



Lakehead
Public
Schools

Office of the Director

Jim McCuaig Education Centre
2135 Sills Street Thunder Bay ON P7E 5T2
Telephone (807) 625-5131 Fax (807) 622-0961

REGULAR BOARD MEETING NO. 17

Tuesday, March 26, 2024

Jim McCuaig Education Centre

Sherrilynne Pharand
Director of Education

Ellen Chambers
Chair

AGENDA

PUBLIC SESSION

7:30 p.m. – in the Board Room/Microsoft Teams

		<u>Resource Person</u>	<u>Pages</u>
1.	Call to Order		
2.	Disclosure of Conflict of Interest		
3.	Approval of the Agenda		
4.	Resolve into Committee of the Whole – Closed Session		
5.	COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – Closed Session – 6:45 p.m. (SEE ATTACHED AGENDA)		
6.	Report of Committee of the Whole – Closed Session		
7.	Land Acknowledgement		
8.	Delegations/Presentations		
8.1	Trustee Character Award- Allyson Boone	L. Vanderwey	Verbal
8.2	Trustee Character Award- Corine Bannon	E. Chambers	Verbal
8.3	Northwestern Ontario Regional Science Fair	R. Cross/J. Pilot	Verbal
8.4	Celebrating Student Achievement - Get Fresh – A Partnership between Roots Community Food Center and Superior CVI	J. Lower	1-3

Trustees (Chair and Vice-Chair) and presenters of reports will be available
for comment after the Board Meeting.

LAKEHEAD DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

		<u>Resource Person</u>	<u>Pages</u>
9.	Approval of Minutes	E. Chambers	4-10
9.1	Regular Board Meeting No. 16 - February 27, 2024		
10.	Business Arising from the Minutes		

MATTERS NOT REQUIRING A DECISION:

11.	Information Reports		
11.1	Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA) Report	R. Sitch	Verbal
11.2	Student Trustee – March Report	M. De Franceschi	Handout
11.3	Indigenous Student Trustee – March Report	E. Drake	Handout
11.4	Updates from the Chair/Director	E. Chambers/ S. Pharand	Verbal
11.5	Parent Involvement Committee Meeting Minutes – November 20, 2023	S. Pharand	11-14
11.6	Finance Committee Meeting Minutes – January 30, 2024	K. Alaksa	15-17
11.7	Bus Transportation Final Costs for 2023-2024 (039-24)	K. Alaksa	18-19
11.8	Student Achievement Report (043-24)	H. Harris/ J. Lower	20-26
11.9	French Immersion Program Review (041-24)	H. Harris	27-29
11.10	Math Achievement Action Plan (040-24)	AJ Keene	30-33
12.	First Reports		

MATTERS FOR DECISION:

13.	Postponed Reports		
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Trustees (Chair and Vice-Chair) and presenters of reports will be available
for comment after the Board Meeting.

	<u>Resource Person</u>	<u>Pages</u>
14. Appointment to the Parent Involvement Committee (038-24)	S. Pharand	34
<i>It is recommended that Lakehead District School Board approve the appointment of Michelle Riemer, school council representative, to the Parent Involvement Committee, effective March 26, 2024, to November 14, 2025.</i>		
15. Ad Hoc and Special Committee Reports		
15.1 Communications Committee - Letter to Minister of Education, Steven Lecce re: Transportation Concerns	E. Chambers	35-43
15.2 Communications Committee - Letter of response to MPP Kevin Holland re: Transportation Concerns	E. Chambers	41-43
15.3 Communications Committee - Letter to Minister of Finance Chrystia Freeland re: Federal Budget 2024-National School Food Program	E. Chambers	44-45
16. New Reports		
17. New Business		
18. Notices of Motion		
19. Information and Inquiries		
20. Adjournment		

Trustees (Chair and Vice-Chair) and presenters of reports will be available for comment after the Board Meeting.
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Celebrating Student Achievement

School: Superior CVI

Title of Initiative: *Get Fresh* – A partnership between Roots Community Food Center and Superior CVI

Presentation Team: - Ryan McDonnell

Components of Initiative	School's Details
1. Description of the nature of the initiative to improve student achievement	In the fall of 2023, Root's Community Food Center in cooperation with Horizon began operating the cafeterias in all three Lakehead Public Schools secondary schools. In addition to providing food services for our students, the presence of Roots and Horizon in our school communities has created the opportunity to increase student engagement, support student learning and foster community.
2. Rationale for selecting the initiative	Roots and Horizon were new additions to our school communities for the 2023-2024 school year. Partnering with these organizations has improved food security within our schools and created unique opportunities to engage students and extend learning outside of the classroom.
3. Intended outcomes of the initiative related to improved student achievement	<p>The intended outcome of collaborating with Roots and Horizon over the course of the 2023-2024 school year were to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increase student engagement and achievement; • build skills; • foster community; and • improve food security.
4. Description of the data used	Interviews and conversations with students. Classroom participation. Attendance data.

<p>5. Brief description of the significant activities or strategies involved with the initiative</p>	<p>Roots and Horizon have become an integral part of our school community. Some of the significant activities that have resulted from the partnership with our school community are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • providing a school wide meal at the winter holiday and for a Ramadan Fast breaking Iftar; • training students on safe food handling, meal planning, kitchen skills and other culinary tasks through job placements in the cafeteria kitchen; • supporting teachers to offer food related experiential learning tasks such as gathering and preparing horseradish and operating blender bikes to prepare smoothies; and • involving foods classes in planning and preparing cafeteria meals with attention to nutritional value, cultural influences, sourcing local ingredients and budgeting.
<p>6. One or two highlights of the above activities</p>	<p>One of the highlights from the growing partnerships that have developed out of the get fresh café increased student engagement, sense of community and overall pride that has emerged when students work with the Roots and Horizon staff developing skills, planning meals, and preparing food.</p>
<p>7. Description of any unexpected results or “moments of serendipity” related to the initiative</p>	<p>It has become increasingly evident that food is a cornerstone of communities. Having students prepare and share meals is a powerful equalizer and community builder.</p>
<p>8. Description of one or two interesting findings that would be useful or helpful to other schools</p>	<p>An interesting finding that may help other schools is staff and students are engaged in learning with and from Roots Community Food Centre, LDSB’s community partner. The learning shifts from teacher to community partner and also to the students leading the learning as they share their own culinary experiences. For some, this experience has prompted a future pathway plan.</p>

9. Identification of one or two noteworthy hurdles or stumbling-blocks	Some of the stumbling blocks around this initiative was the slow start up in the year as we adjusted to the new model for cafeteria services. Superior CVI is the first of the three secondary schools to move forward with programming in the cafeteria.
10. Next steps in pursuing the initiative	Our hope is that the partnership with Horizon and Roots will continue to grow. Some next steps are to provide more opportunities for students to plan and prepare cafeteria meals and to further expand the number of classes and students who are engaged in programming with Roots and Horizon.

LAKEHEAD DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

MINUTES OF REGULAR BOARD MEETING NO. 16

Board Room/Microsoft Teams
Jim McCuaig Education Centre

2024 FEB 27
7:30 P.M.

TRUSTEES PRESENT:

Ellen Chambers (Chair)
Donica LeBlanc (Vice Chair)
Pat Johansen
Ron Oikonen
George Saarinen
Scottie Wemigwans
Ryan Sitch

Trudy Tuchenhagen
Leah Vanderwey
Emily Drake (Indigenous Student
Trustee)
Morgann De Franceschi (Student
Trustee)

ABSENT WITH REGRET:

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION:

Sherry-Lynne Pharand, Director of Education (virtual)
AJ Keene, Superintendent of Education
Jane Lower, Superintendent of Education
Michelle Probizanski, Superintendent of Education
Heather Harris, Superintendent of Education (Director Designate)
Kirsti Alaksa, Superintendent of Business

FEDERATION/UNION REPRESENTATIVES:

Jenny Fenton, Lakehead District School Board Managers

PUBLIC SESSION:

1. **Approval of Agenda**

Moved by Trustee Wemigwans

Seconded by Trustee Saarinen

“THAT the Agenda for Regular Board Meeting No. 16, February 27, 2024 be approved.”

