

REGULAR BOARD MEETING

Tuesday, November 25, 2025
Jim McCuaig Education Centre

Sherri-Lynne Pharand
 Director of Education

Leah Vanderwey
 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	L. Vanderwey	
2. DISCLOSURE OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST		
3. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA	L. Vanderwey	Verbal
4. RESOLVE INTO COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – CLOSED SESSION – N/A		
5. COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – CLOSED SESSION – N/A		
6. REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – CLOSED SESSION – N/A		
7. LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	E. Chambers	Verbal
8. CONSENT AGENDA	L. Vanderwey	
8.1 Approval of Minutes October 28, 2025 Regular Board Meeting		1-5
8.2 Recommendations from the Board Advisory Committee (109-25)		6-10
9. DELEGATIONS/PRESENTATIONS – N/A		
10. REPORTS		
10.1 <u>Director's Reports</u>		
10.1.1 Belong – N/A		

			<u>Resource Person</u>	<u>Pages</u>
10.1.2	Succeed			
	10.1.2.1	International Education Report (111-25)	J. Lower	11-13
	10.1.2.2	Student Achievement Report (098-25)	H. Harris/ J. Lower	14-19
	10.1.2.3	Early Learning Report (112-25)	H. Harris	20-23
10.1.3	Reconcile – N/A			
10.1.4	Other			
	10.1.4.1	By-Law No. 126– 2026 Tax Levy (113-25)	K. Alaksa	24-25
10.2	<u>Chair's Reports</u>			
10.3	Student/Indigenous Student Trustee Reports			
	10.3.1	Indigenous Student Trustee November Report	E. Genno	Handout
	10.3.2	Student Trustee November Report	B. Bruce	Handout
10.4	Reports of Standing Committees			
	10.4.1	Recommendation from the Coordinating Committee (108-25)	L. Vanderwey	26
	10.4.2	Miiniwewinan: Indigenous Education Advisory Committee Request for Approval of Correspondence (114-25)	H. Harris	27-29
	10.4.3	Parent Involvement Committee Minutes – October 6, 2025	S. Pharand	30-33
	10.4.4	Recommendation from the Communications Committee (110-25)	E. Chambers	34-36

		<u>Resource Person</u>	<u>Pages</u>
10.5	Reports of External Board or Agency Representation		
10.5.1	Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA) Report	R. Sitch	Verbal
11.	REPORTS OF SPECIAL (AD HOC) COMMITTEES – N/A		
12.	SPECIAL ORDERS – N/A		
13.	UNFINISHED BUSINESS AND GENERAL ORDERS – N/A		
14.	NOTICE OF MOTIONS – N/A		
15.	ANNOUNCEMENTS		Verbal
16.	ADJOURNMENT	L. Vanderwey	Verbal

LAKEHEAD DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

MINUTES OF REGULAR BOARD MEETING

Board Room/Microsoft Teams
Jim McCuaig Education Centre

2025 OCT 28
7:30 p.m.

TRUSTEES PRESENT:

Leah Vanderwey (Chair)
Ellen Chambers
Pat Johansen
Donica LeBlanc
Ron Oikonen
Ryan Sitch

George Saarinen
Trudy Tuchenhausen
Scottie Wemigwans (Indigenous Trustee)
Eryn Genno (Indigenous Student Trustee)
Breanna Bruce (Student Trustee)

ABSENT WITH REGRETS:

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION:

Sherri-Lynne Pharand, Director of Education
Heather Harris, Superintendent of Education: Child Care & Elementary Education
Jane Lower, Superintendent of Education
Patti-Jo Pesola-Brunton, Superintendent of Education: Math Lead
Michelle Probizanski, Superintendent of Education
Kirsti Alaksa, Superintendent of Business

PUBLIC SESSION:

1. **Call to Order**

Meeting called to order by Chair Vanderwey at 7:35 p.m.

2. **Disclosure of Conflict of Interest - None**

3. **Approval of Agenda**

Moved by Trustee Saarinen

Seconded by Trustee Johansen

"THAT the Agenda for Regular Board Meeting, October 28, 2025, be approved."

CARRIED

4. Resolve into Committee of the Whole – Closed Session – N/A

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – CLOSED SESSION – N/A

5. Committee of the Whole – Closed Session - N/A

PUBLIC SESSION – 7:30 P.M.

6. Report of the Committee of the Whole – Closed Session – N/A

7. Land Acknowledgement

Trustee Tuchenhausen read the Land Acknowledgement.

8. Consent Agenda

Chair Vanderwey informed the Board that she would like to consider item 8.1 separately as there needs to be an amendment to that item.

Moved by Trustee LeBlanc

Seconded by Trustee Oikonen

“THAT Lakehead District School Board approve the consent agenda, excluding item 8.1, which will be considered separately.”

CARRIED

- 8.1 Minutes of Regular Board Meeting – September 23, 2025

Moved by Trustee Chambers

Seconded by Trustee Tuchenhausen

“THAT Lakehead District School Board approve the Minutes of Regular Board Meeting – September 23, 2025, with the following amendment:

1. *Under Trustees Present – Leah Vanderwey be indicated as chair of the Board not Donica LeBlanc.”*

CARRIED

9. Delegations/ Presentations

- 9.1 Trustees’ Recognition Award – Jennifer Johnston

Trustee Saarinen presented Jennifer Johnston, with a Trustees’ Recognition Award for her exceptional contributions to students, her profession and the broader educational community in the field of counselling and attendance services.

10. Reports

- 10.1 Director’s Reports

- 10.1.1 Belong – N/A

10.1.2 Succeed

10.1.2.1 Adult Education Report (097-25)

Superintendent Lower introduced Sam Peotto, Manager of Lakehead Adult Education Centre, who presented the report. All trustees' questions were addressed.

