve some or all of the following steps:

- (a) seeking legal advice with respect to whether an Integrity Commissioner would be likely to find that the conduct amounts to a breach of the Code;
- (b) requesting assistance from the Chair, Vice Chair, Governance Officer or a neutral third party who may be able to mediate any outstanding concerns.
- (c) facilitating a meeting between the Trustee who brought the complaint, and the Trustee alleged to have breached the Code;
- (d) discussing possible remedial measures with the Trustee who is alleged to have breached the Code of Conduct, for example an apology or access to professional development training.

REFERRAL TO INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER

If the matter has not been resolved informally within twenty (20) business days of the providing a copy of the notice to the Trustee who is alleged to have breached the Code, the person to whom the notice was originally submitted shall refer the matter to an Integrity Commissioner, as recommended by the Director and appointed by resolution of the Board.

- (a) If the Minister of Education has created a roster of Integrity Commissioners, the person appointed by the Board shall be from the roster.
- (b) If the Minister has not created a roster of Integrity Commissioners, the Board shall appoint a person who meets the criteria for Integrity Commissioners outlined in O. Regulation 306/24 *"Integrity Commissioners and Process for Alleged Breaches of the Code of Conduct"*.

INVESTIGATION

The Integrity Commissioner appointed by the Board shall conduct an investigation into the alleged breach of the Board's Code of Conduct, to commence no later than fourteen (14) days after their appointment.

The Integrity Commissioner may refuse to conduct an investigation if:

- (a) The complaint was submitted more than sixty (60) days after the later of the date that the alleged breach occurred, or was discovered,¹ unless the Integrity Commissioner is satisfied that the delay was in good faith and no substantial prejudice will result to any person affected by the delay; or
- (b) In the opinion of the Integrity Commissioner, the complaint is made in bad faith, or is frivolous or vexatious,

A breach is deemed to have been discovered on the earlier of:

- (a) The day on which the Trustee notifying the Board first knew that the breach had occurred; and
- (b) The day on which a reasonable person with the abilities and in the circumstances of the Trustee notifying the Board ought to have known of the occurrence.

The decision of the Integrity Commissioner to refuse to conduct an investigation is final.

In conducting their investigation, the Integrity Commissioner shall have the power to:

- (a) Require the production of any records that may in any way relate to the investigation;
- (b) Examine and copy any such records; and
- (c) Require any officer of PDSB, or any other person, to appear before them and give evidence, on oath or affirmation, relating to the investigation.

Section 33 of the *Public Inquiries Act, 2009* shall apply to an investigation under this Code.

DECISION

The Integrity Commissioner shall make a determination with respect to the alleged breach of the Code of Conduct no later than ninety (90) days after commencing the investigation, unless

¹ If a breach relates to a series of incidents the 60-day period runs from the day the last incident in the series was discovered.

the Integrity Commissioner notifies the Board and the Trustee who is the subject of the complaint that an extension is necessary, and the reasons for the extension.

SANCTIONS

If the Integrity Commissioner determines that the Board's Code of Conduct has been breached, the Integrity Commissioner may impose one or more of the following sanctions:

- (a) **Censure:** The trustee is reprimanded
- (b) **Reduction of Honorarium:** the Trustee's honorarium may be reduced by up to 25% of the Trustee's combined base and enrollment amount for the year of the term of office in which the breach occurred, and the Trustee may be ordered to repay any amount already received for that year.
- (c) **Barring from meetings:** The Trustee may be barred from attending all or part of one or more meetings of the Board, or one or more meetings of a committee of the Board, for up to a maximum of ninety (90) days, or the balance of the Trustee's term, whichever is less.
- (d) **Barring from committees:** The Trustee may be barred from sitting on one or more committees of the Board, for up to ninety (90) days, or the balance of the Trustee's term, whichever is less.
- (e) **Barring from Chair/Vice Chair:** The Trustee may be barred from becoming Chair or Vice Chair of the Board, or of any committee of the Board, or removed from such a position if the position is already held.
- (f) **Barring from Representing the Board:** The Trustee may be barred from exercising the privileges of a Board member or from acting as a Board representative, or removed from such a position if it is already held.
- (g) **Other:** The Trustee may be subject to any other sanction that in the opinion of the Integrity Commissioner is reasonable and appropriate under the circumstances, and/or would promote compliance with the Board's Code of Conduct.

A Trustee who is barred from attending a meeting or part of a meeting is not entitled to receive any materials that relate to that meeting, or that part of the meeting, from which they are barred, except such materials as are available to the general public.

The Integrity Commissioner shall provide the Trustee who was the subject of the complaint, and the Board of Trustees, written notice of their determination as to whether or not there was a breach of the Code, which shall include

- (a) the reasons for the determination;

- (b) the reasons for the sanctions, if any; and
- (c) information about the right to appeal the decision.

NOTICE OF APPEAL

Either the Board of Trustees, or the Trustee who has been found by an Integrity Commissioner to have breached the Code of Conduct, may appeal the determination, the sanctions, or both.

A decision by the Board of Trustees to appeal shall be by Board resolution. The Trustee found to have breached the Code may not participate in the vote.

The Board of Trustees and the Trustee found to have breached the Code shall be the parties to the appeal.

The Appellant shall give written notice of the appeal to the other party, and the Deputy Minister, no later than fifteen (15) business days after receiving written notice of the integrity commissioner's determination.

APPEAL PANEL

The Appeal shall be heard by a panel of three (3) Integrity Commissioners appointed by the Deputy Minister or delegate, and shall not include the Integrity Commissioner whose decision is under appeal.

WRITTEN APPEAL

Appeals shall be held in writing, as follows:

- (a) The appellant shall provide written submissions to the Appeal Panel and the respondent no later than twenty (20) business days after receiving notice that the Panel has been appointed.
- (b) The respondent shall provide written submissions to the Appeal Panel and the appellant no later than twenty (20) business days after receiving the appellant's submissions.
- (c) The appellant shall provide their written reply to the respondent's submissions no later than ten (10) business days after receiving the respondent's submissions.
- (d) The chair of the Appeal Panel may extend any of the above timelines at the written request of a party in order to provide for the fair, just and expeditious resolution of the appeal.
- (e) A decision to extend a timeline shall be provided to the parties in writing and a copy of the decision shall be provided to the Deputy Minister.

The Appeal Panel may,

- (a) define or narrow the scope of the appeal;
- (b) limit the length of submissions from the parties;
- (c) make interim decisions and orders; and
- (d) on its own motion, and without holding a hearing, dismiss an appeal as frivolous or vexatious or commenced in bad faith.

The chair of the Appeal Panel shall notify the parties of any decisions made by the panel with respect to the foregoing.

DECISION

The Appeal Panel shall provide its decision and its reasons, including any dissent, to the parties in writing no later than thirty (30) business days after receiving the respondent's submission.

The Appeal Panel shall provide a copy of the decision, reasons and dissent to the Deputy Minister.

If the Appeal Panel overturns the decision of the Integrity Commissioner, any sanction imposed by the Integrity Commissioner is revoked.

If the Appeal Panel upholds the decision of the Integrity Commissioner that there was a breach of the Code, the Panel may uphold, vary or overturn any sanctions imposed.

A decision of the Appeal Panel is final.

PUBLICATION

Subject to Section 207(2) of the *Education Act*, the Board shall publish the following on its website:

- (a) Notice that there has been a written allegation of a breach of the Code.
- (b) A decision by an Integrity Commission with respect to the alleged breach.
- (c) A decision by an Integrity Commission with respect to the imposition of a sanction.
- (d) A determination by an Appeal Panel.

Where the alleged breach of the board's code of conduct or the determination regarding the breach involves any of the matters described in Section 207(2) of the *Act*, the Board shall publish only such information as is appropriate.

STATUTORY POWER PROCEDURES ACT

The Ontario *Statutory Powers Procedures Act* R.S.O. 1990, c S.22 does not apply to anything done regarding the enforcement of the Code of Conduct.

LEGAL COSTS

The PDSB is not authorized by statute to reimburse legal costs incurred in alleging or defending against a Code of Conduct complaint.

Appendix 1
Peel District School Board Member Code of Conduct – Complaint Form

Nature of Complaint:

_____, I, _____ (full name), _____ of the _____ (City, Town, of residence etc.) _____ in the Province of Ontario.

STATE THE FOLLOWING:

1. I have personal knowledge of the facts as outlined below, because:

(insert reasons e.g., I work for.....I attended a meeting at which...etc.)

2. I have reasonable and probable grounds to believe that: _____ (specify name of Trustee) a Board Member of the Peel District School Board, has contravened Section(s) _____ of the Trustee Code of Conduct.

3. Date of the alleged breach _____.

4. Date when the alleged breach came to my attention _____.

Please include a detailed statement describing the alleged breach, and attach any documents, along with the names of witnesses and/or persons who may have information relevant to an investigation into the alleged conduct.

DATED THIS _____ DAY OF _____, 20 __,

(Signature of person making the complaint)



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O. Reg. 312/24: MEMBERS OF SCHOOL BOARDS - CODE OF CONDUCT

Under: [Education Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. E.2](#)

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CURRENT January 1, 2025 - e-Laws currency date (March 10, 2025)

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[ONTARIO REGULATION 312/24](#)

MEMBERS OF SCHOOL BOARDS - CODE OF CONDUCT

CURRENT Consolidation period: January 1, 2025 - e-Laws currency date (March 10, 2025)

Last amendment: [312/24](#).



This is the English version of a bilingual regulation.

∨ Legislative History



Obligations

1. A code of conduct mentioned in subsection 218.2 (1) of the Act shall contain the following obligations:

1. A board member shall comply with the board's code of conduct and any applicable board by-law, resolution, policy or procedure.
2. When acting or holding themselves out as a board member, the member shall conduct themselves in a manner that would not discredit or compromise the integrity of the board.
3. When acting or holding themselves out as a board member, the member shall treat persons equally without discrimination based on a person's race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, marital status, family status or disability.