CARRIED

2. Resolve into Committee of the Whole – Closed Session

Moved by Trustee Oikonen

Seconded by Trustee Tuchenhagen

“THAT we resolve into Committee of the Whole – Closed Session with Trustee Chambers in the chair to consider the following:

- *Confirmation of Committee of the Whole – Closed Session Minutes*
 - *Regular Board Meeting No. 15*
 - *January 23, 2024*
- *Personnel Matter*

and that this meeting shall not be open to the public pursuant to Section 207 (2) of the Education Act as amended.”

CARRIED

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – CLOSED SESSION:

3. Committee of the Whole – Closed Session items were dealt with in their entirety.

PUBLIC SESSION:

4. Report of Committee of the Whole – Closed Session

Moved by Trustee Johansen

Seconded by Trustee Tuchenhagen

“THAT the report of the Regular Board-Committee of the Whole – Closed Session be adopted with the following recommendations therein:

‘THAT Lakehead District School Board approve the Committee of the Whole – Closed Session Minutes of Regular Board Meeting No. 15, January 23, 2024.’

‘THAT Lakehead District School Board approve the Committee of the Whole – Closed Session Minutes of Regular Board Meeting No. 13, November 28, 2023.’

CARRIED

5. Trustee Character Award

Trustee LeBlanc, on behalf of the Board, presented Amy Graham, Secretary, Program Department, Victoria Park Training Centre with the Trustees’ Character Award. Amy was recognized for being “ an invaluable asset for the Program Department, and Lakehead District School Board students and staff alike”.

6. Five Mile Public School – Five Mile Games Room

Heather Harris, Superintendent of Education, introduced Teachers Paula Lombardo and Martin Mielke, and Principal Lisa Nutley, Five Mile Public School, who presented information regarding their school's games room. The games room was created to help students build their social and emotional skills and grow their communication skills with healthy face-to face interactions with their peers. All trustees' questions were addressed.

7. Approval of Minutes

Moved by Trustee Saarinen

Seconded by Trustee Sitch

"THAT Lakehead District School Board approve the Minutes of Regular Board Meeting No.15, January 23, 2024."

CARRIED

MATTERS NOT REQUIRING A DECISION:

8. Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA) Report

Trustee Sitch informed the Board that he will be attending the next OPSBA Directors meeting, scheduled for next weekend. Trustee Sitch reported that topics for discussion will be standard items.

9. Student Trustee Report

Morgann De Franceschi, Student Trustee, presented her February report to the Board. Items addressed in the report included her continued goals in her role as student trustee and her attendance at the SEAC meeting on February 14, 2024. On February 21, 2024, Student Trustee De Franceschi attended a meeting with Indigenous Student Trustee Drake and Superintendent Lower to discuss the upcoming student senate. All trustees questions were addressed.

10. Indigenous Student Trustee Report

Emily Drake, Indigenous Student Trustee, presented her February report to the Board. Items addressed in the report included attending a meeting with the First Nations, Métis, Inuit (FNMI) Miiniwewinan team to discuss the importance being allowed to practice smudging and culture in schools, and on February 8, 2024, she attended the Miiniwewinan meeting. On February 21, 2024, Student Trustee De Franceschi met with Indigenous Student Trustee Drake and Superintendent Lower, to discuss the upcoming student senate. All trustees questions were addressed.

11. Updates from the Chair/ Director

Sherry-Lynne Pharand, Director of Education, reminded the Board that it is Black History month. There have been posts on our social media, and a number of schools have had authors visit the schools to read their books and speak with students. Director Pharand informed the Board of the continuation of the Distributed Leadership Forum, which included a French Immersion forum for teachers to get together and collaborate on literacy and numeracy. Director Pharand shared that she attended the celebration last Friday of the Indigenous Skilled Trades completed Tiny Home Project. The aviation SHSM had an event at Westgate Collegiate and Vocational Institute last week and students were given the opportunity to use the flight simulator. Director Pharand informed the Board of a few upcoming events including a carnival for French Immersion intermediate students that will be taking place at École Elsie MacGill next week and pink shirt day on February 28, 2024 in support anti-bullying. Chair Chambers reminded trustees of the upcoming Communications Committee Meeting to discuss letters to the Minister of Education regarding transportation concerns.

12. Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Michelle Probizanski, Superintendent of Education, presented the January 17, 2024 minutes. All trustees' questions were addressed.

13. Miiniwewinan: Indigenous Education advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Heather Harris, Superintendent of Education, presented the December 14, 2024 minutes. All trustees' questions were addressed.

MATTERS FOR DECISION

14. Recommendations from the Board Advisory Committee (031-24)

Policy Review – 7040 Violence in the Workplace (029-24)

Moved by Trustee LeBlanc

Seconded by Trustee Johansen

“THAT Lakehead District School Board approve the 7040 Violence in the Workplace Policy, as indicated in Report No. 029-24, Appendix A to Report No 029-24”

CARRIED

15. Recommendations from the Board Advisory Committee (031-24)

Policy Review – 3072 Advocacy Policy (027-24)

Moved by Trustee LeBlanc

Seconded by Trustee Saarinen

“THAT Lakehead District School Board approve the 3072 Advocacy Policy, Appendix A to Report No. 027-24.”

CARRIED

20. Policy Review – 7030 Human Rights and Workplace Harassment Policy (032-24)

Moved by Trustee LeBlanc

Seconded by Trustee Saarinen

“THAT Lakehead District School Board approve 7030 Human Rights and Workplace Harassment Policy, as indicated in Appendix A to Report No. 032-24”

CARRIED

21. Policy Review – 8061 Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee Policy (034-24)

Moved by Trustee Wemigwans

Seconded by Trustee Johansen

“THAT Lakehead District School Board approve 8061 Miiniwewinan: Indigenous Education Advisory Committee Policy, as indicated in Appendix A to Report No. 034-24, and update any other LDSB policies where Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee is referenced.”

CARRIED

22. School Year Calendar (033-24)

Moved by Trustee Johansen

Seconded by Trustee Saarinen

“THAT Lakehead District School Board:

1. Approve the proposed 2024-2025 elementary school year calendar, including the opening and closing dates, and professional activity days, as described in Appendix A of Report No. 033-24.

2. Approve the proposed 2024-2025 secondary school year calendar, including the opening and closing dates, professional activity days and examination days, as described in Appendix B of Report No. 033-24.”

CARRIED

23. Ad Hoc and Special Committee Reports

24. New Reports

25. New Business

26. Notices of Motion

27. Information and Inquiries

- 27.1 Trustee LeBlanc informed the Board that she, along with Trustee Johansen attended the CPR and AED press event at Superior Collegiate and Vocational Institute on February 15, 2024.
- 27.2 Trustee Vanderwey inquired if there was an update on her inquiry regarding the Board operated before and after school programs. Director Pharand, through the Chair, responded that the Coordinating Committee has put it as a banked item and will bring it forward once they are able to do a full analysis.
- 27.3 Trustee Saarinen informed the Board that he, along with other trustees, attended the Indigenous Skills Trades event and wanted to mention that the staff went above and beyond to make the event accessible to all.

28. Adjournment

Moved by Trustee Saarinen

Seconded by Trustee LeBlanc

“THAT we do now adjourn at 8:30 p.m.”

CARRIED

LAKEHEAD DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

MINUTES OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE

Board Room
Jim McCuaig Education Centre

2023 NOV 20
6:30 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Robin Cawlishaw
Ellen Chambers
Tara Ingram
Shannon Jessiman
Lorraine Mashongoane
Sherri-Lynne Pharand
Laura Prodanyk
George Saarinen

Jena Samakese
Chelsea Siver
Fred Van Elburg

RESOURCE:

Judy Hill, Executive Assistant
Stephanie Rea, Communications Officer

MEMBERS ABSENT, WITH REGRET:

Ahmed Bediwy
Morning Star Tom

GUESTS:

AJ Keene, Superintendent of Education

1. **Call to Order, Welcome and Introductions**

Director Pharand called the meeting to order and welcomed new members, Chelsea Siver and Lorraine Mashongoane. Introductions were made around the table.