10.1.3 Reconcile – N/A

10.1.4 Other

10.1.4.1 Short Term Borrowing Resolution Report (105-25)

Moved by Trustee Saarinen Seconded by Trustee Wemigwans

“THAT Lakehead District School Board approve the Short-Term Borrowing Resolution for the 2025-2026 school year as outlined in Report No.105-25, Short-Term Borrowing Resolution.”

CARRIED

10.2 Chairs Reports

10.3 Student/Indigenous Student Trustee Reports

10.3.1 Student Trustee October Report (Handout)

Breanna Bruce, Student Trustee, presented her September report to the Board. Items addressed in the report included:

- Attending the United Way “Better is Possible breakfast”;
- Meetings with Hammar skjold High School, Westgate Collegiate and Vocational Institute and Superior Collegiate and Vocational Institute’s student councils;
- Attending a Parent Involvement Committee Meeting on October 6, 2025; and
- Presenting to a Civics class at Superior Collegiate and Vocational Institute with Chair Vanderwey and Trustee Johansen on the role of trustees for Local Government Week.

All trustees' questions were addressed.

10.3.2 Indigenous Student Trustee October Report (Handout)

Eryn Genno, Indigenous Student Trustee, presented her September report to the Board. Items addressed in the report included:

- Attending the United Way “Better is Possible breakfast”;
- Sharing her Indigenous student trustee update with members of Miiniwewinan at the first committee meeting of the school year; and
- Meetings with Hammarskjold High School, Westgate Collegiate and Vocational Institute’s student councils.

All trustees’ questions were addressed.

10.4 Reports of Standing Committees

10.4.1 Miiniwewinan: Indigenous Education Advisory Committee Minutes – June 19, 2025

Heather Harris, Superintendent of Education and Co-Chair of Miiniwewinan: Indigenous Education Advisory Committee, presented the minutes. All trustees’ questions were addressed.

10.5 Reports of External Board or Agency Representation

10.5.1 Ontario Public School Boards’ Association (OPSBA) Report

Trustee Sitch updated members on items from the September OPSBA Board of Directors Meeting, including the federal government’s decision to make the National School Food Program permanent, a submission from OPSBA to the government against the removal of speed traps from school zones, province wide campaign “democracy is not outdated” being put on by OPSBA with a petition in support of democratically appointed school board officials, the upcoming Public Education Symposium in January, meeting and Advocacy Day November 23 and 24.

All trustees’ questions were addressed.

11. Reports of Special (Ad Hoc) Committees – N/A

12. Special Orders – N/A

13. Unfinished Business/ General Orders

13.1 Suspension/Expulsion Hearing Committee

Director Pharand informed Board members that due to a lack of legislated number of members available for an upcoming hearing with a tentative date of November 20, 2025, the committee is asking for a trustee to volunteer to be appointed as an additional alternate member of the committee.

Moved by Trustee Sitch Seconded by Trustee Saarinen

“THAT the Lakehead District School Board approve Trustee Chambers as an Alternate to the Suspension/Expulsion Hearing Committee”

CARRIED

14. Notices of Motion – N/A

15. Announcements

15.1 Chair Vanderwey informed the Board that the following events were attended by trustees:

- October 24, 2025 – MPP Lise Vaugeois visited a civics class at Superior Collegiate and Vocational Institute;
- October 27, 2025 – Staples/ Kiwanis Club Thunder Bay School Supply Donation at Sherbrooke Public School; and
- October 28, 2025 – Trustees’ Professional Development Session on Artificial Intelligence with Gino Russo.

15.2 Director Pharand informed Board members that Lakehead District School Boards Paediatrics Clinic and the KZ Lodge had been submitted to present at OPSBA’s Public Education Symposium.

15.3 Chair Vanderwey informed Board members that she was invited to present at the Occasional Teachers General Meeting on the role of a trustee.

15.4 Trustee Sitch inquired if Lakehead Public Schools are still involved in the Christmas Cheer Fund. Director Pharand confirmed that many of schools collect food items.

16. Adjournment

Moved by Trustee Saarinen

Seconded by Trustee Sitch

“THAT we do now adjourn at 8:21 p.m.”

CARRIED

LAKEHEAD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

2025 NOV 25
Report No. 109-25

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

RE: RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE BOARD ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Background

The following reports were received at the Board Advisory Committee Meeting of November 11, 2025, and has been referred to the Board for approval. The recommendations are as follows:

1. POLICY REVIEW – 3074 EXPENSE AND TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT (107-25)

It is recommended that Lakehead District School Board approve the following motion:

“THAT Lakehead District School Board approve the 3074 Expense and Travel Reimbursement Policy, Appendix A to Report No. 107-25.”

2. POLICY REVIEW – 1011 ACCESS TO SYSTEM PROGRAMS (102-25)

It is recommended that Lakehead District School Board approve the following motion:

“THAT Lakehead District School Board approve 1011 Access to System Programs Policy, Appendix A to Report No. 102-25.”

The above policies are attached as Appendix A to Report No. 109-25.

Respectfully submitted,

DONICA LEBLANC
Chair, Board Advisory Committee

BUSINESS AND BOARD ADMINISTRATION	3000
EXPENSE AND TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT POLICY	3074

1. Rationale

It is the objective of Lakehead District School Board to adhere to the Ontario Broader Public Sector (BPS) Expenses Directive as incorporated in this policy.

2. Policy

It is the policy of Lakehead District School Board to reimburse individuals for those expenses incurred in the conduct of approved Board business or in carrying out the responsibilities of an employee, a Board member, student trustee, school council or non-trustee Board committee member.

3. Definitions

- 3.1 “Approved Board business” refers to expenses incurred in the course of doing business on behalf of the Board.
- 3.2 The term “trustees” refers to both elected public trustees and student trustee(s), unless otherwise noted.
- 3.3 The term “school council member” refers to individuals elected to a Lakehead District School Board school council.
- 3.4 The term “non-trustee Board committee member” refers to individuals appointed by the Board to the following Lakehead District School Board Committees such as:
Miiniwewinan: Indigenous Education Advisory Committee, Audit Committee, Parent Involvement Committee (PIC) and the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC).