Prohibitions

2. (1) A code of conduct mentioned in subsection 218.2 (1) of the Act shall contain the following prohibitions:

1. No board member shall use or permit the use of board resources for any purpose other than the business of the board.
2. No board member shall disclose confidential information obtained or made available to them in their role as a board member except as authorized by law or by the board.
3. No board member shall use information described in paragraph 2 in a manner that would be detrimental to the interests of the board or for the purpose of personal gain or for the gain of the member's parent, spouse or child.
4. No board member shall accept a gift from any person, group or entity that has dealings with the board if a reasonable person might conclude that the gift could influence the member when performing their duties unless,
 - i. the gift is of nominal value,
 - ii. the gift is given as an expression of courtesy or hospitality, and
 - iii. accepting the gift is reasonable in the circumstances.

4.1 No board member shall give notice of an alleged  Fr of the code of conduct under subsection 218.3 (1) of the Act if the allegation is frivolous or vexatious or the notice is given in bad faith.

- 4.2 No board member shall engage in reprisal or the threat of reprisal against,
- i. a member who gave notice of an alleged breach of the code of conduct under subsection 218.3 (1) of the Act, or
 - ii. any person who provides information about the alleged breach to the integrity commissioner appointed under clause 218.3 (3) (b) of the Act.
5. No board member shall act as a spokesperson to the public on behalf of the board unless authorized to do so under clause 218.4 (e) of the Act. O. Reg. 312/24, s. 2 (1), 6.

(2) In this section, “child”, “parent” and “spouse” have the same meaning as in section 1 of the *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act*. O. Reg. 312/24, s. 2 (2).

Additional content

3. A board’s code of conduct may contain additional provisions if the provisions do not conflict with any of the required provisions set out in sections 1 and 2.

Review

4. (1) Every board shall periodically review its code of conduct for, among other things, compliance with this Regulation, and shall pass a board resolution setting out the required changes, or if no changes are required, confirming the code of conduct.

(2) The first review shall be completed within 30 days after this Regulation comes into force.

(3) The second review shall be completed no later than May 15, 2027.

(4) Each subsequent review shall be completed in the fourth year following the previous review and no later than May 15 in that year.

(5) If one or more changes are set out in a board resolution under subsection (1), the board shall update its code of conduct to reflect the changes no later than August 31 in the year of the review.

Publicly available

5. (1) Every board shall make its code of conduct publicly available on its website.

(2) A board shall indicate on its website the effective date of every change it makes to its code of conduct, other than changes of a typographical or similar nature.

(3) A board shall maintain an archive of all previous versions of its code of conduct, indicating the period during which each version applied, and ensure that the versions are publicly accessible.



6. OMITTED (PROVIDES FOR AMENDMENTS TO THIS REGULATION).
7. OMITTED (REVOKES OTHER REGULATIONS).
8. OMITTED (PROVIDES FOR COMING INTO FORCE OF PROVISIONS OF THIS REGULATION).

ONTARIO REGULATION 306/24

made under the

EDUCATION ACT

Made: July 25, 2024

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INTEGRITY COMMISSIONERS AND PROCESS FOR ALLEGED BREACHES OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT

Definitions

1. In this Regulation,

“appellant” means the party appealing the integrity commissioner’s determination; (“appelant”)

“business day” means a day from Monday to Friday, excluding holidays; (“jour ouvrable”)

“respondent” means the party responding to an appeal of the integrity commissioner’s determination. (“intimé”)

Qualifications

2. (1) A person is qualified to be appointed by an English-language public board as an integrity commissioner if,

(a) the person has a total of at least three years experience working as an integrity commissioner, a judicial or quasi-judicial adjudicator, an investigator or in a similar role in a legal context;

(b) in working in the role or roles mentioned in clause (a), the person applied professional ethics rules and the principles of natural justice and fairness; and

(c) the person demonstrates understanding of the rights set out in section 23 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and section 93 of the *Constitution Act, 1867*.

(2) A person is qualified to be appointed by an English-language Roman Catholic board as an integrity commissioner if the person,

- (a) holds the qualifications set out in subsection (1); and
- (b) is an English-language Roman Catholic board supporter.

(3) A person is qualified to be appointed by the Protestant separate school board as an integrity commissioner if the person,

- (a) holds the qualifications set out in subsection (1); and
- (b) is a Protestant separate school board supporter.

(4) A person is qualified to be appointed by a French-language public district school board as an integrity commissioner if the person,

- (a) holds the qualifications set out in subsection (1);
- (b) is fluent in French; and
- (c) is a French-language public district school board supporter.

(5) A person is qualified to be appointed by a French-language separate district school board as an integrity commissioner if the person,

- (a) holds the qualifications set out in subsection (1);
- (b) is fluent in French; and
- (c) is a French-language separate district school board supporter.

(6) A person is qualified to be appointed by the Centre Jules-Léger Consortium as an integrity commissioner if the person,

- (a) holds the qualifications set out in subsection (1);
- (b) is fluent in French; and
- (c) is a French-language district school board supporter.

Fees

3. A board shall pay all fees charged by an integrity commissioner appointed under the Act.

Notification of alleged breach

4. (1) For the purposes of subsection 218.3 (2) of the Act, the notification of an alleged breach of a board's code of conduct shall be provided to,

- (a) the vice-chair, if the notice relates to the conduct of the chair;
- (b) another member of the board who is neither the complainant nor the subject of the complaint, if the notice relates to the conduct of both the chair and vice-chair; and
- (c) in all other situations, the chair.

(2) A member of a board who gives a notification under subsection 218.3 (2) of the Act shall provide a copy of the notification to the director of education.

(3) A notification alleging a breach of the code of conduct shall include,

- (a) the name and contact information of the member alleging the breach;
- (b) the name and contact information of the member whose conduct is the subject of the notification;
- (c) the date of the alleged breach;
- (d) a description of the alleged breach; and
- (e) the provision of the code of conduct that was allegedly breached.

Referral

5. (1) For the purposes of clause 218.3 (3) (b) of the Act, the time period within which a matter must be referred to an integrity commissioner is 20 business days.

(2) The integrity commissioner to whom an alleged breach is referred under subsection 218.3 (3) of the Act may define the scope of the investigation commenced under subsection 218.3 (7) of the Act.

Notice of appeal

6. For the purposes of subsection 218.3.2 (3) of the Act, the appellant shall give the written notice of appeal referred to in that subsection no later than 15 business days after receiving written notice of the integrity commissioner's determination.

Appointment of panel

7. (1) The panel of three integrity commissioners referred to in subsection 218.3.2 (4) of the Act shall be appointed no later than 15 business days after the Deputy Minister or

their delegate receives the notice of appeal under section 6.

(2) One of the integrity commissioners appointed under subsection 218.3.2 (4) of the Act shall be named by the panel to act as chair and co-ordinate the hearing of the appeal.

(3) The chair of the panel shall notify the parties to the appeal of,

(a) the appointment of the panel; and

(b) the requirements under subsections 8 (2) to (4) and section 11.

Written appeal, submissions

8. (1) The panel shall hear the appeal in writing.

(2) The appellant shall provide written submissions to the panel and the respondent no later than 20 business days after receiving notice that the panel has been appointed.

(3) The respondent shall provide written submissions to the panel and the appellant no later than 20 business days after receiving the appellant's submissions.

(4) The appellant shall provide their written reply to the respondent's submissions no later than 10 business days after receiving the respondent's submissions.

(5) The chair of the panel may extend any timeline set out in subsection (2), (3) or (4) at the written request of a party in order to provide for the fair, just and expeditious resolution of the appeal.

(6) A decision to extend a timeline under subsection (4) shall be provided to the parties in writing and a copy of the decision shall be provided to the Deputy Minister.

Consideration by panel

9. (1) The panel shall convene to consider the appeal at such times and in such places as they may determine.

(2) The panel may be convened by electronic means.

Panel decisions

10. (1) The panel may,

(a) define or narrow the scope of the appeal;

(b) limit the length of submissions from the parties;

(c) make interim decisions and orders; and

(d) on its own motion, and without holding a hearing, dismiss an appeal as frivolous or vexatious or commenced in bad faith.

(2) A panel's decision made under clause (1) (d) is final.

(3) The chair of the panel shall notify the parties of any decisions made by the panel under subsection (1).

Decision

11. (1) The panel shall provide its decision and its reasons, including any dissent, to the parties in writing no later than 30 business days after receiving the respondent's submission.

(2) The panel shall provide a copy of the decision, reasons and dissent to the Deputy Minister.

Commencement

12. This Regulation comes into force on the later of the day section 24 of Schedule 2 to the *Better Schools and Student Outcomes Act, 2023* comes into force and the day this Regulation is filed.

11.1

Board Meeting, March 26, 2025

Community Engagement and Outreach Plan – Update

Strategic Alignment:

Ministry Directives – Directive 10

Multi-Year Strategic Plan 2024-2028 - Community Engagement

Report Type:

Information

Prepared by: Atheia Grant, Superintendent of Equity, Indigenous Education & Community Engagement
Camille Logan, Associate Director, School Improvement & Equity

Submitted by: Rashmi Swarup, Director of Education

Overview

Update

The purpose of this Board Report is to provide an update on the ongoing implementation of the Community Outreach Plan 2023, as well as the work of the Board in establishing and maintaining meaningful relationships with diverse communities and stakeholders.

Highlights:

- Update the Board on the implementation of the Community Outreach Plan that was approved by the Board of Trustees on August 23, 2023.
- Detail the work that has been undertaken by all staff in the Equity, Indigenous Education and Community Engagement Department to action the Community Outreach Plan.
- Show how PDSB is engaging with internal and external stakeholders, to re-build and maintain trust and credibility with the Peel community, particularly Black Indigenous and historically marginalized communities as well as communities that are underrepresented.