2. **Land Acknowledgement**

Director Pharand acknowledged the lands and traditional territory.

3. **Disclosures of Conflict of Interest**

There were no disclosures of conflict of interest.

4. **Election of Parent Involvement Committee Chair**

Director Pharand called for nominations for chair of the Parent Involvement Committee. Chelsea Siver, parent member, self-nominated. Director Pharand called for further nominations. As no further nominations were forthcoming, Chelsea Siver was acclaimed as chair of the Parent Involvement Committee.

5. Election of Parent Involvement Committee Vice-Chair

Chair Siver called for nominations for vice-chair of the Parent Involvement Committee. Robin Cawlishaw, parent member, self-nominated. Chair Siver called for further nominations. As no further nominations were forthcoming, Robin Cawlishaw was acclaimed as vice-chair of the Parent Involvement Committee.

6. Confirmation of Minutes – May 1, 2023 and September 11, 2023

The minutes of May 1, 2023 and September 11, 2023 were approved by consensus.

7. Business Arising from the Minutes

There was no business arising from the minutes.

8. Parent Involvement Committee By-Laws

Director Pharand presented the proposed changes as were noted in the document. By consensus, the changes were approved as highlighted.

9. Parent Involvement Committee Event Update

Shannon Jessiman, principal representative, provided an update. Plans are in the works to bring Karl Suban as guest speaker on January 18, 2024. There will be four sessions: secondary students in the morning, Grade 8 students in the afternoon, Lakehead Public Schools leaders after school and an evening session for parents. There will also be a hybrid model. The event will be hosted at Westgate CVI. Lorraine Mashongoane offered to look after child care.

10. Math Achievement Action Plan

AJ Keene, Superintendent of Education, provided a power point presentation and overview of this initiative funded by the Ministry of Education to improve student achievement in mathematics.

11. Summer Learning Programs

Fred Van Elburg, Coordinator, provided an overview of the elementary summer camps. Two Hundred and forty students participated. Funding was provided by the Council of Directors of Education. Camps were held at Claude Garton Public School, Kingsway Park Public School, St. James Public School, Sherbrooke Public School, and McKellar Park Central Public School. All camps were well attended.

12. Blanket Exercise

Director Pharand reported that the Board Development Committee would like to do the blanket exercise and invite school councils, Miiniwewinan: Indigenous Education Advisory Committee, Special Education Advisory Committee, and the Parent Involvement Committee to participate. They would like to request funding from PIC for this activity--\$500 to a maximum of \$1,000. There was consensus from the committee to support this. It is anticipated to do this late February or March.

13. Kindergarten Registration Evening

Stephane Rea, Communications Officer, provided an update on Kindergarten Registration evening. The event will be held on January 15, 2024, at Ecole Elsie MacGill Public School. This will be a drop in event and there will be information booths for community partners and organizations.

14. Parent Involvement Committee Representative on School Year Calendar Committee

Director Pharand asked for a Parent Involvement Committee member to sit on the School Year Calendar Committee. The committee meets once in December and once in January. Lorraine Mashongoane volunteered to be the PIC representative.

15. Miiniwewinan: Indigenous Education Advisory Committee (IEAC) and Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) Funding for 2023-2024

The Parent Involvement Committee agreed, by consensus, to fund Miiniwewinan: IEAC and SEAC \$2,000.00 each for the purpose of parent engagement. Letters will be sent to AEAC and SEAC chairs advising of this decision and requesting a final report by the end of August 2024.

16. Draft Parent Involvement Committee 2023-2024 Meeting Schedule

Director Pharand referred to the proposed 2023-2024 meeting schedule included in the package. The meeting schedule was approved by consensus.

17. Special Education Advisory Committee Report

Tara Ingram, SEAC representative, reported on the following:

- Operational Plan discussion;
- Spec. Ed. Summer Camps;
- Spec. Ed. Scholarship - \$200.00/school/student and a plaque for the special needs student;
- Dr. Mushquash speech at the SEAC event – message was on screen time;
- 2023-2024 Work Plan;
- Math Achievement Action Plan presentation;
- Annual report; and
- Trustee update.

18. Miiniwewinan: Indigenous Education Advisory Committee Report

Defer to next meeting.

19. Director's Report

Director Pharand reported on the following:

Reports to the Board included several policy reviews and reports on:

- Summer Learning Programs K-12;
- Job Skills Program;
- Adult Education;
- Student Achievement – Director Pharand provided an overview of the Literacy & Numeracy results for Grades 3 and 6;
- 2023-2024 Director's Acton Plan; and
- Math Achievement Acton Plan.

20. Other Business

There was no other business.

21. Next Meeting Date

Monday, March 4, 2024.

22. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

LAKEHEAD DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

MINUTES OF FINANCE COMMITTEE

Board Room / Microsoft Teams
Jim McCuaig Education Centre

2024 JAN 30
6:30p.m.

TRUSTEES PRESENT:

Ellen Chambers
George Saarinen
Patricia Johansen (virtual)
Leah Vanderwey
Donica LeBlanc

Ron Oikonen
Scottie Wemigwans
Trudy Tuchenhagen
Ryan Sitch (virtual)

TRUSTEES ABSENT, WITH REGRET:

Ellen Chambers

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION:

Sherri-Lynne Pharand, Director of Education
AJ Keene, Superintendent of Education
Jane Lower, Superintendent of Education
Kirsti Alaksa, Superintendent of Business
Michelle Probizanski, Superintendent of Education

RESOURCE:

Angela Lee-Wiwcharyk, Manager of Financial Services
Christine Jones, Executive Secretary

PUBLIC SESSION:

1. **Call to Order**

Kirsti Alaksa, Superintendent of Business, called the meeting to order at 6:30pm.

2. Kirsti Alaksa, Superintendent of Business, shared the land acknowledgement.

3. **Disclosure of Conflict of Interest**

There were no disclosures of Conflict of Interest.

4. **Election of Chair**

Kirsti Alaksa, Superintendent of Business, explained the process of the election for Chair of the Finance Committee. Angela Lee-Wiwcharyk, Manager of Financial Services, and Christine Jones, Executive Secretary, were introduced as the scrutineers for the elections.

Kirsti Alaksa, Superintendent of Business, announced the pre-nominations for the Chair of the Finance Committee. Trustee Scottie Wemigwans was nominated by Trustee George Saarinen. Trustee Wemigwans accepted the nomination with thanks to his nominator. Superintendent Alaksa called for nominations from the floor three times. There were no further nominations.

Moved by Trustee Tuchenhagen

Seconded by Trustee Vanderwey

“THAT nominations for the position of Chair of the 2023-2024 Finance Committee be closed.”

CARRIED

Trustee Wemigwans was acclaimed as Chair of the Finance Committee and assumed the Chair.

5. Election of Vice Chair

Trustee Wemigwans announced the pre-nominations for Vice Chair of the Finance Committee. Trustee George Saarinen was nominated by Trustee Tuchenhagen. Trustee Saarinen accepted the nomination with thanks to his nominator. Trustee Chair Wemigwans called for nominations from the floor three times. There were no further nominations.

Moved by Trustee Vanderwey

Seconded by Trustee LeBlanc

“THAT nominations for the position of Vice Chair of the 2023-2024 Finance Committee be closed.”

CARRIED

Trustee Saarinen was acclaimed as Vice Chair of the 2023-2024 Finance Committee.

6. Approval of the Agenda

Moved by Trustee Oikonen

Seconded by Trustee Saarinen

“THAT the Agenda for the Finance Committee Meeting of January 30, 2024, be approved.”

CARRIED

7. Delegations

There were no delegations.

8. Information Reports

8.1 Kirsti Alaksa, Superintendent of Business, presented the 2022-2023 Financial Statement Variance Report No. 009-24. The 2022-2023 Financial Statements are available on the board's website. Kirsti Alaksa, Superintendent of Business, will email the link. All trustee's questions were answered.