4. Guidelines

- 4.1 Public funds are used prudently and responsibly with a focus on accountability and transparency.
- 4.2 Expenses for travel, meals and hospitality support Board objectives.
- 4.3 Plans for travel, meals, accommodation and hospitality are necessary and economical with due regard for health and safety.
- 4.4 All claims for reimbursement will only be authorized for approved Board business.
- 4.5 Individuals are responsible to ensure that all claims for reimbursement comply with this policy and do not include any personal expenses.

BUSINESS AND BOARD ADMINISTRATION	3000
EXPENSE AND TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT POLICY	3074

- 4.6 Claims for reimbursement by staff members are submitted to the immediate supervisor for authorization.
- 4.7 Trustee claims are submitted to the vice-chair of the Board for authorization.
- 4.8 Claims for the vice-chair are submitted to the chair of the Board for authorization.
- 4.9 School council member and non-trustee Board committee member claims are submitted to the appropriate senior administration member for authorization (director of education or a superintendent).
- 4.10 Claims for reimbursements of any costs associated with travel on Board business are to be submitted and will be processed after the event. There will be no immediate reimbursement for airfare or deposits charged to personal credit cards.

5. Review

This policy shall be reviewed in accordance with 2010 Policy Development and Review Policy.

<u>Cross Reference</u>	<u>Date Approved</u>	<u>Legal Reference</u>
Broader Public Sector Expenses Directive	October 23, 2007	
Travel, Meal and Hospitality Expenses Directive	<u>Date Revised</u> December 15, 2009 June 26, 2012 November 26, 2019 November 25, 2025	

PHILOSOPHY AND GOALS	1000
ACCESS TO SYSTEM PROGRAMS POLICY	1011

1. Rationale

Lakehead District School Board (LDSB) is committed to offering specialized system programs of choice for students.

2. Policy

All students of LDSB shall have equal access to recognized system programs of LDSB.

3. Definitions

3.1 System Programs - Programs which are identified by formal LDSB resolution such as the French Immersion and the International Baccalaureate Programme.

3.1.1 Certificates of Accomplishment may be issued, by the school, to a student who has successfully completed the specific program as laid out by the school.

3.1.2 The opportunity to meet the prescribed standards of an external accredited program may be an optional component of a system program.

3.2 Equal Access - The opportunity for all qualified students to register for system programs.

4. Guidelines

4.1 System programs:

- will be offered at designated schools;
- may require that a student meet established entry criteria;
- may or may not require specialized facilities;
- are normally, but not necessarily, offered over a number of years; or
- do not include Special Education programs.

4.2 In the event that registration must be limited, specific criteria will be clearly outlined in determining entrance.

4.3 Transportation to system programs shall be provided according to the 3040 Transportation Policy.

PHILOSOPHY AND GOALS	1000
ACCESS TO SYSTEM PROGRAMS POLICY	1011

5. Review

This policy shall be reviewed according to 2010 Policy Development and Review Policy.

<u>Cross Reference</u>	<u>Date Approved</u>	<u>Legal Reference</u>
3040 Transportation Policy	June 24, 2003 <u>Date Revised</u> January 27, 2015 January 24, 2023 November 25, 2025	

LAKEHEAD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

2025 NOV 25
Report No. 111-25

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

RE: LAKEHEAD PUBLIC SCHOOLS INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

1. Background

- 1.1 Lakehead District School Board (LDSB) is committed to enriching the learning experience of all students with access to exceptional, specialized, and innovative programs.
- 1.2 Lakehead District School Board is dedicated to building relationships with community partners and post-secondary institutions to better our education system and community.
- 1.3 Lakehead Public Schools International (LPSI) was established as a corporation following approval by LDSB in June 2015. It has an arms-length governance structure that guides the International Student program. The 2024-2025 school year was the ninth official year the program has been operating since its inaugural launch in September 2016.
- 1.4 A full-time international student coordinator continues to support LPSI and is responsible for student relationships, registration and finances, ongoing development of up-to-date marketing materials, education agent/industry partner liaison, and program recruitment efforts.
- 1.5 Lakehead Public Schools International uses two external third-party homestay providers to facilitate the recruitment and retention of homestay families. These providers are MLI Homestay and Harmony Homestay. Both homestay providers are the legal custodian to LPSI students and oversees the operation of the local homestay program. The international student coordinator and homestay coordinators work together to match the students and families. For the 2024-2025 school year an additional Homestay program (Harmony Homestay) was introduced as an effort to increase homestay families in Thunder Bay.

2. Situation

- 2.1 The 2024-2025 school year continued to build on the previous year's successful International Student enrollments. Lakehead Public Schools International enrolled 49 students throughout the school year. These 49 students also represented a diverse group, with students from Germany, Spain, Mexico, China, Brazil, Cambodia and Vietnam. The 2024-2025 recruitment efforts continued strengthening ties within the European market; Spain and Germany continue to drive the growth and success of this program.

- 2.2 Throughout the entire 2024-2025 school year, the coordinator continued to participate in virtual meetings that were held with the Canadian Association of Public Schools International (CAPS-I), which included international programs across Canada, to discuss new policies set forth by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), industry trends, and any other pertinent issues or questions from school boards.
- 2.3 Lakehead Public Schools International still maintains its membership with CAPS-I and the Ontario Association of School Districts International (OASDI). Being part of these groups allows for our Board to be active participants in the development of International Education in Canada and gain first-hand experience with trends in the industry.
- 2.4 Lakehead Public Schools International continued with its in-person recruitment efforts over the 2024-2025 school year. Planned in-person events that took place included, ALPHE Frankfurt, ALPHE Malaga, and ALPE Brazil, ALPHE London plus CAPS-I Calgary. Included in those travels were independent meetings with agencies and student fairs which took place throughout Spain and Germany resulting in new agency partnerships and student applications. This aligned with strengthening our partnerships in our two key markets.
- 2.5 Tuition for the 2024-2025 was \$13,400. Lakehead Public Schools International remained competitively priced throughout the region and with similar sized programs. We continue to monitor competitor prices and listen to agent feedback regarding fees. International student tuition fees for 2025-2026 academic year are \$14,200.