Background:

The Ministry of Education Review of the Peel District School Board (PDSB) in March 2020 required the creation of the Equity Office (Directive 10) to facilitate and lead aspects of system change through the implementation of a large portion of the 27 Directives. Specifically, Ministry Directive 10 is meant to rebuild trust and establish meaningful relationships with the many stakeholder groups that PDSB serves. Part of directive #10 states; *The board shall establish the position of Outreach Officer in the Equity Office to be responsible for developing a comprehensive outreach plan to rebuild and maintain trust and credibility with the Board community, particularly with Black communities, and for leading implementation, assessment and reporting on the plan. The Board will include in the plan specific objectives tied to actions and measurable outcomes.*

Through the development and implementation of the Community Outreach Plan 2023, the PDSB is demonstrating a strong commitment to engaging meaningfully and authentically with diverse communities, in particular communities who have been underserved and marginalized. Also, actioning the Community Outreach Plan aligns with PDSB Equity Strategy 2023, the Community Engagement Policy and DRAFT Community Engagement Operating Procedure as well as the Multi Year Strategic Plan, that centers community engagement as a clear goal.

Evidence

The PDSB Community Outreach Plan 2023 established the expectation that PDSB engage in work that is continuous and ongoing to establish and maintain meaningful relationships with communities. The plan shows how PDSB will engage with internal and external stakeholders, re-build and maintain trust and credibility with the Peel community, especially communities that have been 'historically marginalized and/or excluded from contributing their insights to the

Board's priorities and actions.' The Plan stipulates that this outreach should be with affinity groups, issue specific community groups, community roundtables, student groups and associations, School Councils and general family and community engagement groups. The following is evidence of PDSB outreach and robust engagement with diverse community groups from September 2023 to March 2025. It is important to note that this report includes some, and not all, of the internal and external stakeholders that the board is engaging with, and the initiatives undertaken during this period and are ongoing.

Engagement with Affinity Groups and Students Associations

Indigenous students, families and communities

The engagement initiatives with Indigenous students, families and communities, through continuous outreach by the Indigenous Education team at the Maawnjiding Windguskeng Centre for Indigenous Education and Land Based Learning include; the election of the First Indigenous Student Trustee (August 2024), whose leadership is creating opportunities and impacting change by amplifying the voices of First Nation, Métis and Inuit youth across the PDSB. Also, Summer Culture Camps (Grades K-8), Indigenous student gatherings, Indigenous Family Nights and Powwows are engaging Indigenous students, families and communities in the celebration of Indigenous culture, community and traditions as well as address mental health, reduce stigma and provide culturally responsive strategies to support student and family wellness.

Very importantly the Indigenous Education Advisory Circle (IEAC) which comprises Indigenous, staff, students, parents, Elders and community members meets throughout the school year with the Indigenous Education Team within the Equity Department to; engage in the ongoing development and feedback of the Board Action Plan for Indigenous Education; answer and address the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action #62 and #63; ensure Indigenous Rights are being upheld as stated in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People; consult and offer constructive feedback on current and prospective curriculum resources, system-wide initiatives that promote awareness and capacity building in Indigenous Education, board policies that impact Indigenous students and families and build and strengthen relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. In addition, to suggesting avenues for further collaboration and partnership between the board and local Indigenous citizens and community partners and exploring ways to increase the active and direct involvement of Indigenous parents and guardians in the education of their children.

Community outreach and engagement initiatives with Indigenous families and communities have had a positive impact by fostering cultural pride, community connection, and student well-being, while strengthening community bonds, and enhancing students' sense of belonging and resilience. Feedback from participants highlight the enjoyment and engagement of attendees, the value of hands-on learning, and the importance of community and cultural connections in shaping Board policies.

Engagement with Black students and families

Members of the Equity Department have centered outreach and engagement initiatives with Black Parents Associations (BPA) and Students and Family Advocates (SFAs). BPAs are key stakeholders in school communities with the goal to create a greater sense of belonging and self-advocacy to inform academic programming for Black students and to ensure Black

students' safety and wellbeing. Currently 43% of schools in PDSB reported having a Black Parent Association. The Central BPA committee constitutes Black parent representatives from each of the 13 Family of Schools across Caledon, Brampton and Mississauga. The Central Black Parents Association meets with the Superintendent of Equity, Indigenous Education and Community Engagement, The Manager of Community Engagement and the Coordinating Principal of African, Black, Afro-Caribbean Student Success and other central PDSB staff once per month. The purpose of the Central BPA is to provide support to BPAs across the system and through their collaborative efforts with the BPAs to provide suggestions and feedback to board staff on PDSB's efforts to implement the Black Student Success Strategy and the intended outcomes of the 6 Focus areas. In addition to BPAs, 57.3 percent of schools in PDSB have active Black Students Associations (BSA). BSAs are supported by Black Students Association Staff Leads who are trained by members of the Equity Team, on how to facilitate anti-racist, culturally responsive learning environments designed to create a greater sense of belonging, self-advocacy and leadership for Black students.

The creation of Black Parent Associations (BPAs) at all levels of the organization, has fostered meaningful partnerships between Black families, schools, and the broader education system, enhancing engagement and advocacy for Black students. The Central BPA, which meets once per month have voiced to the members of the Equity Team, the importance of continued focus on Black parent and community engagement on the wellbeing and academic success of Black students. Of specific importance is ensuring culturally responsive curriculum, financial literacy, leadership training, improving students study habits, and fostering an appreciation for Black history beyond February. BPAs have provided a platform for Black parents to share insights, collaborate on initiatives, and therefore contribute to the academic success and well-being of Black students.

To deepen outreach, engagement and continue to build trusting relationships between Black families and the PDSB, a number of Student and Family Advocates (SFA) work in partnership in schools in various capacities to support Black, racialized and marginalized students and families to successfully navigate the education system. These SFAs include:

- Roots Community Services
- Patches 360
- HM Youth Foundation
- Delta Family Resource Centre
- Parents of Black Children
- Black Youth Success Initiative (BYSSI)

The PDSB have deepened trusting relationships with SFAs. The SFA program has significantly impacted the community by enhancing the understanding of anti-Black racism among administrators, educators, staff and improving relationships between families and school administrators. Families have reported feeling more supported and aware of available resources, leading to better academic outcomes for their children. To improve future community engagement the PDSB and SFAs are committed to increasing outreach efforts to involve more parents and caregivers, expanding the availability of community resources, and providing more tailored workshops and programs that address specific community needs. Additionally, fostering stronger partnerships with local agencies/community organizations and creating more leadership opportunities for students can further enhance the program's effectiveness.

Engagement with Muslim students, families, and community

Community outreach and engagement to support PDSB Affirming Muslim Identities and Dismantling Islamophobia Strategy (AMIDIS) includes the Muslim Youth Leadership Conferences and ongoing engagement with Muslim Parents Associations (MPAs) and events such as the AMIDIS Community Celebration, Community Town Halls, Muslim Excellence and Joy Night, Ramadan Cooking Night and community Iftars. These ongoing outreach and engagement opportunities have supported the launching, celebrating and building the awareness of the Affirming Muslim Students Identities and Dismantling Islamophobia Strategy among staff, students and the community, as well as educating staff on making sure that all spaces in the classroom and the learning environment are identity affirming for Muslim students, as well as creating a greater sense of belonging, self-advocacy and leadership for Muslim students. Twenty one percent of schools in PDSB have active Muslim Students Associations (MSAs) (28 Secondary schools & 26 Elementary schools) that are supported by Muslim Students Association Staff Leads who are well trained in creating culturally responsive learning environments for students.

The community outreach initiatives have had a positive impact, with participants expressing appreciation for the opportunities to celebrate and affirm Muslim identities and share concerns about Islamophobia. Events like the AMIDIS Community Celebration, Muslim Youth Leadership Conference, and various workshops for PDSB Students and Staff received overwhelmingly positive feedback, highlighting the need for such initiatives. Participants, including students, parents, and staff reported that they felt seen, valued, and eager for more frequent and diverse engagement opportunities.

Engagement with PDSB Sikh and Punjabi Communities

Outreach and engagement programs like the Sikh Student Associations (SSA), Punjabi Moms Group, Langar Day events, Panjabi & Friends' Club, have served to strengthened community ties with the PDSB; build partnerships with Punjabi caregivers to effectively share information about mental health, parenting, and community building; connect the school community with Sikh traditions; engage students in learning about Punjabi culture, develop leadership skills, and support academic success as well as connect newcomer parents and students with settlement services and information. These continued outreach Initiatives have positively impacted the community by fostering a sense of belonging, safety, and empowerment among Sikh students and their families. In addition, to helping students navigate identity-based issues and build leadership skills, while strengthening community ties. Feedback indicates that these initiatives have improved students' sense of belonging and academic success, and increased parent and caregiver involvement in schools.

Engagement with PDSB Jewish student, staff and parent communities

The Equity team in partnership with Jewish identifying staff, students and community agencies supported the launch of the first Jewish Student Alliance in December 2024. The goal for the Jewish Student Alliance (JSA) is to create a welcoming space for Jewish-identifying students across Peel, rooted in mutual respect, empathy, and shared experiences, fostering a sense of belonging within the school community. By building this affinity space, JSA helps students express and celebrate their Jewish identity with confidence while providing a supportive peer network. Jewish students spoke of the importance of their identity and desire to gather in

community with their peers regularly. For the inaugural Chanukah celebration event on December 9th, 2024. Students, Staff, Parents, Trustees and community groups came together where they showed appreciation for the opportunity to experience this identity affirming event in community. Students, families and staff reported feeling affirmed in a space that was created with their well-being in mind in alignment with the goals of the MYSP.