7.2 Angela Lee-Wiwcharyk, Manager of Financial Services, presented the Transfer & Contingency Fund Report No. 008-24. All trustee's questions were answered.

7.3 Angela Lee-Wiwcharyk, Manager of Financial Services, presented the Interim Financial Information, December 31, 2023, Report No. 023-24. All trustee's questions were answered.

Kirsti Alaksa, Superintendent of Business, advised the next Finance Committee meeting date will follow shortly.

9. Adjournment

Moved by Trustee Johansen

Seconded by Trustee Saarinen

"THAT we do now adjourn at 7:50 p.m."

CARRIED

LAKEHEAD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

2024 MAR 26
Report No. 039-24

TO THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE
LAKEHEAD DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD – Public Session

RE: BUS TRANSPORTATION FINAL COSTS FOR 2023-2024

1. Background

School bus transportation contracts for Lakehead District School Board (LDSB) are based on a formal procurement process and negotiated efforts with the coterminous board and our service providers. References to changes in the 2023-2024 contract amounts refer to the previous year.

2. Situation

2.1 With respect to the 2023-2024 transportation contracts, LDSB has secured fully tendered routing for busing services through Student Transportation Services of Thunder Bay (STSTB).

2.2 Student transportation in 2023-2024 has unique challenges due to the ongoing national school bus driver shortage which has been exacerbated by the overall labour market shortage that continues to affect delivery of service, routing, and costs.

2.3 Utilization of our dedicated transportation software for route planning, accurately measures the distance of all routes adjusted annually for new, departing and changes to student addresses. This year had a slight overall decrease of 95km from the total daily contracted routes distance to 11,501km; however, there was a 1.4% increase in ridership, and one contracted school bus eliminated bringing the current total to 83 and the addition of one contracted special needs minivan brings the total to three.

2.4 The previous pegged fuel rate of \$0.957 per liter triggered the Ministry of Education fuel escalator provision funded from outside the student transportation grant, when fuel prices increased more than 3% above this rate, and has been increased this year to a new pegged fuel rate of \$1.50 per liter plus a 2% Northern Fuel Adjustment. Therefore, the Ministry of Education fuel escalator funding from outside the student transportation grant is now triggered when fuel is 3% higher than \$1.50 per liter, despite our contract rates being based on the \$0.957 amount.

The extra fuel cost that must now be covered by the board for the \$0.53 per liter difference, is mostly funded as part of the increase to this year's student transportation grant to the board.

- 2.5 Another additional cost this year is the flow through funding for the Ministry of Education Driver Retention and Recruitment (R&R) bonus, which is a \$2000.00 paid in \$1000.00 increments to drivers with a minimum 95% attendance record. This bonus replaces the similar Driver Retention Program (DRP) in place since 2018, which was paid directly to drivers from the Ministry of Education from funds outside the student transportation grant. This cost, along with payroll administrative fees paid to the contracted bus operators, accounts for 2.6% of this year's total grant amount.
- 2.6 The 2023-2024 fully tendered and audited routing resulted in the following daily contract amounts, new required fuel, and R&R costs (amounts do not include HST):

DAILY PAYMENT	
First Student Canada – Contracted Routes	\$ 24,500
First Student Canada – Additional Fuel Costs	\$ 1,432
First Student Canada – R&R Bonus	\$ 594
Iron Range Bus Lines – Contracted Routes	\$ 10,340
Iron Range Bus Lines – Additional Fuel Costs	\$ 453
Iron Range Bus Lines – R&R Bonus	\$ 344
TOTAL	\$ 37,663

3. Conclusion

Through continually monitoring and addressing the ongoing and unprecedented challenges to student transportation over the last several years, LDSB continues to provide safe, efficient, and cost-effective transportation services to students in Thunder Bay and the surrounding region.

Respectfully submitted,

CRAIG MURPHY
 Consortium Manager
 Student Transportation Services of Thunder Bay

KIRSTI ALAKSA
 Superintendent of Business

SHERRI-LYNNE PHARAND
 Director of Education

LAKEHEAD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

2024 MAR 26
Report No. 043-24

TO THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF
LAKEHEAD DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD – Public Session

RE: STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT REPORT

1. Background

- 1.1 Lakehead District School Board's (LDSB) Strategic Plan places student achievement and well-being at the centre of our ongoing pursuit of excellence and our commitment to every student.
- 1.2 The Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) assesses students' skills and knowledge in reading, writing and mathematics at key points in their education.

2. Situation

- 2.1 Assessment data, aligned with LDSB goals, allows administration and teachers to implement and support the LDSB Improvement Plan. This information is used to identify student strengths and areas of need. It assists teachers, schools, and the system in planning, implementing, and monitoring instructional strategies that support and improve student learning and well-being.
- 2.2 The following mid-year data is outlined in this report:
 - February interim report card marks in language and mathematics for primary, junior, and intermediate students;
 - semester one final report card marks in Grade 9 mathematics and English credits;
 - semester one final report card marks in Grade 9 core French, geography, and science credits; and
 - Grades 9 and 10 credit accumulation at the end of semester one.

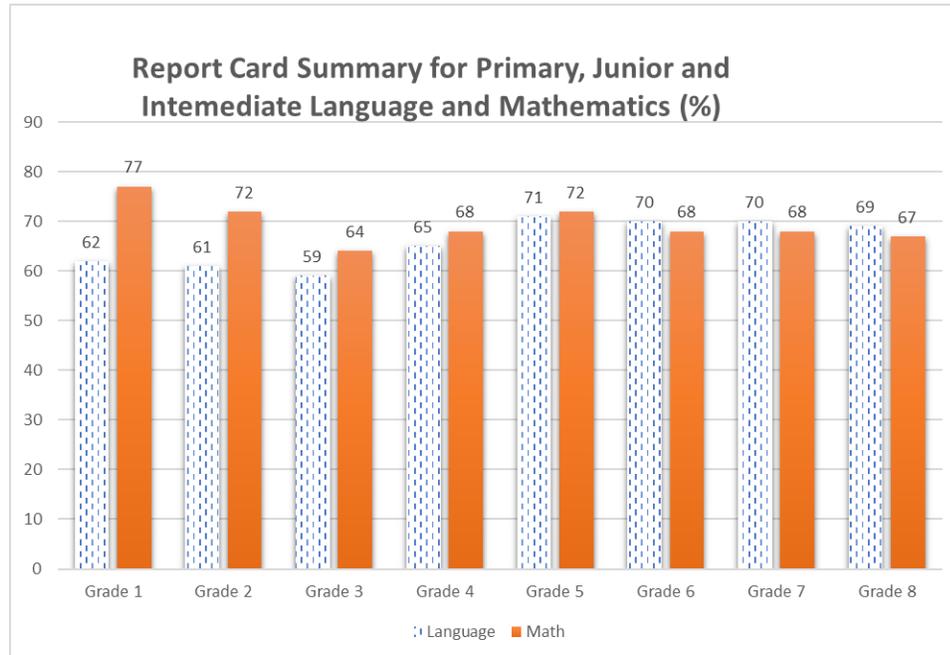
3. Grades 3, 6, 9 and 10 EQAO Assessments for the 2023-2024 School Year

- 3.1 All primary and junior EQAO assessments will be written in an online format for the 2023-2024 school year.
- 3.2 Students enrolled in Grade 9 mathematics courses are completing the provincial Grade 9 Assessment of Mathematics in an online format.
- 3.3 The Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT) continues to be written in an online format for the 2023-2024 school year, and all three secondary schools have cohorts of Grades 10 and 11 students writing the OSSLT.

4. Student Achievement

4.1 Elementary Student Achievement Data

Summary and Analysis – Interim Report Card Data – Language and Mathematics February 2024



4.1.1 Language and Mathematics Assessment:

- student achievement in language will now be reported as one overall grade or mark with supporting comments (2023); and
- to foster a cohesive approach to both instruction and assessment across the elementary mathematics curriculum, and achievement in mathematics will be reported as one overall grade/mark, with supporting comments.