3. Current Projects

- 3.1 Lakehead Public Schools International is working on several enhancements to marketing strategies. Through data driven analysis and in collaboration with our strategic partners both locally and international. Key components of this plan include:
- ROI Strategy: Conducting an in-depth analysis of return on investment (ROI) across each target country to ensure efficient resource allocation and measurable outcomes. This strategy should help with bottom line and agent relationship development;
 - Homestay Marketing Strategy: Partnering with our Homestay providers to expand marketing reach and increase visibility;
 - Agent and Student Recruitment Strategy: Implementing a multi-year recruitment approach aligned with ROI goals to drive sustainable growth and long-term success;
 - School-Based Initiatives: Promoting unique programs such as our SHSM, IB and our new hockey academy has attracted significant attention; and
 - Student Activity Planning: Expanding and refining our monthly student activity offerings to foster engagement, community, and cultural enrichment.
- 3.1.1 Lakehead Public Schools International continues to further enhance our ROI strategy for student recruitment by analyzing the actual return on investment by country understanding that we will have strong, neutral and negative ROI at times. By tracking this more efficiently LPSI will have a robust view on our investments thus improving our marketing strategies.

- 3.1.2 Lakehead Public Schools International continues to look for enhancements with our homestay providers. Improving the relationships and communication has resulted in less movement with students and improved agency relationships.

3.2. Next Steps

- 3.2.1 Lakehead Public Schools International will be working on updating the international website during the 2025-2026 school year.
- 3.2.2 Lakehead Public Schools International is investigating the potential for a summer international program that can utilize and showcase some of our strengths, Kingfisher Lake Outdoor Education Centre, Lakehead University, and outdoor learning environments. Summer programs in Canada have been very successful offering a shorter cultural and English as a second language (ESL) option for students.
- 3.2.3 In 2025-2026 LPSI partnered with Global Eyes which provides an enhanced application process and also a marketing avenue for students interested in attending Lakehead Public Schools.

Conclusion

Through the international student program, LDSB continues to showcase the excellence of our schools to the world, foster global connections, and expand career pathways for all learners. During the 2024–2025 academic year, international education across Canada has experienced significant changes, particularly related to IRCC immigration policies and reductions in post-secondary study permits. Ongoing Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) policy changes continue to pose potential challenges for Canadian international programs and have required us to adapt our strategies for sustainable growth. Approximately 10% of our international students choose Canada and Thunder Bay for its post-secondary opportunities and these IRCC study visa changes have had an impact across the K-12 sector. By analyzing our strongest markets and collaborating closely with our partners, we aim to strengthen program stability and pursue measured growth in the coming years.

Last year, we were unable to accommodate some students due to a shortage of host families; a challenge that remains a key focus for the current and future years. Lakehead Public Schools International will continue to work with our homestay partners and look for new methods to attract and retain families. With ongoing enhancements to marketing efforts and student programming, the outlook for the LDSB International Student Program remains strong.

Respectfully submitted,

JON-DAVID DOWDELL
International Student Coordinator

JANE LOWER
Superintendent of Education

SHERRI-LYNNE PHARAND
Director of Education

LAKEHEAD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

2025 NOV 25
Report No. 098-25

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

RE: STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

1. Background

- 1.1 Lakehead District School Board's (LDSB) 2025–2029 Multi-Year Strategic Plan prioritizes student achievement through its three guiding pillars: Belong, Succeed, and Reconcile. Grounded in the belief that every student can achieve excellence, LDSB is committed to creating conditions where learners feel a sense of belonging, are supported to reach their full academic potential, and engage in learning that reflects reconciliation, equity, and inclusion. Focused efforts on literacy, numeracy, and pathways ensure that every student is equipped with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to thrive in their chosen futures.
- 1.2 As part of our commitment to the Belong, Succeed, Reconcile pillars outlined in LDSB's 2025–2029 Multi-Year Strategic Plan, we continue to monitor student achievement as a key measure of success for every learner. At both the elementary and secondary levels, LDSB gathers and analyzes a range of student learning data that reflects progress toward curriculum expectations and aligns with system goals for equity, engagement, and achievement.

This evidence of learning, drawn from classroom assessments, report card data, and other sources, helps identify trends, inform targeted interventions, and guide supports for students at each stage of their educational journey. Throughout the year, data across all subject areas are examined at key points to ensure alignment with Board and school priorities. However, for the purpose of this report, the focus is on mathematics and literacy, as these remain central areas of priority for improving student achievement.

Through ongoing analysis and responsive action, we ensure that assessment information is used to improve learning and promote success for all students, consistent with the principles outlined in Growing Success: Assessment, Evaluation, and Reporting in Ontario's schools, Kindergarten to Grade 12.

2. Situation

2.1 Assessment data, aligned with the goals of LDSB's Student Achievement Plan, provides valuable insight into student learning across the system. Drawing on multiple sources of evidence, including report card data, Acadiance screening data, achievement rates in core subject areas, and credit accumulation, educators and administrators identify areas of strength and those requiring targeted support. This comprehensive approach enables schools and system leaders to plan, implement, and monitor evidence-based instructional strategies that enhance student achievement and ensure every learner is supported to succeed.

2.2 The following 2024-2025 year-end data are presented in this report:

- pass rates and mark distributions in Grade 9 mathematics and English;
- credit accumulation for Grades 9 and 10 during the 2024-2025 school year;
- primary, junior, and intermediate final report card marks in literacy and mathematics; and
- K-2 Acadiance screening data for the beginning of the 2025-2026 school year.