Engagement with School Councils and the Parent Involvement Committee

The Manager of Data Literacy and Knowledge Mobilization in the Equity, Indigenous Education and Community Engagement Department has established a framework to facilitate co-construction and collaboration with schools and School Councils to inform their School Improvement and Equity Planning (SIEP) goals and actions. Using the community gathering model, outreach and engagement with specific School Councils has provided parents, caregivers and community the opportunity for meaningful and continuous contributions to the activities and initiatives used to support school's improvement planning processes. Similarly, the Superintendent of Equity, Indigenous Education and Community Engagement work in partnership to support the Parent Involvement Committee (PIC) host regular meetings and events such as Great Start, as well as providing collaborative parent leadership input on PDSB policies and procedures such as the new revised Empowering Modern Learners document. In addition, the PIC Conference is supported by all Central Departments, with the goal of boosting parent involvement and engagement at the school and Board levels.

This year's Great Start event was held in person on November 12, 2024, at the H. J. A. Brown Education Centre and was accessible for online participation. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive with ninety percent of participants reporting that their experience was excellent or good. Participants expressed a strong desire for events that promote communication, idea-sharing, and community-building among school councils and stakeholders with a strong interest in participating in town halls facilitated by the Manager of Data Literacy to promote parent voice in the SIEP process. It is also important to note, that through the collaborative effort between PIC and the Equity Department this year the largest number of schools in the history of PDSB, have applied for the Parent Reaching Grant (PRO) to lead projects, initiatives or activities in schools that address parent needs and/or remove barriers that prevent parents from participating and engaging fully in their children's learning and educational progress through an equity and inclusion framework. Some of these ongoing events include- workshops on literacy and numeracy, curriculum, EQAO preparation, combatting discrimination, mental health and wellness, food sovereignty and environmental stewardships, experiential learning, STEM and cyber safety.

Engagement with Community Roundtables

The Equity team are currently collaborating with various community planning tables, to focus our collective efforts on addressing systemic issues and improve community well-being in Peel Region both in school and in the community. Key initiatives include the Anti-Black Racism-Systemic Discrimination (ABR SD) Collective, which advocates against racism and systemic discrimination, and the Bramalea Community Network, which identifies community needs and promotes safety and well-being. The ABR-SD Collective aims to promote equity and inclusion across Peel Region, with PDSB participating in both the Coordinating and Education Sub-Committees. ABR Collective works with the Equity and Curriculum Departments to provide input on culturally responsive curriculum and support in creating identity affirming and discrimination free learning environment that support student wellbeing and achievement as per the Multi Year

Strategic Plan. In addition, outreach includes participation on the Region of Peel, Community Safety and Wellbeing Committee which aims to enhance safety and resilience, and the Peel Poverty Reduction Committee, which addresses poverty through collaborative efforts. The Peel Purposeful Planning Partnership (Px4) explores programming needs and family engagement strategies, while Erin Mills Connects focuses on building a vibrant community by connecting students and families with local resources. The Manager of Data Literacy in the Equity Department is collaborating with these community groups and tables to facilitate data literacy training, to enhance their capacity to utilize data from the school boards in Peel region and community agencies in their planning processes.

Issue Specific Engagement

Community Outreach on Addressing Food Insecurity in PDSB schools and the Community.

The Equity Indigenous Education and Community Engagement Department as well as schools have partnered with the Sai Dham Food Bank to address the growing issue of food insecurity in Peel region, by facilitating emergency food assistance for students and families. Through our collaborative efforts, during the first week back to school in 2025, we worked with the Sai Dham Food Bank and 42 schools to deliver emergency food hampers to help students and families facing food insecurity. Approximately 11, 500 food hampers were distributed to students and their families. The Equity Department look forward to continuing this partnership where schools Emergency Food Assistance for students and families facing food insecurity, as the Children's Healthy Breakfast Program that provides over 1000 children in PDSB schools with daily nutritious breakfasts and food hampers.

Engagement on Drug Prevention

The Planet Youth Drug Prevention Project, coordinated by Erin Mills Connects and Led by Dam Youth Services is working in six PDSB schools collaborating on substance abuse prevention support. The Manager of Data Literacy is collaborating with these community groups to enhance their capacity to utilize data in their planning process in support of student success and wellbeing.

Engagement Through Capacity-Building for Not-for-Profits

The Manager of Data Literacy within the Equity Department is also leading community outreach initiatives focused on asset mapping and resiliency planning (AMRP), data literacy training, and community-based data collection and analysis using the Thought Exchange platform. With the goal of deepening trusting partnerships with the PDSB and community not-for -profits, by working on shared initiatives. The AMRP process aims to enhance awareness of student assets and opportunities within schools and communities, with training provided to front-line staff of The Dam Youth Services and plans to extend this to other agencies. In addition to organizing data literacy workshops for agencies involved in anti-Black racism and systemic discrimination efforts. Additionally, the Thought Exchange platform is being utilized to support community agencies in data collection and analysis, with plans for additional community roundtables.

PDSB outreach with Community Planning Tables, issue specific tables, community agencies and Not-for-Profits is deepening trusting partnerships between the PDSB and diverse communities. We are also, identifying community needs, while addressing issues of discrimination and enhancing awareness of student and community assets and opportunities within schools and communities, while promoting safety and wellbeing in alignment with the

PDSB Multi-Year Strategic Plan. This implementation is actioning foundational Board policies (e.g., Anti-racism policy, Black Student Success Strategy, PDSB Equity Strategy, Human Rights policy). PDSB is committed to the ongoing and successful implementation of the Community Outreach Plan to 'ensure that the board is fostering relationships with the various diverse communities to develop a deeper understanding of the issues of importance to communities while also creating opportunities for consultation and participation in decision-making where feasible.

Impact Analysis

Equity & Human Rights Review:

The implementation of the Community Outreach Plan since September 2023 is ensuring, that the Board is fulfilling 'its responsibility to implement the Ministry Directives and to continuing to re-establish trusting relationships with the community and repairing the harm caused by the PDSB to communities that have been marginalized, specifically Black and Indigenous.' In alignment with Policy 51 (Human Rights), these engagement activities are creating spaces where students can fully participate in their education. The various student leadership workshops and community events also represent systemwide implementation of the Multi-Year Strategic Plan by connecting student identity affirmation with academic success and well-being. Further, implementation of the Community Outreach Plan is ensuring 'that the board is fostering relationships with the various diverse communities to develop a deeper understanding of the issues of importance to communities while also creating opportunities for consultation and participation in decision-making where feasible.'

By connecting student identity affirmation with academic success, events such as Indigenous Student Gatherings, Family Nights, and the Summer Culture Camp have strengthened cultural pride, enhanced student resilience, and deepened community bonds for Indigenous students, families, staff and community members. The creation of Black Parent Associations (BPAs) at all levels of the PDSB, has amplified the voices of Black parents to inform the ongoing work of the Board that will not only promote the achievement of Black students but also contribute to the broader goal of systemic change within the education system. Building and maintaining trust with historically marginalized communities remains at the core of PDSB's outreach efforts. The Student Family Advocate (SFA) program has significantly enhanced relationships between Black families and school administrators, increasing awareness of anti-Black racism and improving access to support services. Similarly, engagement initiatives for Muslim, Sikh, Jewish, Punjabi and diverse communities, have provided safe spaces for cultural celebration, identity affirmation, and community advocacy. Through ongoing dialogue, two-way communication, and meaningful engagement, these initiatives ensure that community voices are heard, valued, and reflected in school policies and practices. The success of events such as the Muslim Youth Leadership Conference, Chanukah celebration and Langar Day underscores the importance of culturally responsive outreach in fostering belonging, empowerment, and positive academic outcomes for students.

The Board's commitment to open communication and transparency is evident in our efforts to consult, report back, and co-develop solutions with diverse community stakeholders. The Parent Involvement Committee, in collaboration with the Equity Department, successfully engaged

school council members through the Great Start event, emphasizing collaboration and shared decision-making. Additionally, partnerships with Community Planning Tables, not-for-profits, and local agencies have helped identify and address community needs, enhance student well-being, and create safer, more inclusive school environments. By integrating the Black Student Success Strategy, the PDSB Equity Strategy, and the Anti-Racism Policy into these outreach efforts, the board is actively fostering relationships that prioritize equity, accountability, and meaningful representation. The continued implementation of the Community Outreach Plan ensures that historically marginalized voices are not only heard but are also shaping the future of education in the PDSB.

Board or Ministry Policy Alignment:

- Community Engagement Policy
- Multi Year Strategic Plan 2024 – 2028
- Anti-racism Policy – Directive 16
- Human Rights – Policy 51
- Equity Policy # 54

The Community Outreach Plan initiatives directly align with PDSB's Multi-Year Strategic Plan 2024-2028, particularly its commitments to community engagement, equity and inclusion. These goals align with the PDSB Equity Strategy's core pillars, specifically through identity-affirming spaces and systematic approaches to dismantling barriers faced by historically marginalized students and families. The successful delivery of community engagement events and leadership initiatives fulfills key objectives outlined in the Community Engagement Policy and DRAFT Operating Procedure. With high attendance at community events and leadership programs, these initiatives mirror the successful engagement frameworks established in the Black Student Success Strategy, by adapting proven approaches for diverse community contexts. These programs align with the School Improvement and Equity Plan (SIEP) 2024-2025 by:

- Creating sustainable structures for student voice and leadership
- Building staff capacity through targeted professional learning
- Establishing meaningful family and community partnerships
- Supporting identity-affirming educational experiences for all students

The initiatives fulfill Directive 16 (Anti-Racism Policy) requirements by systematically addressing systemic barriers through:

- Regular community consultation and engagement
- Student leadership development opportunities
- Staff professional learning initiatives
- Family engagement programming

They also demonstrate PDSB's commitment to sustained relationship building rather than one-time consultation. This approach ensures meaningful implementation of Board policies while creating sustainable frameworks for ongoing community engagement and student success, achievement and wellbeing.