4.2 Secondary Student Achievement Data

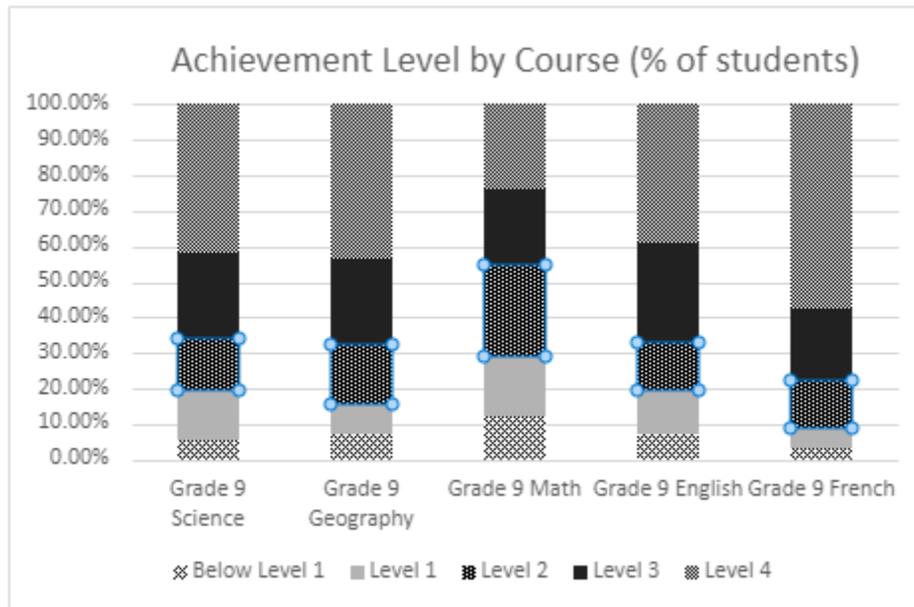
- 4.2.1 Students enrolled in the Grade 9 de-streamed math course (MTH 1W) had an 88% pass rate in semester one. Fifty-seven percent of students achieved provincial standard, level three or higher.

Students enrolled in the Grade 9 de-streamed English course (ENL 1W)) had a 93% pass rate in semester one. Sixty-six percent of students achieved provincial standard, level three or higher.

4.2.2 Students enrolled in the Grade 9 academic geography course (CGC 1D) had a 93% pass rate in semester one. Sixty-seven percent of students achieved provincial standard, level three or higher.

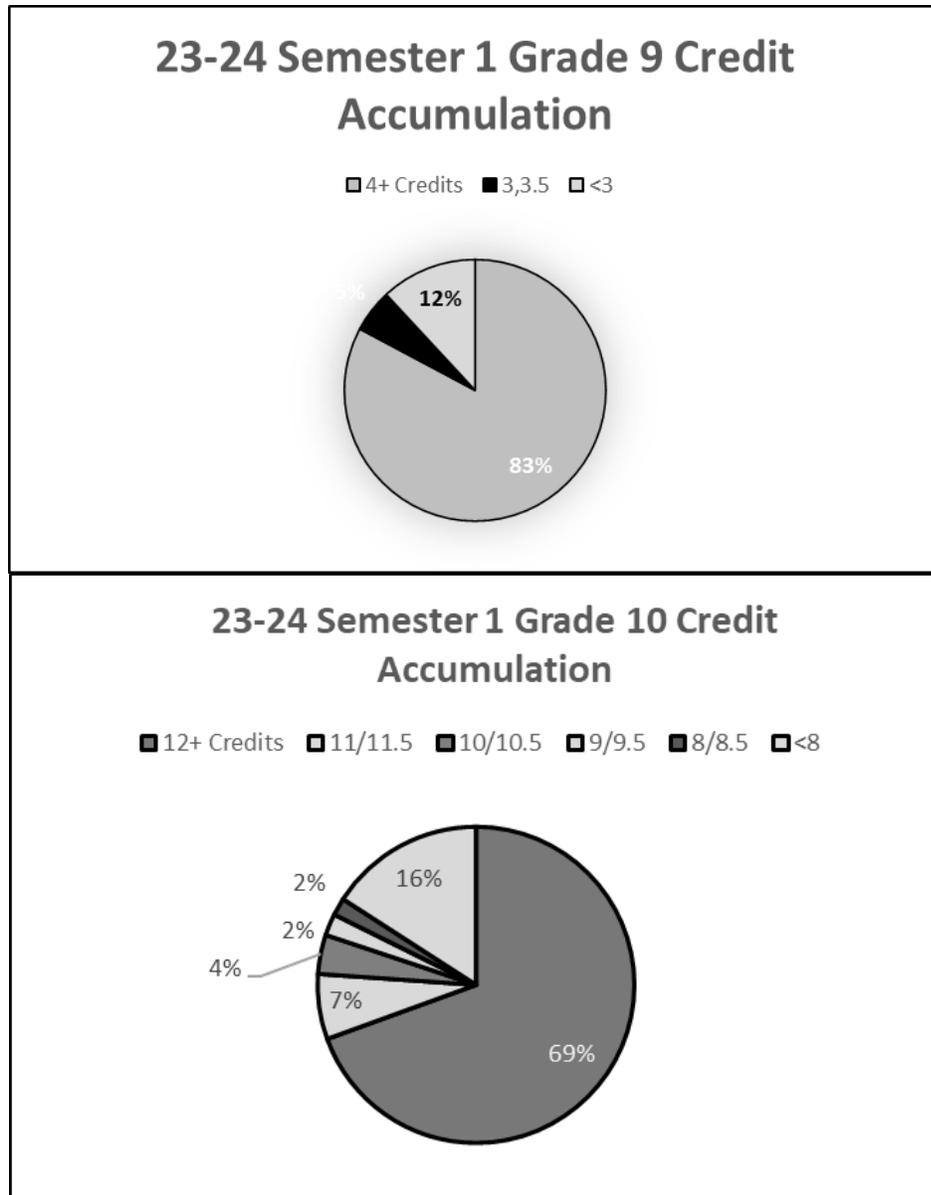
Students enrolled in the Grade 9 academic core French course (FSF 1D) had a 96% pass rate in semester one. Seventy-eight percent of students achieved provincial standard, level 3 or higher.

Students enrolled in the Grade 9 de-streamed science course (SNC 1W) had a 95% pass rate in semester one. Sixty-five percent of students achieved provincial standard, level three or higher.



4.2.3 At the end of semester one, 83% of Grade 9 students have earned four or more credits for completion of their OSSD.

At the end of semester one, 69% of Grade 10 students have earned 12 or more credits for completion of their OSSD.



5. Next Steps

5.1 Significant system-based supports are in place to support literacy and mathematic development in elementary schools:

- Heggerty Phonemic Awareness program being used for all K-2 classrooms as well as Pratique Phonémique purchased for all K-2 FI teachers;
- Equipped for Reading Success and Bridge the Gap as a Tier 2 Intervention for Grade 3 and above;
- Acadience screening tool for Grades 2 to 8;
- Indicateurs dynamiques d'habiletés précoces en lecture (IDAPEL) assessment tool for French Immersion students;
- Lexia Core 5 in Grade 2 as a Tier 1 intervention;
- Empower as a Tier 3 intervention;
- Coach and Intervention Teachers (CAIT) focused school-based support at the classroom level in targeted schools;
- Distributed Leadership Forums focused on building understanding of the components of structured literacy instruction;
- System Professional Learning Communities meetings on Professional Activity (PA) days focused on literacy; and
- system targeted training for all teachers and administrators in the afternoon of PA days

5.2 Significant system-based supports are in place to support literacy and mathematics development in secondary schools:

- at-the-elbow coaching support for teachers of de-streamed Grade 9 courses;
- professional development sessions are being delivered for secondary teachers to learn how to enhance the implementation of experiential learning to increase student engagement;
- chairs forum remains an opportunity to coordinate professional learning for teachers, focusing on high-impact instructional strategies;
- Lexia PowerUp is being used in classrooms as a Tier 1 intervention for select Grades 9 and 10 students;
- Acadience reading screening is being piloted in Grades 7-8 classrooms in nine schools across the system;
- First Nation, Métis, and Inuit graduation coaches and student support workers assist with the learning needs of Indigenous students;
- De-streaming coaches provide learning sessions for teachers of Grade 9 courses, tailored to address course and classroom needs, while focusing on high-impact instructional strategies;
- cross-panel lesson study groups provide opportunities for teachers in Grades 7-10 to deepen their instructional practice by co-planning, observing, and debriefing on literacy-focused lessons;
- secondary school literacy coaches provide practice and targeted interventions for students preparing to write the OSSLT; and
- student success teachers and classrooms are available at all secondary sites for students requiring one-on-one support.