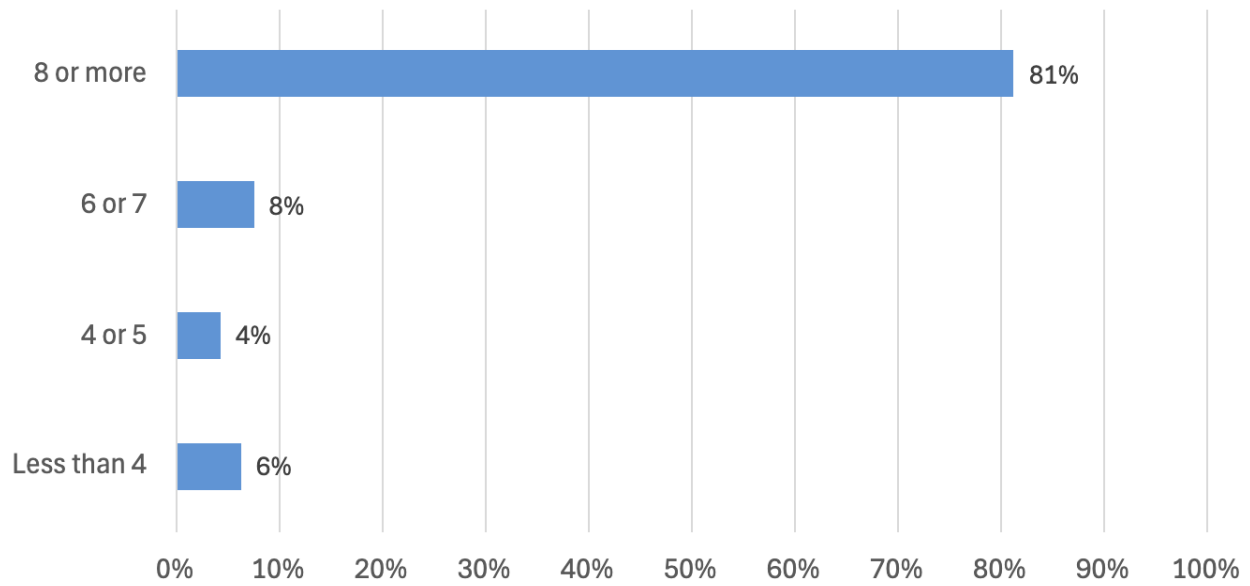
2.3 Secondary Student Achievement Data 2024-2025

- Students enrolled in the Grade 9 de-streamed math course (MTH 1W) had a 92% pass rate. Sixty-nine percent of students achieved provincial standard, level 3 or higher;
- Students enrolled in the Grade 9 de-streamed English course (ENL 1W) had a 93% pass rate. Seventy percent of students achieved provincial standard, level 3 or higher;
- Students enrolled in the Grade 10 academic math course (MPM 2D) had a 95% pass rate. Seventy-one percent of students achieved provincial standard, level 3 or higher;
- Students enrolled in the Grade 10 applied math course (MFM 2P) had an 88% pass rate. Thirty-six percent of students achieved provincial standard, level 3 or higher;
- Students enrolled in the Grade 10 academic English course (ENG 2D) had a 94% pass rate. Seventy-two percent of students achieved provincial standard, level 3 or higher; and
- Students enrolled in the Grade 10 applied English course (ENG 2P) had an 88% pass rate. Forty-three percent of students achieved provincial standard, level 3 or higher.

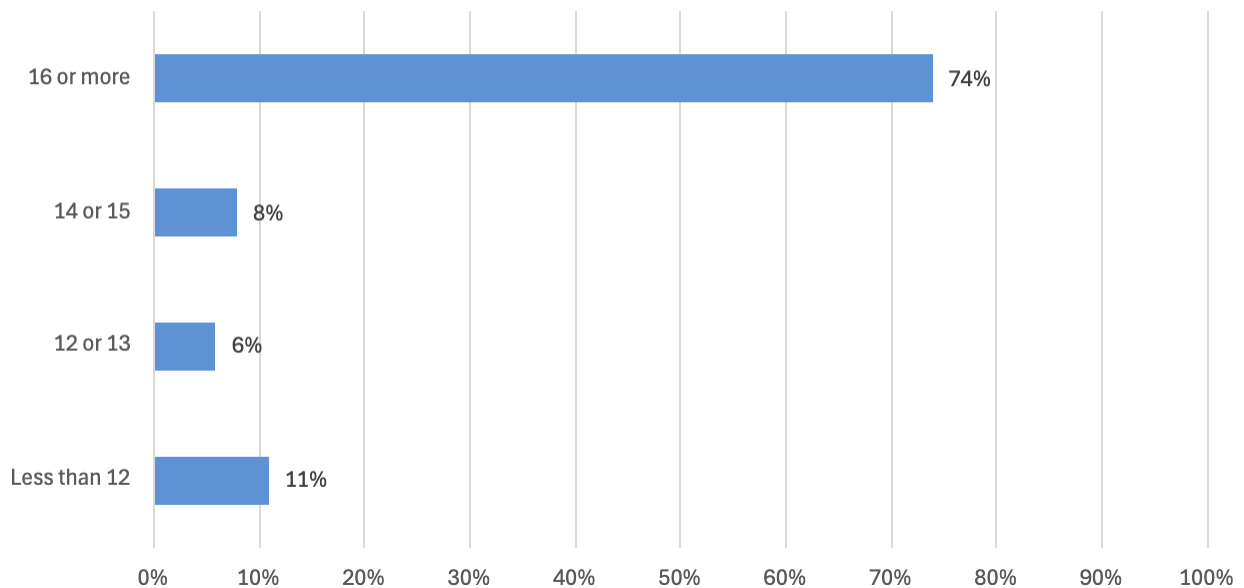
2.4 2024-2025 Credit Accumulation Towards an OSSD

- eighty-one percent of Grade 9 students earned eight or more credits; and
- seventy-four percent of Grade 10 students earned 16 or more credits.