Risk Assessment:

Failure to implement the Community Outreach Plan presents significant risks to student success, achievement, wellbeing and Board compliance as well as diminished public confidence in the PDSB. Without robust community engagement PDSB risks perpetuating systemic barriers and failing to meet its obligations under Human Rights Policy, the Ministry Directives as well as the Multi-Year Strategic Plan.

Community Impact:

The implementation of the Community Outreach plan is having a positive impact on student wellbeing, sense of belonging, leadership and achievement. These engagement activities create spaces where all students can fully participate in their education without discrimination, while fostering cultural pride and community connections that is improving the relationship between PDSB parents and diverse communities including Black, Indigenous and marginalized communities.

Next Steps

The Equity Indigenous Education and Community Engagement Department is committed to the ongoing implementation, evaluation, and monitoring of the Community Outreach Plan by aligning community engagement initiatives with the goals of the Multi-Year Strategic Plan 2024-2028 and the PDSB Equity Strategy 2023- 2027. As well as strengthening community partnerships, enhancing data driven approaches, expanding student and family engagement opportunities, and facilitating continuous feedback loop in reporting back to the community. Our goal continues to be grounded in building trusting relationships with the diverse communities that we serve, Black and Indigenous families, through open communication and honoring their lived experiences as well as amplifying marginalized voices, intentionally addressing discrimination, facilitating brave collaborative spaces as well as ensuring engagement with community that is culturally responsive and accessible.

Next steps include the following:

Strengthening Community Partnerships

- Reconvene and meet regularly with PDSB community round table -The Exceptional Voices -to deepen the Board's commitment to representing the voice of community in the development and implementation of board policies, practices and procedures
- Expand outreach efforts to ensure the representation of additional marginalized groups and wider PDSB communities.
- Expand collaboration with local organizations to address emerging issues important to diverse students, families and community, such as housing and food insecurity, mental health needs and drug prevention.
- Increase capacity-building initiatives by hosting workshops with community groups on resiliency planning and cultural responsiveness.

Expand Student and Family Engagement Opportunities

- Create additional leadership development opportunities for student groups.
- Create cross-cultural engagement initiatives to foster collaboration among different affinity groups.
- Expand opportunities for parents and School Councils to provide input in SIEP and Board policies and procedures as well as utilize the Parent Reaching Out Grant

Enhance Data-Driven Approaches

- Continue organizing Data Literacy Townhalls to ensure community partners can effectively utilize data in their planning processes.
- Introduce additional methods for data collection, such as focus groups and one-on-one interviews, to capture qualitative insights.

Promote Continuous Feedback Loops

- Implement digital platforms, such as Thought Exchange, for ongoing feedback collection from families and students.
- Regularly report back to communities on how their input has influenced PDSB policies and initiatives.

Communications:

Communication and updates regarding the implementation of the continued implementation of the Community Outreach Plan will be shared through various methods and approaches such as Families of Schools meetings and PDSB board reports that are accessible to the entire community.

Success Measures:

Moving forward the effectiveness of the Community Outreach Plan will be evaluated through both quantitative metrics and qualitative indicators that align with PDSB's Multi-Year Strategic Plan, School Improvement and Equity Plan and PDSB Equity Strategy. This framework ensures accountability while measuring meaningful community impact and engagement outcomes in the following areas:

- Affinity Groups and Student Associations
- School Councils and Parent Involvement Committee
- Community Partnerships
- Issue-Specific Outreach

Monitoring Tools

- Thought Exchange Platform: Gathering community insights and analyzing trends.
- Event Surveys: Evaluate event impact immediately post-session.
- Attendance Logs: Maintain records of participant demographics and numbers.
- Focus Groups: Convene small group discussions for deeper insights.
- Annual Reports: Published progress reports.
- Annual Community Review: Share detailed outcomes and seek feedback for continuous improvement.

References:

Chadha, E., Herbert, S., & Richard, S. (2020). *Review of the Peel District School Board*. Ontario Ministry of Education.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Directive-10-Community-Outreach-Plan-August-Report

Board Meeting, August 23, 2023

Community Outreach Plan

Strategic Alignment:

Ministry Directives – Directive 10

Report Type:

Recommendation

Prepared by: Lisa Hart, Superintendent of Equity, Indigenous Education, School Engagement & Community Relations

Camille Logan, Associate Director, School Improvement & Equity, Curriculum & Instruction, Student and Community Engagement

Submitted by: Rashmi Swarup, Director of Education

Overview

Recommendation:

To recommend the approval of the Community Outreach Plan and provide an update on the ongoing work of establishing and maintaining meaningful relationships with communities.

Highlights:

- Delivering on the actions required in Ministry Directive 10, a Community Outreach Plan has been developed by the Equity Department
- The Community Outreach Plan details the work that will be undertaken in the coming year to operationalize the Community Engagement Framework, Policy, and Procedures
- This plan shows how PDSB will engage with internal and external stakeholders, re-build and maintain trust and credibility with the Peel community

Background:

Following the release of the Ministry of Education Review of the Peel District School Board (PDSB) in March 2020 (Chadha et al., 2020), the PDSB has been undertaking system transformation to ensure that the well documented and historical inequities in student achievement and experiences are eliminated. PDSB recognizes that an approach that recognizes the intersectionality of identities must be taken when addressing systemic inequities and disproportionate outcomes through the process of system transformation. Specific to this process is intentionally interrogating systems and structures to dismantle systemic discrimination and in particular manifestations of anti-Black racism as it pertains to community engagement.

To achieve these ends, the 2020 Ministry Review required the creation of the Equity Office (Directive 10) to facilitate and lead aspects of the system change through the implementation of a large portion of the 27 Directives.

Specifically, Ministry Directive 10 is meant to rebuild trust and establish meaningful relationships with the many stakeholder groups that PDSB serves. Part of directive #10 states;

The board shall establish the position of Outreach Officer in the Equity Office to be responsible for developing a comprehensive outreach plan to rebuild and maintain trust and credibility with the Board community, particularly with Black communities, and for leading implementation, assessment and reporting on the plan. The Board will include in the plan specific objectives tied to actions and measurable outcomes.

PDSB is committed to engaging meaningfully and authentically with diverse communities. Intentional tools and resources are being developed to support building and maintaining the relationship between PDSB and its communities, in particular communities who have been underserved and marginalized.

Evidence

Findings/Key Considerations:

As identified in Directive 10, a key aspect of this work is to center communities that have been historically marginalized and/or excluded from contributing their insights to the Board's priorities and actions to improve the learning and working environments.

In response to the Ministry Directive 10, PDSB has created the framework which has guided the development of the Community Outreach Plan. This includes:

- Developing the Community Outreach Policy and Procedures in consultation with the community
- Developing the Community Engagement Framework

Impact Analysis

Equity & Human Rights Review:

The development and successful implementation of the Community Outreach Plan will ensure that the PDSB is fulfilling its responsibility to implement the Ministry Directives and to continuing to re-establish trusting relationships with the community and repairing the harm caused by the PDSB to communities that have been marginalized, specifically Black and Indigenous.

The development of this outreach plan is also a key component in the board's commitment to address inequitable outcomes and manifestations of systemic racism that have impacted engagement with diverse members of Peel's community.

The PDSB has heard from many communities that they want to be meaningfully engaged. Communities have shared they want an ongoing relationship to be established and not only consulted when the board needs information from them. In addition, the community has also indicated that they want the board to demonstrate their commitment through their actions by acting upon the information that was gathered through meaningful dialogue.

This outreach plan will help ensure that the board is fostering relationships with the various diverse communities to develop a deeper understanding of the issues of importance to communities while also creating opportunities for consultation and participation in decision-making where feasible.

The Community Outreach Plan outlines a framework to:

- Continue to improve relationships with the community, particularly those who have been underserved, marginalized and silenced because of systemic discrimination and racism
- Better understand the perspectives and experiences of the community in order to establish effective programs and initiatives that meet the diverse needs of students, thereby supporting their success and wellbeing.
- Demonstrate the Board's responsiveness and accountability to the community

-
- Build trust with the community through meaningful engagement that advances equity and human rights

The Community Outreach Plan aligns with foundational Board policies (e.g., Anti-racism policy, Black Student Success Strategy, PDSB Equity Strategy, Human Rights policy) and as such, works towards upholding the human rights and dignity of students who have been underserved by the system. The plan offers schools a practical approach to affirming student identity. It emphasizes the importance of gaining an understanding of the assets of each community. Meaningful community engagement ensures a positive impact on student achievement and well-being.

Board or Ministry Policy Alignment:

- Community Engagement Policy
- Anti-racism Policy - Directive 16
- Human Rights - Policy 51
- Safe and Caring - Policy 48

Resource/Financial Implications:

The adoption of the Community Outreach Plan does not directly incur any financial implications. The ongoing invitation to build meaningful and authentic relationships will support the work of all PDSB departments and schools.

Legal implications:

The Policy will ensure that the PDSB remains compliant with the Ministerial Directions and the expectations in the *Education Act* that the community have input into the decisions that affect the lives and education of the community's children.

The development and implementation of the Community Outreach Plan will enhance decision making practices that affect students and all departments, teams, and facets of the organization.

Risk Assessment:

The PDSB is committed to engaging with the diverse communities it serves in support of better outcomes and experiences for all students. Failure to understand the experiences and perspectives of the community affects our ability to establish effective programs and initiatives that meet the diverse needs of students, thereby supporting their success and wellbeing. If PDSB does not develop and implement a Community Outreach Plan, it runs the risk of not fulfilling a binding Ministry Directive.

Community Impact:

Various communities that are engaged with PDSB, have stated "nothing about us, without us". The community outreach plan will provide the framework to strengthen relationships, repair any harm and create conditions for improved partnerships. Improved relationships between school boards and communities have been shown to have a positive impact on the community and the board when a strategic plan for this engagement is fully implemented.

The Community Outreach Plan will help the board leverage the narratives, voices, and experiences of those in Peel’s diverse communities when establishing programs and initiatives. It will help amplify the voices of the most marginalized and underserved as a necessary component of system transformation.