- 5.3 Schools remain focused on sustaining and continuing to improve on gains made in literacy with a focus on new teachers and their mentors along with targeted supports to identify and respond to gaps. Based on assessment data, primary literacy programming is being implemented to support students.
- 5.4 The special education department continues to focus on efficient alignment and use of resources to support success for all students. The special education department has been, and will continue to, work closely with LDSB program department to implement the recommendations of the Right to Read which includes a universal screener, systematic and explicit literacy practices, and a tiered support for interventions. Additionally, continued training and resources have been dedicated to enhancing staff capacity to better understand student strengths, unique learning needs and the importance of differentiation of instruction, environment, and assessments. Special education facilitators and central support staff will continue to be integral to the planning and monitoring of strategies and interventions to support the learning for all students.
- 5.5 All schools, system-wide, continue to have a focus on improving mathematics and literacy learning and teaching for all students and ensuring that students are achieving at grade level. Every school in the system includes a mathematics and/or literacy goal in their School Student Achievement Plan as well as a goal in Indigenous education, mental health, and well-being.
- 5.6 Professional development will continue to be focused on improving student achievement through a variety of structures:
- continue to refine diagnostic assessments to identify gaps in literacy and mathematics;
 - continue the focus on building mathematics content knowledge as well as pedagogy;
 - ensure teachers and administrators are aware of and able to implement evidence based instructional strategies; and
 - focus on a deep understanding of assessment and evaluation to improve student success, engagement, and well-being.
- 5.7 Program staff will work collaboratively with administrators and teachers to address targeted specific needs in each division and transition and provide grade specific training focused on mathematics and literacy strategies.
- 5.8 Access to assistive technology and devices will continue to support the needs of all learners at all grade levels. Literacy and mathematics interventions and differentiated instruction will continue in all schools to support individual student learning needs and inform next steps.

6. Conclusion

Improving student learning and achievement will continue to be the focus at LDSB. Through targeted professional learning, data analysis, at-the-elbow coaching, Ministry support and research-based instructional strategies, LDSB will continue to support the learning of all students.

Respectfully submitted,

FRED VAN ELBURG
Program Coordinator

MEGHAN SMELOW
Student Success Lead

HEATHER HARRIS
Superintendent of Education

JANE LOWER
Superintendent of Education

AJ KEENE
Superintendent of Education

MICHELLE PROBIZANSKI
Superintendent of Education

SHERRI-LYNNE PHARAND
Director of Education

LAKEHEAD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

2024 MAR 26
Report No. 041-24

TO THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF
LAKEHEAD DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD – Public Session

RE: FRENCH IMMERSION PROGRAM REVIEW

1. Background

- 1.1 Lakehead District School Board's (LDSB) Strategic Plan outlines its commitment to the success of every student. To support student success, LDSB offers a variety of high-quality programs that support the varying interests, abilities and learning needs of all students.
- 1.2 To ensure the highest quality of program delivery for students, LDSB and schools routinely monitor, evaluate, and adjust programs. The 4010 Program Implementation Policy outlines that, "Lakehead District School Board shall implement a consistent process for regular review, revision and improvement of school programs."
- 1.3 Students enroll in the French Immersion program in Senior Kindergarten (SK). The curriculum content in all grades is the same as the English curriculum, except that students receive instruction in French Language beginning in SK. French is the language of communication for 100 percent of programming in SK and Grade 1, 75% from Grades 2 to 5, and 50% from Grades 6 to 8.
- 1.4 Students receive a "French Immersion Certificate" along with the Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) if they successfully complete ten (10) French Immersion credits in a variety of subjects at the secondary level.
- 1.5 The aim of the French Immersion program is for students to develop proficiency in French and English, and to have an understanding and appreciation of French culture.

2. Situation

A review committee was formed in February 2024 to ensure a strong French Immersion program into the future and investigate and propose both short-term and long-term program recommendations to enhance future French Immersion programming. The committee is comprised of:

- supervisory officer;
- secondary principal;
- elementary principal;
- principal of special education;
- French resource teacher;
- elementary program coordinator; and
- elementary and secondary classroom teachers.

Additional staff will also provide guidance and resource support to the committee, as required.

3. Next Steps

3.1 The intended outcomes of the review include:

- identifying a recommended model of delivery that will ensure students are functionally bilingual and academically successful in all subject areas;
- identifying expectations for implementation of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) in all French Immersion classrooms and how to support and monitor the expectations;
- identifying expectations for the administration of the Diplôme d'Études en Langue Française (DELF) assessment;
- recommending secondary credits that promote and further language skills, and offer choice and prerequisites for students;
- ensuring that ongoing opportunities for daily French Immersion are available at the secondary level;
- identifying supports needed to ensure access and equity of opportunity for all students;
- recommendations to encourage recruitment and retention of qualified French Immersion teachers, designated early childhood educators (DECEs), and support staff; and
- increasing the awareness of French Immersion programs and the cognitive and long-term benefits for students.

3.2 The French Immersion Review committee will also gather data and solicit input from a variety of stakeholder groups, including other jurisdictions, in addition to students, families, community, and staff.

4. Timelines

It is anticipated that LDSB will receive an update outlining the work of the committee and short-term recommendations in June 2024.

5. Conclusion

Lakehead Public Schools will continue to offer French Immersion programming designed for students whose first language is not French and for students who want to graduate with their French Immersion Certificate and OSSD. Through the work and recommendations of the French Immersion Review Committee, LDSB will continue to ensure our graduating French Immersion students are functionally bilingual and have an understanding and appreciation of various French cultures.

Respectfully submitted,

HEATHER HARRIS
Superintendent of Education

SHERRI-LYNNE PHARAND
Director of Education

LAKEHEAD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

2024 MAR 26
Report No. 040-24

TO THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF
LAKEHEAD DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD – Public Session

RE: MATH ACHIEVEMENT ACTION PLAN

1. Background

- 1.1 In the spring of 2023, the Ministry of Education announced a significant investment to improve student achievement in mathematics.
- 1.2 The Ministry of Education subsequently released a Math Achievement Action Plan that provides details of the investment as well as actionables for school boards. Included in these actionables was the hiring of a superintendent to lead the initiative, as well as math facilitators (coaches) to support schools identified by the Ministry of Education as priority schools.
- 1.3 School boards were to develop their plan to be reported on three times per year. These plans are to include strategies, data, and key performance indicators (KPIs) to measure the success of specific strategies. The plan must be endorsed by both the director of education and the Board of Trustees.

2. Situation

- 2.1 Implementation of Lakehead District School Board's (LDSB) Math Achievement Action Plan is well underway. Resources have been developed, training has been provided, and coaches work directly with teachers and students in 11 priority schools.
- 2.2 School boards are required to submit the second plan with updates on Key Performance Indicators by March 28, 2024.
- 2.3 Included in Appendix A are some highlighted data points gathered from our work to date.

3. Conclusion

Significant data and needs analysis, consultation, and planning have gone into the creation of the LDSB's Math Achievement Action Plan. The plan is comprehensive and ambitious and puts the mathematical learning needs of students at the forefront of school achievement teams and classroom teachers. At this point, our data does not show significant growth, but it is trending in the right direction. The improvement of mathematics teaching and learning at Lakehead Public Schools is a long-term goal, but schools and teachers are adopting resources and changing practices with enthusiasm.