Credit Accumulation - Grade 9



Credit Accumulation - Grade 10



- 2.5 Each secondary school offers one section of mathematics support (GLS1O) and one section of literacy support (ELS2O) to assist students in closing learning gaps and developing the skills and confidence needed for success in future English and mathematics courses. These targeted supports reflect LDSB's commitment to the Belong, Succeed, Reconcile pillars by ensuring that every student feels supported in their learning journey, experiences success through responsive instruction, and benefits from equitable opportunities to achieve at high levels.

We provide professional learning for school administrators focused on literacy, math, student success, and data-informed decision-making, while also supporting the literacy intervention and engagement teacher role, expanding multilingual language learner (MLL) services, and offering literacy and math programming beyond the regular school day.

In addition, cross-panel professional learning for math and English teachers fosters a shared understanding of high-impact instructional strategies, curriculum expectations, and assessment practices. A primary area of focus within this professional learning is the use of explicit, direct instruction to support skill development, conceptual understanding, and equitable access to learning for all students. Together, these efforts promote curriculum alignment, strengthen educator capacity, and reinforce a coherent, system-wide focus on improving student achievement.

2.6 Elementary Student Achievement Data 2024-2025

2.6.1 The beginning of the year Acadience Screening data shows:

- sixty-eight percent of Kindergarten students are at or above benchmark;
- thirty-two percent of Grade 1 students are at or above benchmark; and
- forty-five percent of Grade 2 students are at or above benchmark.

2.6.2 The end of year report card data for primary, junior, and intermediate grades in math and literacy show:

- in the primary grades, 74% of students are at or above benchmarks in mathematics, while 63% of students are at or above benchmarks in literacy;
- in the junior grades, 70% of students are at or above benchmarks in mathematics, while 69% of students are at or above benchmarks in literacy; and
- in the intermediate grades, 66% of students are at or above benchmarks in mathematics, while 74% of students are at or above benchmarks in literacy.

2.7 Lakehead District School Board is committed to ensuring that every student acquires the essential literacy and math skills needed to be successful. In response to the Right to Read report, all elementary schools are required to implement consistent literacy screening and monitoring of K-2 students below grade level benchmarks. Schools are implementing tier 1, 2 and tier 3 interventions to ensure all students learn to read.

2.7.1 Literacy coach and intervention teachers work with focus schools to provide training, support, and intervention aligned with the Science of Reading.

2.7.2 Math coach and intervention teachers work with priority schools to provide co-teaching and modelling of good mathematical practices, as well as providing intervention for target groups for mathematical fluency and foundation skill building.

3. Next Steps

- at the elementary level Distributed Leadership Forum will be focused on literacy this year;
- literacy coach and intervention teachers, and other central staff will work with priority schools providing more intensive intervention and collaborative learning;
- math coach and intervention teachers will work with their priority schools focused on building fluency and foundational math skills;
- system wide professional development (PD) will continue in both math and literacy. Math PD will be focused on Grade 6 this year, and literacy training will continue in K-2 with a strong focus on data, progress monitoring and tier 1 and 2 interventions;
- focus instructional efforts on strengthening foundational skill development through explicit instruction and purposeful practice. Teachers will provide students with more time and structured opportunities to consolidate learning and apply skills in varied contexts to support retention;
- use diagnostic and formative assessment data to identify students performing below the provincial standard and plan targeted reteaching and practice opportunities. Departments will regularly analyze student work to refine instruction and ensure consistent expectations of proficiency;
- establish a regular data review cycle to monitor student progress in Grades 9 and 10 English and math, tracking trends in both pass rates and achievement of provincial standard. Principals and program leads will use this data to guide responsive planning; and
- strengthen professional collaboration through department and cross-panel learning that emphasizes instructional strategies promoting conceptual understanding, skill transfer, and long-term retention. Exemplars and success stories will be shared across schools to build collective efficacy.

CONCLUSION

Improving student learning and instructional practice remains at the heart of our shared work in LDSB. Together, we are deepening our focus on students who face persistent learning challenges, ensuring they have the time, support, and connections needed to thrive. Through purposeful professional learning, data analysis, progress monitoring, and responsive coaching, educators continue to build classrooms where every student feels a strong sense of belonging and confidence in their ability to succeed. Guided by reflection and ongoing learning, we are also committed to ensuring all students are represented in our plans and priorities by providing responsive instruction that meets identified needs and honours the diverse experiences of our learners.

Respectfully submitted,

KALI BERNST

Principal of Indigenous Education and Program

KATHLEEN ANDREWS

Student Success Lead

HEATHER HARRIS

Superintendent of Education: Early Years and Elementary Education

JANE LOWER

Superintendent of Education

SHERRI-LYNNE PHARAND

Director of Education

LAKEHEAD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

2025 NOV 25
Report No. 112-25

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

RE: EARLY LEARNING

1. Background

- 1.1 The Lakehead District School Board Strategic Plan 2025–2029 is grounded in three foundational pillars: *Belong*, *Succeed*, and *Reconcile*. The Kindergarten program supports the implementation of the strategic plan through a balanced approach to engaging play-based and inquiry learning and in systematic, explicit, direct instruction in mathematics and language.
- 1.2 The early years lead at the superintendent level supports the implementation of Ontario's vision of a responsive, high quality, accessible and increasingly integrated early years system that contributes to healthy child development. The early years lead works closely with the Thunder Bay District Social Services Administration Board (TBDSSAB) and maintains a seat on the district community partners table, which serves to address children's needs and services for both Pre-K and school-aged learners across the region.
- 1.3 In response to The Right to Read report (Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2022) the Ministry of Education revised the Language Curriculum for Grades 1–9 to align with the science of reading. The release of the revised Kindergarten Program is anticipated in 2026.
- 1.4 Policy/Program Memorandum (PPM 168) mandates annual early reading screenings for all students in Year 2 of Kindergarten through Grade 2. Screening uses standardized tools to identify at-risk students early and inform interventions.