Next Steps

Action Required:

- Begin to implement the Community Outreach Plan (September 2023)
- Collect data to inform key performance indicators and other measures of success (October 2023)
- Ongoing implementation, evaluation, and monitoring (Monthly)
- Update report to Board (May/June 2024)

Communications:

Communication and updates regarding the implementation of the Community Outreach Plan will be shared through various methods and approaches. In addition, communication about the progress made on this directive will come through PDSB board reports that are accessible to the entire community.

Success Measures:

One measure of success, once the Community Outreach Plan is created, will be the activities taken to implement the plan. Some potential markers of success include but are not limited to:

- The establishment/continuation of roundtables and committees
- The number of meetings held for each roundtable and committee
- The number of issue-specific engagements with members of the school community (e.g., involvement in School Improvement and Equity Planning, school community engagement initiatives and activities at the school and board levels)
- The number of participants in the issue-specific engagements
- Community members report that implementation of various identity specific strategies, activities and initiatives have had a positive impact on student achievement and wellbeing.
- Community members report that engagements are inclusive and productive

References:

Chadha, E., Herbert, S., & Richard, S. (2020). *Review of the Peel District School Board*. Ontario Ministry of Education.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Community Outreach Plan

PDSB COMMUNITY OUTREACH PLAN 2023-2025

Introduction

This Community Outreach Plan is in response to Directive 10 which requires the PDSB to create a comprehensive outreach plan. Directive 10 states:

The board shall establish the position of Outreach Officer in the Equity Office to be responsible for developing a comprehensive outreach plan to rebuild and maintain trust and credibility with the Board community, particularly with Black communities, and for leading implementation, assessment and reporting on the plan. The Board will include in the plan specific objectives tied to actions and measurable outcomes.

PDSB is committed to engaging meaningfully and authentically with diverse communities. Intentional tools and resources are being developed to support building and maintaining the relationship between PDSB and its communities, in particular communities who have been underserved and marginalized.

At the May 24, 2023, Board Meeting, the Board passed the Community Engagement Policy. The policy served as an intentional tool designed to guide the board with accessible, inclusive, equitable and meaningful engagement with communities. Its application will ensure that PDSB's work with communities will continue to advance the board's priorities as they are related to advancing equity and human rights across all learning and working environments.

With the completion of the Community Engagement Policy and now the Community Outreach Plan, the PDSB has the clear direction necessary to leverage the narratives, voices, and experiences of those in Peel's diverse communities as a necessary component of system transformation.

Purpose

The Community Outreach Plan will help the Board engage all members of the school community and improve relationships with the community, particularly those who have been underserved, marginalized and silenced due to systemic discrimination and racism. Given the Ministry Review, some actions and initiatives will prioritize Black and Indigenous communities to rebuild trust, confidence and redress inequitable outcomes and harm.

Community engagement will also help the PDSB better understand the community's experiences in order to establish effective and responsive programs that meet the diverse needs of students and support their success and wellbeing. Furthermore, the plan will solidify the PDSB's responsiveness and accountability to the PDSB community, with particular attention to those historically marginalized.

In addition, this Community Outreach Plan is intended to:

- Share information with members of the PDSB community about Board policies, programs and initiatives,
- Gathering input and feedback from members of the PDSB community to inform the development of Board policies, processes and initiatives,
- Inform the Board about student and community needs,
- Build positive working relationships and trust between the Board and various segments of the PDSB community,
- Improve measures of accountability and increase confidence in PDSB and the public education system.

Principles

The development and implementation of this Community Outreach Plan will be guided by the following principles.

1) Building relationships

The PDSB commits to building authentic relationships of mutual respect and collaboration with the diverse communities that it serves. These relationships will be student-centric and prioritize the success and wellbeing of all students. The PDSB also commits to regular consultation with diverse communities that is culturally responsive and designed to build mutual trust and understanding. Wherever possible, the PDSB will look for opportunities to co-construct solutions with the communities and those most impacted.

2) Open communication

The PDSB commits to community engagement that embodies two-way open communication and information sharing. This mutual dialogue will also be transparent and hold the PDSB accountable for communicating its progress toward board goals and priorities to the community.

3) Honouring lived experience

The PDSB commits to honouring the lived experience of those throughout the diverse PDSB community by actively listening to, honouring and respecting personal stories, amplifying marginalized voices, and having difficult conversations with courage and humility.

4) Use of an anti-racist, anti-oppressive and anti-colonial (ARAOAC) principles

The PDSB commits to community engagement that is informed by anti-racist, anti-oppressive and anti-colonial principles (ARAOAC). This means being conscious of and addressing the systems of power and privilege that have marginalized various groups of people. The Board acknowledges that in the past some communities have been excluded from community engagement because of systemic discrimination and racism, including anti-Indigenous racism and anti-Black racism. When engaging with the community, Board staff shall deliberately, intentionally, and thoughtfully consider these communities, and all communities, are included.

5) Facilitation of learning spaces

The PDSB will facilitate brave/courageous/ learning spaces during community engagement. These spaces will be characterized by respect, fairness, dignity, trust and acceptance of differences. These spaces will be welcoming and supportive for diverse communities to share their experiences. We aim to provide spaces that are trauma-informed, uphold confidentiality, encourage non-violent communication and allyship to encourage solidarity in championing equity and the dismantling of systemic discrimination.

6) Accessibility

The PDSB ensures engagement with the community that is culturally responsive and accessible. Supports and accommodations will be provided, including physical access, language interpretation, child minding, considerations regarding location, time of day etc., to remove barriers and support the ability of members of marginalized and underserved communities to participate fully in community engagement initiatives and activities.

Evaluation

Ongoing evaluation of this outreach activities will be conducted.

A post-engagement survey will be administered to participants with questions related to key performance indicators (i.e., feelings of inclusion, facilitation of a safe space, interaction with PDSB, feelings of trust, etc.) to measure success of meetings and community engagement sessions. This work will be designed to solicit suggestions for improvement and provide an opportunity for any other outstanding concerns to be shared.

Reporting and Accountability

When consulting on the development of policies, programs, or initiatives, the Board will report back to the community to update them on the information gathered and how it was considered in the decision-making process.

The Board will also communicate the successes and accomplishments toward improvement and the achievement of goals so that community members can have confidence in the implementation of the policies and programs on which they were consulted.

Community Outreach Plan 2023/24-2024-25

How	Who	Purpose	Frequency
<p>Affinity group engagement</p>	<p>Active engagement with identity specific historically marginalized communities with priority for Black and Indigenous communities as per the Ministry Review</p>	<p>Continued engagement with Black and Indigenous communities to;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - inform the ongoing work at the student centres of excellence to advance Indigenous Education and Black Student Success - contribute to and receive updates regarding the initiatives to address anti-Indigenous and anti-Black racism - enable Black and Indigenous parents/families to network and build connections, problem solve, and share resources through advisory groups to successfully navigate the education system <p>Provide ongoing updates about identify specific strategy implementation (e.g. Black Student Success, Affirming Muslim Students)</p>	<p>As specified re various group structures and/or terms of reference</p>
<p>Issue-specific engagement Methods will include online surveys as well as</p>	<p>All members of the PDSB school community, including students, parents, staff, and community members.</p>	<p>To engage members of the broader school community and gather input into PDSB policies and initiatives as needed.</p>	<p>As needed</p>

How	Who	Purpose	Frequency
<p>in-person and virtual consultation sessions.</p>	<p>Consultation/engagement sessions will be convened as needed by departments, with the support of the Equity, Indigenous Education, School Engagement & Community Relations Department.</p> <p>Where feasible, engagement will occur through existing structures (e.g., advisory committees, School Councils, Employee Resource Groups, etc.).</p>		
<p>Community Roundtables</p>	<p>Roundtables will include members of various community organizations serving diverse members of Peel Region (e.g. religion/creed, 2SLGBTQIA+).</p>	<p>Build trust and relationships between various diverse communities and the Board, and across community groups</p> <p>Foster support for PDSB human rights and equity work</p> <p>Build community and a shared understanding of the common issues and experiences in public education</p> <p>Act in partnership to ensure acts of reciprocity for communities to be better served to address community needs</p> <p>Share and garner support for PDSB initiatives</p>	<p>Annually – as needed</p>

How	Who	Purpose	Frequency
		Gather input as needed into PDSB initiatives	
Student Groups and Associations	Diverse student groups across the system	To ensure student voice informs the strategies to eliminate anti-Black racism, anti-Indigenous racism, and other forms of discrimination in schools and improve student learning and engagement.	Quarterly
School Improvement and Equity Planning	<p>All schools are engaged with the development, review and revision of their School Improvement and Equity Plan.</p> <p>The school leadership team involved in leadership of the planning process is encouraged to seek opportunities to include parent and community voice meaningfully with the review of school goals and plans for monitoring.</p>	To engage parents, families and community members as appropriate into aspects of the school improvement planning processes in schools to support improved outcomes.	Ongoing/ throughout the school year
School Councils and General Parent, Family, Community Engagement groups	School councils and other less formalized committees and groups designed to enhance parent engagement should reflect principles of the Community Outreach plan to engage community to enhance student achievement, wellbeing, opportunities and experiences.	To enhance overall engagement of school community members along with parents/families to strengthen relationships between home and school.	Ongoing/ throughout the school year

How	Who	Purpose	Frequency

Note This is not an exhaustive list as community engagement is responsive and dynamic to the diverse needs of the communities that we serve in the PDSB.