Respectfully submitted,

AJ KEENE
Superintendent of Education and Board Math Lead

SHERRI-LYNNE PHARAND
Director of Education

Highlights of Data Points in the Math Achievement Action Plan Progress Report

Section A – All Schools

Priority Action 1 – Fidelity of Curriculum

Key Performance Indicator	Initial Report	Progress Report
The percentage of school administrators who agree that having a mathematics coach working with Grades 3 and 6 teachers has resulted in significant improvement of teacher practice.	58%	100%
The percentage of school administrators who agree that there is greater consistency of quality mathematics instruction in their building because of the provision and training of Scope and Sequence Slide Decks and Resources.	32%	65%
The percentage of school administrators who believe that having a focus on mathematics learning at staff and division meetings results in more consistent instructional practice in classrooms.	27%	85%
The percentage of teachers in Grades 3 and 6 who feel that the training focused on lesson planning and high-impact teaching strategies has significantly improved their mathematics instruction.	11%	66%

Priority Action 2 – Content Knowledge for Teaching

Key Performance Indicator	Initial Report	Progress Report
The percentage of Grade 3 and 6 teachers who believe focused professional development has improved their mathematics content knowledge for teaching.	17%	55%

Priority Action 3 – Knowing the Mathematics Learner

Key Performance Indicator	Initial Report	Progress Report
Percentage of Grade 3 and 6 teachers who feel that their use of KH has positively impacted their ability to assess and address student mathematical needs.	32%	61%
Percentage of school administrators who believe the focus on and provision of open and parallel learning tasks has resulted in increased student access and engagement in mathematics learning.	18%	50%

Knowledgehook Assessment Data

BOY = Beginning of Year; MOY = Middle of Year

Each section is 12 questions, covering curriculum to date, modeled after EQAO Assessment

	BOY1	MOY1	BOY2	MOY2
Grade 3	14%	31%	24%	32%
Grade 6	8%	42%	9%	39%
Grade 7	8%	26%	17%	29%
Grade 8	14%	30%	5%	31%

Mathematics Report Card Data – Term 1

	Below Level 1	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Priority Schools	5%	8%	33%	42%	13%
All Schools	3%	6%	23%	47%	20%

Attendance Rates (% of students with 90% attendance or higher Term 1)

	Grade 3	Grade 6
Priority Schools	49%	47%
All Schools	57%	54%

Student Confidence in Math (% of students responding YES to prompt “I am good at math”)

	Grade 3	Grade 6
Priority Schools	57%	53%
All Schools	65%	52%

LAKEHEAD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

2024 MAR 26
Report No. 038-24

TO THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF
LAKEHEAD DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD – Public Session

RE: APPOINTMENT TO THE PARENT INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE

1. Background

Vacant positions continue to be advertised for the 2023-2024 Parent Involvement Committee (PIC).

2. Situation

2.1 Through the Board website, PIC has continued to seek representation for vacant positions.

2.2 One application has been received for school council representative.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Lakehead District School Board approve the appointment of Michelle Riemer, school council representative, to the Parent Involvement Committee effective March 26, 2024, to November 14, 2025.

Respectfully submitted,

SHERRI-LYNNE PHARAND
Director of Education

March 27, 2024

The Honourable Stephen Lecce
Minister of Education
Ministry of Education
900 Bay Street, 5th Floor
Toronto, ON M7A 1L2

Dear Minister Lecce,

RE: Transportation Concerns and Recommendations on Behalf of
the Trustees of Lakehead District School Board

We, the trustees of the Lakehead District School Board (LDSB), are writing to bring to your attention a pressing concern and the challenges currently faced by LDSB with the government's changes to the transportation funding that will affect the eligibility distances for our students. As advocates for quality education and the well-being of students, we believe it is important to address these issues in order to ensure equity of access for our students to attend school.

Lakehead District School Board, on behalf of Student Transportation Services Thunder Bay, reached out to MPP Kevin Holland regarding the impact of these changes in our Northwestern Ontario Region, on students and families our Board supports. We followed up in writing from all boards who are members of Student Transportation Services Thunder Bay. We have attached the correspondence to Mr. Holland, that included history, implemented changes and expected outcomes along with suggestions to help address these concerns.

Upon receipt of the attached response from Mr. Hollands' office, we felt it necessary to clarify some of the information. It is important to have an accurate understanding of the real impacts of these changes to transportation on our Northwestern Ontario school boards (please see attached response to Mr. Holland).

In Thunder Bay, city infrastructure makes many walks to school unsafe: lack of sidewalks, long winter months with high snowbanks, extreme cold and many months of darkness when going to school coupled with long wait lists for child-care and before and after school programs all pose a risk to our students.

Increasing walk distances for primary children puts three-year-old toddlers on the road before light in long winter months and often on busy roads with no sidewalks. Bussing is also an equity issue. We are deeply concerned about our children who live in risk and their families who do not have the means to transport their children to school. When busses are cancelled due to weather or driver shortage, most students from these neighborhood's, despite their proximity to school, do not attend. We saw this inequity of access during the pandemic and believe we will be creating inequity through the new funding formula. Attendance is paramount to student success.

Committed to the success of every student

www.lakeheadschoos.ca

Minister, we respectfully request that you study our unique and difficult situation here in Northwestern Ontario and make positive changes for the safety of children on their journey to school. We extend an invitation to visit Thunder Bay as soon as possible and see our actual situation, speak to parents, Student Transportation Services Thunder Bay, our Board, staff, and meet some of the children who are so adversely affected by the changes to walk times and funding for transportation. We appreciate your support in this matter moving forward and hope to find solutions collaboratively for the safety of our students.

Sincerely,

On behalf of the Trustees of Lakehead District School Board,

Ellen Chambers
Chair
Lakehead District School Board

cc: Kevin Holland, Member of Provincial Parliament
Lise Vaugois, Member of Provincial Parliament

Att:

Thursday, February 1, 2024

Dear Mr. Holland,

Thank you for meeting with representatives of Lakehead District School Board, on behalf of Student Transportation Services Thunder Bay, this past November to discuss our concerns on the funding changes implemented by the Ministry of Education for 2023-2024 regarding transportation and its impact on school boards in Northern Ontario and the students we support.

The information has been shared with the other school boards in our region, Thunder Bay Catholic District School Board, Conseil scolaire de district catholique des Aurores boréales and Conseil scolaire du Grand Nord, as they are equally impacted by the funding changes for transportation.

Please find attached information on this issue including brief history, implemented changes and the expected outcomes, as well as suggestions to help address some of these concerns.

We are appreciative of your offer to bring our concerns forward and would be happy to provide further information or clarification as required.

Sincerely,



Craig Murphy
Consortium Manager
Student Transportation Services Thunder Bay



Mireille Major-Levesque
Director of Education
Conseil scolaire de district catholique des
Aurores boréales



Pino Tassone
Director of Education
Thunder Bay Catholic District School Board



Sherri-Lynne Pharand
Director of Education
Lakehead District School Board



Sébastien Fontaine
Director of Education
Conseil scolaire du Grand Nord

BRIEFING NOTE

Thursday, February 1, 2024

RE: Implications of transportation funding changes for the north

Background:

The Ministry of Education provides an annual student transportation grant to school boards to assist parents in transporting their children to and from school. Previous grants were a base amount established by the Ministry for each school board many years ago adjusted each year for increased enrolment, and rising contract costs (approximately 2%). The grant did not come with any requirements to determine eligibility; therefore, school boards developed their own policies for providing a safe, efficient, and cost-effective transportation system for their students within the grant amount available.

In Thunder Bay, all local school boards agreed many years ago on a joint transportation policy which included eligibility distances which considered the needs of our families in our Northwestern Ontario community. Winter weather conditions for up to 7 months of the 10-month school year, city infrastructure, and availability and costs of alternative transportation were all considered against the student transportation grant each board received from the Ministry in establishing our eligibility policies.

With continuous and increasing transportation cost pressures on school boards and recognizing that the student transportation grant was not reflective of the actual cost of providing student transportation in the province, the Ministry set out on conducting a student transportation funding review in 2018 which resulted in the new funding formula introduced for the 2023-2024 school year.

During the funding review period, student transportation grants were frozen at 2019-2020 levels up to and including the 2022-2023 school year while our competitively procured contracts with bus operators continued to have annual increases causing significant pressures on our abilities to continue to offer the level of service local families have become accustomed to.