2. Situation

2.1 2020-2025 Kindergarten enrolment data:

Year (at October 31)	Year 1 Kindergarten Enrolment	Year 2 Kindergarten Enrolment	Total Kindergarten Enrolment
2020	565	612	1177
2021	623	626	1249
2022	625	694	1319
2023	615	656	1271
2024	583	647	1230
2025	629	611	1240

2.2 Transition to Kindergarten

Lakehead Public Schools prioritizes a smooth and supportive transition to Kindergarten to ensure children and families feel prepared and confident entering school. School-based Welcome to Kindergarten events and the board's annual registration night provide families with resources, community connections, and practical guidance to support a positive start to school. Additional outreach by the board team occurs in partnership with communities and community agencies to ensure culturally responsive practices and individualized planning for our youngest learners.

2.2.1 Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ)

ASQ is a developmental screening tool designed for use by educators and is administered to all Year 1 Kindergarten students prior to the start of the school year. ASQ screening relies on parents and guardians as experts on their children, and measures five domains: communication, gross motor, fine motor, problem solving, and personal-social. The purpose of administering the ASQ is two-fold:

- to quickly and efficiently determine whether a child should receive a more thorough, comprehensive evaluation or referral to ensure appropriate supports are in place; and
- to identify areas for whole-and small-group instruction and intervention throughout the school year.

2.2.2 Supporting Students with Special Education Needs

Planning for a positive and supportive transition for students with special education needs involves collaboration among families, educators, and community agencies. Key strategies include individualized meetings, early identification, and coordinated supports to address each child's strengths and needs to plan for a successful start to school.

2.2.3 Bright Beginnings

The Bright Beginnings program at Lakehead Public Schools is a Special Education and early years initiative designed to support a successful transition to Kindergarten for children who may benefit from additional preparation. Using developmental screening tools such as the ASQ, the program identifies areas of need and provides targeted support in self-regulation, social-emotional development, and foundational literacy and numeracy skills. Bright Beginnings emphasizes family engagement and works in partnership with community agencies to deliver wraparound services, ensuring equitable access and readiness for all learners.

3. Early Learning Data

Observing, documenting, and assessing each child's development and learning are essential for educators to plan, implement, and evaluate the effectiveness of the learning experiences they provide to students. Formative assessment includes both formal and informal measures and allows educators to monitor student progress and plan next steps in their instruction based on the data collected. Educators can be intentional about helping children to progress when they know where each child is with respect to established milestones and learning goals.

3.1 Early Reading Screening

The ministry-mandated early reading screener was administered by classroom teachers to students in Year 2 Kindergarten, Grade 1 and Grade 2 in October 2025. This is the second year of administration, allowing staff to compare results and begin to analyze patterns of system success and areas for growth.

Early Reading Screening Results Reading Composite Score Beginning of year (BOY)		
Grade	% of students who met benchmark October 2024	% of students who met benchmark October 2025
Year 1 Kindergarten	54%	68%
Grade 1	17%	32%
Grade 2	38%	46%

4. Next Steps

- 4.1 Focus Kindergarten to Grade 2 coaching and intervention support in priority schools, identified through system and school-based data. Monitor programs, interventions and supports to ensure they are having a positive impact on student achievement and well-being.
- 4.2 Continue to support educators and administrators to provide exemplary Kindergarten programming through professional development and training opportunities that reflect the identified needs of the system.
- 4.3 Continue to work collaboratively with community partners to support early years development and positive outcomes for students and families.

Conclusion

Lakehead Public Schools remains committed to fostering high-quality early learning experiences that align with provincial priorities and the board's strategic pillars of Belong, Succeed, and Reconcile. Through intentional programming, targeted interventions, and collaborative partnerships with families and community agencies, the board ensures that every child, regardless of background or need, has the support required for a successful start to school. Continued focus on evidence-based literacy instruction, early screening, and responsive transition practices will position our youngest learners for long-term achievement and well-being.

Respectfully submitted,

HEATHER HARRIS

Superintendent of Education: Early Years and Elementary Education

SHERRI-LYNNE PHARAND

Director of Education

LAKEHEAD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

2025 NOV 25
Report No. 113-25

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

RE: BY-LAW NO. 126 – 2026 TAX LEVY

1 Background

- 1.1 Section 257.7(1) of the Education Act requires that the English language public district school boards levy education taxes for all boards in those areas without municipal organization, within our present jurisdiction.
- 1.2 Sect 257.7(1.1) of the Education Act states that the Ministry of Finance shall collect the amount levied under the provincial Land Tax as if they were taxes imposed under that Act.

2 Situation

Ontario Regulation 400/98 and subsequent amendments to this regulation prescribes the tax rates for education purposes under subsection 257.12(1) of the Education Act.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Lakehead District School Board approve By-Law No.126 – 2026 Tax Levy (Appendix A) authorizing the 2026 tax levy at the prescribed rates set by Ontario Regulation 400/98 as amended, as outlined in Report No. 113-25.

Respectfully submitted,

KIRSTI ALAKSA
Superintendent of Business

SHERRI-LYNNE PHARAND
Director of Education

LAKEHEAD DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

BY-LAW NO. 126

A by-law to provide for a 2026 tax levy.

WHEREAS subsection 257.7(1) of the Education Act (the “Act”) requires the Board to levy the tax rates prescribed under section 257.12 of the Act;

AND WHEREAS Ontario Regulation 400/98 prescribes the tax rates under subsection 257.12(1) of the Act;

NOW THEREFORE Lakehead District School Board of Thunder Bay, Ontario enacts the following:

The rates set out in Ontario Regulation 400/98 for 2026 are hereby levied in localities within the area of jurisdiction of the Board on the property indicated in section 257.7 of the Act.