11.2

Board Meeting, March 26, 2025

Multi-Year Strategic Plan Progress Report 7.1 Curriculum & School Improvement

Strategic Alignment:

Multi-Year Strategic Plan 2024 - 2028

Report Type:

For Information

<i>Prepared by:</i>	Lara Chebaro, Superintendent of Curriculum & School Improvement Planning Harjit Aujla, Associate Director - School Improvement & Equity
<i>Submitted by:</i>	Rashmi Swarup, Director of Education

Overview

The Peel District School Board's Curriculum & School Improvement Department's multifaceted work continues to align with the Peel District School Board's Multi-Year Strategic Plan (MYSP). This report outlines some of the actions the department continues to engage in during this academic year in support of the four MYSP Goals.

The actions outlined in this report directly align with the goals of the MYSP in support of student achievement.

Highlights:

- **Student Achievement – MYSP Goal 1**

PDSB's Curriculum & School Improvement Department is dedicated to fostering student agency and ownership by equipping learners with the skills and knowledge needed to access diverse academic and career pathways while addressing disproportionate outcomes for historically and currently marginalized and underserved students. For staff, we will uphold a culture of high expectations and provide ongoing professional learning to remain responsive to the needs of a culturally diverse and evolving world. For families and the community, we aim to deepen understanding and access to pathway opportunities while strengthening partnerships with community organizations, agencies, and post-secondary institutions to support and benefit families.

Strategic Actions

Goal 1: Student Achievement

Improving core academic skills and preparing for future success.

For Students:

In alignment with our commitment to advancing student achievement, the following initiatives fostered student agency and ownership by helping learners develop the skills and knowledge necessary to access diverse academic and career pathways. Additionally, these initiatives supported our continued efforts to address disproportionate outcomes for students who have been historically and currently marginalized and underserved.

On December 4th, the Curriculum and School Improvement department hosted the 3rd annual Youth in Action event at the Living Arts Centre. The event welcomed over 1,200 students, along with representatives from the Toronto Argos, industry leaders, emergency services, and post-secondary institutions. Students explored and gained knowledge about 23 certification opportunities, including:

- Project Management
- Design Thinking
- Indigenous Foods with Chef Rick
- Anti-Oppression and Allyship

- Special Effects Makeup
- Mural and Street Art
- Screen Printing
- Hot Glass and Flame-working
- Dance (Hip Hop, Fusion)
- Music (Drumming, DJ)
- Mixed Media Portraits
- Videography
- Food Handlers Certification
- Customer Service Training
- Portfolio Development
- Wrapping and Taping
- GPS Training

All attendees were students currently enrolled in the SHSM program. To earn the red seal certification on their graduation diploma, students must complete two key requirements: a two-credit co-op placement and training by industry specialists. The Youth in Action event streamlined the training requirement by bringing community specialists and industry partners together in one location to deliver the required sessions. This centralized approach provided students with an efficient and accessible opportunity to fulfill the training component of their red seal certification.

The Peel District School Board offers a wide range of SHSM programs across 31 secondary schools, including but not limited to:

- Aerospace and Aviation
- Arts and Culture
- Hospitality and Tourism
- Information Technology
- Manufacturing - Robotics Engineering
- Sports/Wellness
- Transportation

In addition, the Peel District School Board is the only school board in Ontario to offer the Explore High Skills (EHS) program, a unique pre-SHSM initiative designed for Grade 9 and 10 students. This program has received high praise from the Ministry of Education's Skills Development and Apprenticeship Branch for its innovative approach and impact.

The Curriculum Department's Outdoor Education team continue to expand their offerings to students and staff throughout PDSB. We are thrilled to announce that, beginning in September 2025, the Britannia Farm/Schoolhouse will become our new experiential learning hub dedicated to sustainability education for schools. It serves as an attestation to the dedicated work that we will be doing as a school board in response to our declaration that we are in a climate emergency. This initiative is also a testament to our commitment to the core values of sustainability and stewardship outlined in our Multi-Year Strategic Plan.

To support this exciting expansion, we will be introducing portable classrooms and increasing our staff to deliver specialized programs focused on mental health and sustainability education around topics including; urban farming, gardens and food sovereignty. Additionally, we are launching a new program that leverages the outdoors to help our youngest learners develop

self-regulation skills. This program will also provide professional development for early years educators on risk mitigation and documentation strategies.

These enhancements will significantly bolster the current programming at the Jack Smythe and GW Finlayson Field Centres, offering students hands-on learning experiences that deepen their understanding of environmental stewardship and well-being. We look forward to fostering a greater appreciation for sustainability and mental health through these innovative educational opportunities.

The theme for Black History Month 2025 is ***“From Ancestry to Destiny: Embracing Our Futures Through Knowledge, Unity and Love”***. In alignment with this theme, the Ukweli Knowledge Quest Black History Month 2025 celebrated learning that focused on the contemporary and historical contributions of African, Black, and Afro-Caribbean individuals in Canada, Africa, and throughout the African diaspora. We had 365 Grades 3 to Grade 5 Teams participate, and 132 Grade 6 to Grade 8 Teams participate. This year, we've included a special component. Superintendents across PDSB have been invited to study the Ukweli calendar and compete in their own *Ukweli Knowledge Quest Challenge!*

The Curriculum & School Improvement Department, through the Continuing Education Department, supports learners from ages 3 to 84. As part of our work, we are expanding the courses offered through our Adult Education Programs. The vision for these programs is to empower learners of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds by providing diverse opportunities to acquire new knowledge, explore exciting career pathways, develop invaluable skills, achieve their personal learning goals, and complete their OSSD.

This year, in response to feedback from superintendents, administrators, teachers, families, and students, we will be adding Grade 9 de-streamed courses designed to bridge gaps in literacy and numeracy skills. These courses will equip adult learners with essential foundational skills necessary for success in Grade 10. Additionally, we will offer Grade 10 English at the Applied level and Grade 10 Foundations of Mathematics for adult learners who require these specific courses to meet their learning goals and needs. Our goal is to inspire learners to pursue a variety of post-secondary opportunities by making their educational journey more accessible.

Furthermore, our commitment extends to providing credit ESL courses at levels A–E in Adult Education for learners aged 18 and over who are enrolled in Grades 9–12 in secondary schools. These credits will support learners who may not be able to complete all their required courses before the age of 21 due to barriers related to English language acquisition. This model expands pathways and opportunities for timely graduation. We strive to cultivate an environment that fosters growth and empowers learners to reach their full potential.

For Staff:

The Curriculum & School Improvement Department is dedicated to promoting student achievement by fostering a culture of high expectations and providing ongoing professional learning opportunities. These initiatives help ensure that staff remain responsive to the needs of a culturally diverse and ever-changing world.

On March 6th, the Curriculum department led by the Math Team and in collaboration with the Special Education Department, Equity and Leadership departments hosted a professional

learning day for all 32 Secondary Schools. This event hosted over 150 educators as well as the EQAO team in support of Math achievement in the PDSB.

Teachers from every secondary school attended learning in support of Grade 9 De-streamed Math Program. There was a specific focus on Grade 9 EQAO as well as on Math Achievement. Teachers were then offered a series of workshops to choose from that supported improving their instructional core in mathematics. In the afternoon, the focus shifted in support of the Grade 10 math courses where teachers were able to review school and system level data in support of student math pathways. A specific Grade 10 focused series of workshops were also provided. The feedback was clear, educators were extremely engaged in the content and were mobilized to shift math practice in their schools using data informed decisions. This day was made possible due to the support and the collaboration of the central departments engaged in supporting math achievement.

The Curriculum department, supported by a few other central departments in the board, continue to expand and enhance the additional qualification (AQ) courses available to educators. Currently, we offer 22 AQ courses to teachers both within and outside the board. Enrollment numbers are strong, and we are experiencing consistent growth in participation, reflecting the value of these professional development opportunities.

Also, to support educators teaching literacy and math from Kindergarten to Grade 10, the Curriculum department developed two unique digital curriculum roadmaps. These tools provide consistency, alignment, and transparency in literacy and math instruction across the district. They include anti-oppressive, anti-ableist and differentiated assessments, a range of activities, resources, and learning opportunities tailored for each of the literacy and math topics.

During a recent visit by Education Officers from the Ministry's Math Achievement Branch, staff in Math Priority schools demonstrated the use of these tools. The officers visited a few of PDSB's 48 Math Priority schools to gain insight into the district's approach to mathematics. The visit highlighted the alignment in math instruction across classrooms and schools, showcasing how educators in Peel deliver Math curriculum to high fidelity while centering students' identities, strengths, and learning goals through a differentiated approach.

For Families and Community:

The Curriculum & School Improvement Department is committed to advancing achievement by deepening understanding and access to pathway opportunities and fostering enhanced partnerships with community organizations, agencies, and post-secondary institutions to benefit families. This year, the department hosted two **Virtual Parent Registration** event for families with children starting Kindergarten in September 2025. These two sessions provided families with valuable insights into the Kindergarten program, transportation options from Student Transportation of Peel Region, and local childcare resources for before and after school care. Families also had the opportunity to ask questions and explore available resources, ensuring they felt supported and prepared for the transition to school.

For families with children in Kindergarten to Grade 5, the department has been offering families virtual sessions as part of a five-part series called **Read, Count, Soar**. These virtual sessions are designed to help families support literacy and math development at home. Participants learn how to nurture oral language through daily conversations, routines, and books, as well as strategies for supporting early reading skills. The sessions also include math activities with connections to coding and these sessions provide a series of resources in French. These

initiatives exemplify the department's dedication to empowering families and enhancing student success through meaningful collaboration and accessible learning opportunities.

On Thursday, March 6th, the Peel District School Board celebrated its 20th anniversary of the Peel Dance Showcase. This celebration of dance had over 430 student performers from over 20 schools - primary through secondary. On stage, students displayed varying dance pieces showcasing the diversity in Peel through various dance styles, as well as pieces that showcased important social justice issues. The highlight of the day was during the dress rehearsals where all the performers were able to see each other's performances and were able to cheer each other on in celebration of these great pieces of art. The evening brought energy and excitement as the students were able to showcase the pieces they created through the creative process, for over 1300 family and friends.