For the 2023-2024 school year, the student transportation funding model was changed by the Ministry of Education, reducing the amount of overall funding for student transportation needs in the Thunder Bay area and tied to a universal standard for student transportation eligibility distances across the province.

Impact of the change in transportation funding effective 2023-2024:

Bus Contracts:

- Formula is based on a costing model and does not include a reasonable profit margin for bus operators involved in bidding process;
- Ministry benchmark costs for vehicles, parts and other equipment in the formula are based on 2018 prices adjusted for inflation whereas the actual costs have risen significantly higher since

then. For example, the CPI from 2018 to 2022 increased by 13.7%, the cost of a new school bus increased an average of 42% in that same time period;

- Lack of busing competition in the north which drives pricing higher;
- Previous contract increases at 4%-8%.

Eligibility:

- Student transportation eligibility distances in the funding formula double most current STSTB distances;
- Current: JK/SK 0.40 km, Grade 1-3 0.80 km, Grade 4-8 1.6 km, Grade 9-12 1.6 km;
- New: JK/SK 0.80 km, Grade 1-3 1.6 km, Grade 4-8 1.6 km, Grade 9-12 3.2 km;
- Approximately 1,600 students serviced by STSTB may become ineligible for busing.

Hazards:

- Difficult for students to walk during the winter months due to extreme cold weather (exceeding -25 degrees Celsius), snow volume, sidewalks and roads not cleared, reduced daylight;
- Lack of sidewalks in walking zones;
- Lack of before and after school programs and child care;
- Lack of crossing guards;
- Increased traffic around school zones at beginning and end of school day;
- Some areas of town with higher rates of criminal activity are not conducive to walking;
- STSTB demographics is wide;
- Active transportation programs like walking school buses require supervision and coordination not currently funded.

Equity

- Financial - parents may be impacted financially if they do not have flexible work arrangements that allow them to drop off and pick up their children;
- Attendance of at-risk children is expected to decrease if not eligible for busing;
- Minivans and taxis are not funded for 2023-2024 - these modes of transportation are part of a fleet that supports our students with special education needs, but the Ministry is reviewing for 2024-2025;
- Parents without vehicles are unable to drive children to school;
- Where child care may be available, they may be cost prohibitive to families.

Possible Solutions:

- Ministry has provided transition funding and local priorities funding;
- Request that transition funding be rolled into permanent funding or be available for the term of the current RFPs where contracts do not align with funding parameters;
- Request that local priorities funding be defined to include such things as
 - Lack of sidewalks
 - Lack of streetlights
 - Lack of before and after school/child care services
 - Lack of crossing guards

- Northern temperatures and snow load
- Supports for active transportation programs
- Request that the Ministry review on the use of specialized modes of transportation result in funding for 2024-2025 (i.e. taxis and minivans);
- Request that a reasonable profit margin be included in the formula to better align with the bids of bus operators.

March 27, 2024

Kevin Holland, MPP
744 James St. N.
Thunder Bay, ON
P7C 5N3

To the Honourable Kevin Holland, MPP

Dear MPP Holland,

We appreciate you reaching out to the Ministry of Education regarding the concerns we discussed with you back in November 2023, and followed up in writing to you in January 2024. The information provided to you by the Ministry can be a bit misleading. We hope this letter provides a little more clarity regarding our concerns.

It is true that the Ministry of Education has increased the Student Transportation Grant for the 2023-2024 school year; however, it is not possible to compare these on a high level as they are no longer comparative figures. The Board's costs did not stay status quo. The Ministry passed on an increase in expenses that school boards were previously not responsible for (*\$617,195 in costs for additional fuel and driver retention & recruitment programs*). In addition, part of this increase in funding is Transition Funding (*\$751,444*) that is expected to be phased out by 2027.

It is true that the new funding framework includes Local Priorities & Operations; however, the common reference standards used in the overall funding framework are dated and do not reflect the current cost of a bus, and therefore, do not support the cost of contracting out bus services in 2023-2024. As a result, Lakehead District School Board (LDSB) must use the Local Priorities & Operations to subsidize the cost of transportation for students already within the eligibility distances. This means that there are not additional funds available to apply to such things as hazards, courtesy transportation or to allow the Board to 'consider' eligibility distances that are more palatable to our families.

It is also true that the Ministry has provided a Special Transportation Needs Component, but for LDSB this does not reflect the costs that are incurred in order to provide transportation that meets the individual needs of our students, the geography in which they may be located and the availability of special transportation services in Thunder Bay (*2023-2024 Funding \$43,000 vs 2023-2024 Special Transportation Costs \$279,334*).

The school Board met with you in November 2023 to provide adequate notice that the consortia would be changing eligibility distances in order to align with funding. As our local MPP, you continue to advocate for Northwestern Ontario, and we understood that you would want to hear those constituents and stakeholders on this issue. Increasing our walk distances for primary children, in particular, puts approximately 75 three to five year olds on the road before light in long winter months and often on busy roads with no sidewalks. This is 30 minutes a day for these junior and senior kindergarten students to walk each day. Please see the attached chart for the estimated walk times for all students in our climate. We respectfully request that you study our unique and difficult situation in Northwestern Ontario and make positive changes for the safety of the children in their journey to and from school. We thank you for your support and your ongoing interest in Northwestern Ontario issues.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Ellen Chambers
Chair
Lakehead District School Board

cc: Lise Vaugeois, Member of Provincial Parliament

Att:

The walking durations for grade classifications is shown in the chart below.

Distance – one way	Average Speed	Duration	Daily Active Transportation Duration
0.4 km (JK/SK)	4.0 kph	6 min	12 min
0.8 km (1 – 3)	4.0 kph	12 min	24 min
1.6 km (4 – 8)	4.0 kph	24 min	48 min
1.6 km (9 – 12)	4.0 kph	24 min	48 min
2.4 km	4.0 kph	36 min	72 min
3.2 km	4.0 kph	48 min	96 min

March 27, 2024

The Honourable Chrystia Freeland
Minister of Finance & Deputy Prime Minister
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario,
Canada
K1A 0A6
chrystia.freeland@parl.gc.ca

Re: Federal Budget 2024

Dear Minister Freeland,

We are writing to you today on behalf of the Lakehead District School Board (LDSB) to express our unified and unwavering support for the implementation of a National School Food Program.

Food insecurity has become increasingly prevalent among Canadian children, particularly exacerbated by the challenges brought on by the ongoing pandemic. This issue directly impacts student achievement, mental health, and overall well-being. As educational institutions, we witness firsthand the struggles faced by our students and their families due to inadequate access to nutritious meals. Food insecurity is a national issue and rates have been rising at unprecedented levels. A 2022 Statistics Canada report* shows that 6.9 million people in 10 provinces, including almost 1.8 million children, lived in households struggling to afford the food they need.

We echo the Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA) in urging for a significant allocation of funds towards the establishment and sustainable operation of a National School Food Program. Specifically, we request an allocation of \$1 billion over the next five years, with a minimum annual commitment of \$200 million in the 2024 Budget. This financial commitment is crucial to ensure the effectiveness and widespread impact of the program across the country.

Our school Board strongly believes in the provision of nutrition programming for all students. Like many school districts across Canada, especially those who serve students in rural and/or remote locations, the provision of low-cost meals/food items to our schools is proving to be more and more challenging. In many parts of our country, there is limited access to low-cost healthy foods, especially in the winter months. As such, there is a necessary infrastructure that requires further financial support than what is currently available. It should be noted that Canada is the only G7 country that does not have a National School Food Program.

We recognize the challenges faced by the government in allocating funds, but we firmly believe that investing in our children's future is investing in the future of our nation. We urge you to prioritize the inclusion of substantial funding for a National School Food Program in the 2024 Budget. Your support and leadership in championing this cause will have a profound and lasting positive impact on the lives of countless Canadian students.

Thank you for your attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

Ellen Chambers
Chair
Lakehead District School Board

cc: Patty Hajdu, Member of Parliament
Marcus Powlowski, Member of Parliament