Alignment with Board Strategies and Action Plans:

The work of the Curriculum & School Improvement Department is deeply rooted in the core values of the Multi-Year Strategic Plan (MYSP). We are committed to empowering students by fostering agency, addressing inequities, and preparing them for diverse pathways. For staff, we will uphold high expectations and provide ongoing professional learning. For families and the community, we will enhance access to pathways and strengthen partnerships with organizations and institutions. With a commitment to a culture of high expectations for all students and a focus on addressing patterns of underservice, we strive to ensure that every learner within the Peel District School Board experiences achievement, a sense of efficacy, and hope in every learning environment.

Evidence: Indicators of Progress

- Due to the collaborative efforts of staff, community partners, and parent input, we now have 17 high schools offering Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM) programs. These programs span various fields, including sports, construction, and information and communication technology. We are also in the process of launching nine new SHSM programs across seven additional secondary schools for September 2025.
- Since the start of this academic year, the department has offered over 140 professional learning opportunities to the system attended by over 4000 educators.
- Curriculum Teams have offered a number of parent-facing learning opportunities such as The Kindergarten Registration Night and Read, Count Soar that were attended by over 600 families.

Next Steps

- Continued integration of MYSP-aligned practices within the Curriculum & School Improvement Team.
- Evaluation of current initiatives to assess effectiveness and make improvements where needed.
- Regular reporting on progress and outcomes to ensure transparency and accountability in meeting MYSP goals.

References

- [The Peel District School Board Specialist High Skills Major Program \(SHSM\)](#)
- [The Peel District School Board Kindergarten Site](#)

Board Meeting, March 26, 2025

Multi-Year Strategic Plan Progress Report: Planning and Accommodation Support Services

Strategic Alignment:

Multi-Year Strategic Plan 2024-2028

Annual Planning Document 2024-2025

Report Type:

For Information

<i>Prepared by:</i>	Mathew Thomas, Controller, Planning and Accommodation Support Services Jaspal Gill, Chief Operating Officer and Associate Director of Operations and Equity of Access
<i>Submitted by:</i>	Rashmi Swarup, Director of Education

Overview

Objective:

To present the Multi-Year Strategic Plan Progress Report for the Planning and Accommodation Support Services Department with an update on the construction of new schools and shared-use sports fields and amenities between 2024 and 2028.

The construction of new schools and new shared-use sports fields and amenities supports the Multi-Year Strategic Plan goals of **student achievement, safety and well-being, equity and inclusion, and community engagement**, as they provide the necessary infrastructure for students, staff and the community to engage in achieving these goals. Furthermore, PDSB schools often serve as community hubs in the neighbourhoods in which they are located. As such, new PDSB schools typically include child care centres, before-and-after-school programs, and opportunities for permitted after-hours use by various community groups.

New schools, sports fields and other amenities support the Multi-Year Strategic Plan's core value of **positivity** by creating a supportive and nurturing environment where students feel confident to strive for excellence.

Furthermore, the construction of new schools and new sports fields and amenities provides a visible sign that PDSB schools are modern, state-of-the-art facilities that families consider when choosing a school for their child(ren). They also serve as a consideration for students and families when choosing a secondary school.

Highlights:

New Schools

- Over the course of the 2024-2028 Multi-Year Strategic Plan, based on Ministry capital funding approvals received to date, the Planning and Accommodation Support Services Department will have planned, designed and constructed the following five new elementary schools and one new secondary school during this period:
 - Malala Yousafzai PS
 - Red Cedar PS
 - Caledon East PS
 - Ellengale PS
 - Mayfield West 2 PS
 - Mount Pleasant SS

New Shared-Use Sports Fields and Amenities at PDSB Schools

- Planning and Accommodation Support Services has been leading the planning and active construction of the following new shared-use sports fields and amenities at PDSB schools:

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- Humberview SS
 - Mayfield SS
 - Lincoln M. Alexander SS
 - Turner Fenton SS
 - Central Peel SS
 - Glenforest SS
 - Erindale SS
 - Cawthra SS
 - Camilla PS/Corsair PS
 - The Woodlands SS

Background:

New Schools

On an annual basis, the Planning and Accommodation Support Services Department prepares the Annual Planning Document (APD), which is the PDSB's comprehensive capital planning roadmap for the future.

The APD includes information pertaining to ten-year enrolment projections, future development growth areas, and recommendations for new schools and boundary changes, which support the PDSB's efforts in providing modern, safe environments for learning across a broad range of programs which support student achievement and well-being.

The Board of Trustees is responsible for approving recommendations for any new major school capital projects to be submitted to the Ministry for Capital Priorities Program funding consideration. The Ministry then reviews all business case submissions and decides which projects, if any, to approve to be funded. Business cases for new schools must demonstrate a clear accommodation pressure in the local community (and that nearby schools are operating at full capacity) or poor facility condition.

During the 2024-2028 timeframe, three of the five approved new PDSB elementary schools are being built in new residential neighbourhoods, while the other two are replacements of existing schools in poor condition.

New Shared-Use Sports Fields and Amenities at PDSB Schools

To optimize its properties for the benefit of students, staff, and the broader community, PDSB is continually exploring opportunities through grants and potential partnerships, either with municipalities or private enterprises, for the construction of upgraded artificial turf fields and synthetic tracks at schools. These facilities not only provide exceptional athletic spaces for students but also serve the surrounding communities. Without the investment of funds from these grants and/or partnerships, PDSB would not be able to afford to build these types of facilities on its own.

To date, PDSB has established twelve upgraded track and field partnerships and will soon be adding a new artificial track and field partnership with the City of Mississauga at The Woodlands

Secondary School. The planned facility will feature an International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) certified eight-lane synthetic track and an artificial turf field.

Evidence

The Planning and Accommodation Support Services Department has worked diligently to plan, design and construct new schools and new shared-use sports fields and amenities to support the future needs of PDSB students, staff, families, and the communities they serve.

The following list provides details of these important infrastructure projects.

New Schools:

Malala Yousafzai PS

- New 850 pupil place school in Brampton
- Opened September 2024

Red Cedar PS

- New 850 pupil place school in Brampton
- Scheduled to open September 2025

Caledon East PS

- New replacement 650 pupil place school in Caledon
- Existing Caledon East PS will operate until June 2026 and then be demolished
- Scheduled to open September 2026

Ellengale PS

- New replacement 880 pupil place school in Mississauga
- Existing Ellengale PS will be demolished in Spring 2025
- Scheduled to open January 2027

Mayfield West 2 PS

- New 850 pupil place school in Caledon
- Scheduled to open September 2027

Mount Pleasant SS

- New 1,660 pupil place secondary school in Brampton
- Scheduled to open September 2028

Partnerships with Municipalities:

Humberview SS

- Partnership with Town of Caledon
- New track and field facility
- Completed in 2020

Mayfield SS

- Partnership with Town of Caledon
- New track and field facility
- Completed in 2024

Lincoln M. Alexander SS

- Partnership with City of Mississauga and funding grant provided through Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program
- New track and field facility, multi-sports court and community hub
- Completed in 2024

Turner Fenton SS

- Partnership with City of Brampton
- New cricket pitch
- Completed in 2024

Central Peel SS

- Partnership with City of Brampton
- New track and field facility (completed in 2023)
- New multi-sports court (completed in 2023)
- New Collaborative Learning and Technology Centre (completed in 2024)

Glenforest SS

- Partnership with City of Mississauga
- New community hub
- Demolition of existing joint-use swimming pool
- Completion date to be announced

The Woodlands SS

- Partnership with City of Mississauga
- New track and field facility
- Anticipated completion in 2026

Multi-Sports Courts

- Partnerships with City of Mississauga and City of Brampton
- Examples include Lorne Park SS, West Credit SS, Thomas Street MS, Clarkson SS, Judith Nyman SS (all completed)

Partnerships with Private Entities:

Humberview SS

- Proposed partnership to construct indoor track and field facility which will include amenities to support pole vaulting, discus, shotput and javelin
- Completion date to be confirmed

Erindale SS

- New track and field facility
- Anticipated completion of Summer 2025

Camilla Senior PS/Corsair PS

- New track and field/dome facility
- Completion date to be confirmed

Cawthra Park SS

- New track and field/dome facility
- Completion date to be confirmed

Impact Analysis

Board or Ministry Policy Alignment:

The process for the identification of potential new PDSB schools to be submitted for funding consideration to the Ministry of Education under the Capital Priorities Program is outlined in the Annual Planning Document.

Currently, the Ministry of Education's criteria for the approval of new major school capital funding focuses on addressing accommodation pressures and replacing schools due to their condition.

All projects that are submitted to the Ministry are first approved by the Board of Trustees.

Risk Assessment:

By not being able to construct new schools as emerging residential developments are completed, students would have to travel significant distances to attend a school. This also increases the potential risk that some families may choose a school operated by the co-terminous board, should there be one in that community, or consider a private school.

By not constructing new sports fields and amenities for the use of PDSB school communities, there is a risk that student retention may be adversely affected, particularly between grades 8 and 9.

Next Steps

Action Required:

Each year, the Planning and Accommodation Support Services Department publishes the Annual Planning Document which supports PDSB's future capital needs by including information about enrolment projections, residential development yields, program needs, etc. In addition, the APD includes a list of potential new or replacement schools which are recommended to be submitted for funding consideration by the Ministry of Education through the Capital Priorities Program. Planning and Accommodation Support Services Department staff will continue to submit business cases to address these needs to the Ministry of Education for funding consideration.

In addition, Planning and Accommodation Support Services Department staff regularly review opportunities for new, upgraded track and field facilities and other amenities at PDSB schools through partnerships with municipalities and other entities as these would otherwise not be pursued due to their costs. Staff will continue to meet regularly with municipal partners and other interested parties to consider future opportunities.

Communications:

The Annual Planning Document is published on PDSB's website to provide internal and external stakeholders with information about how PDSB will address future capital planning requirements.