This by-law shall come into force and take effect upon the final passing hereof.

READ, ENACTED, AND MADE AS OF THE 25TH day of November 2025.

Leah Vanderwey
Chair

Sherri-Lynne Pharand
Secretary

LAKEHEAD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

2025 NOV 25
Report No. 108-25

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

RE: RECOMMENDATION FROM COORDINATING COMMITTEE - CANCELLATION OF
REGULAR BOARD MEETING – DECEMBER 16, 2025

1. Background

- 1.1 Article VI – Meetings of the Board, Section 6.1 – Regular Meetings, Lines 173-175, of the Governing By-Law requires that Regular Board meetings shall be held on the fourth Tuesday of every month at 7:30 p.m., in Public Session in the Board Room of Jim McCuaig Education Centre, except July and August, when the Board shall meet at the call of the chair in consultation with the director. On May 27, 2025, the Board approved the Board Advisory Committee and Regular Board Meeting Schedule 2025-2026 (055-25), Appendix A, that stated the December Regular Board Meeting would be held on December 16, 2025 due to the winter break.
- 1.2 As identified in Article VI – Meetings of the Board, Section 6.1 – Regular Meetings, Lines 177-178, the Board may, by Board resolution, cancel a Regular Board Meeting in any month.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Lakehead District School Board cancel the December 16, 2025, Regular Board Meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

LEAH VANDERWEY
Chair

LAKEHEAD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

2025 NOV 19
Report No. 114-25

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

RE: MIINIWEWINAN: INDIGENOUS EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE REQUEST
FOR APPROVAL OF CORRESPONDENCE

1. Background

At the October 2, 2025, Lakehead District School Board (LDSB) Miiniwewinan: Indigenous Education Advisory Committee (IEAC) meeting, it was moved that Serena Essex, Co-Chair of Miiniwewinan, draft a letter to Paul Calandra, Minister of Education on behalf of the committee advocating for the role of democratically elected school board trustees.

2. Situation

The draft letter to Paul Calandra, Minister of Education has been provided as a handout.

3. Conclusion

The Miiniwewinan: Indigenous Education and Advisory Committee respectfully requests that the Board approve the request to send correspondence of support addressing the items presented.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Lakehead District School Board approve the request from the Miiniwewinan: IEAC to send correspondence advocating for the role of democratically elected school board trustees to Paul Calandra, Minister of Education, as outlined in Report No. 114-25.

Respectfully submitted,

SERENA ESSEX

Co-Chair, Miiniwewinan: Indigenous Education Advisory Committee

HEATHER HARRIS

Co-Chair, Miiniwewinan: Indigenous Education Advisory Committee
Superintendent of Education: Early Years and Elementary Education

SHERRI-LYNNE PHARAND

Director of Education



November 19, 2025

Honourable Paul Calandra
Minister of Education
Ontario Ministry of Education

Subject: The Essential Role of Trustees in Public Education

Dear Minister Calandra,

On behalf of Minniwewinan: Indigenous Education Advisory Committee at Lakehead District School Board, I am writing to express our committee's deep concern regarding the recent suggestion to eliminate elected school board trustees. We respectfully urge you to reconsider this proposal, as trustees—particularly Indigenous trustees, play an irreplaceable role in ensuring equitable, inclusive, and community-driven education across Ontario.

School board trustees are the democratic link between communities and the education system. They provide governance that reflects local voices, cultural perspectives, and accountability. Removing trustees risks weakening this vital connection and diminishing the responsiveness of boards to the unique needs of their communities.

Indigenous trustees were added to Ontario school boards as part of a commitment to reconciliation and equity in education. Their inclusion was not symbolic; it was a deliberate step to ensure that Indigenous perspectives inform decision-making, policy development, and resource allocation at Ontario school boards. Indigenous trustees advocate for culturally relevant programming, language revitalization, and safe learning environments for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students. They also serve as trusted bridges between school boards and Indigenous communities, fostering relationships grounded in respect and mutual understanding.

The introduction of Indigenous trustees was a response to long-standing calls for representation following the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action. Their presence helps address systemic barriers and supports Indigenous student success. Eliminating trustees, including Indigenous trustees, would reverse progress made toward reconciliation and equity, undermining commitments that Ontario has publicly affirmed.

We respectfully request that the Ministry maintain the current governance structure of school boards, preserving the role of trustees and strengthening Indigenous representation. Doing so affirms Ontario's dedication to inclusive education and reconciliation, ensuring that all students, especially First Nations, Métis, and Inuit learners, receive the support they deserve.

We welcome the opportunity to meet and discuss this matter further. Thank you for considering our perspective and for your continued commitment to quality education for all.

Miigwetch,

Serena Essex

Serena Essex
Co-Chair, Minniwewinan: Indigenous Education Advisory Committee

CC:

Denise Allyson Cole, Deputy Minister of Education

MPP Kevin Holland

MPP Lise Vaugeois

Stephanie Donaldson, OPSBA Executive Director

Sherri-Lynne Pharand, Director of Education, Lakehead District School Board

Lakehead DSB School Council Chairs

John Delorey, President, OSSTF Secondary Teachers

Dave Paddington, President, ETFO Lakehead Elementary Teachers of Ontario

Rod McGee, President, CUPE Local 2486

Jana Matikainen, President, COPE Local 454

Kari Simpson, President, OSSTF Student Support Professionals

Shelley Crupi, President, OSSTF Early Childhood Educators

Leah Nix, President, ETFO, Elementary Occasional Teachers

Nikki Marks, Co-President, OPC

Meghan Smelow, Co-President, OPC

LAKEHEAD DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

MINUTES OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE

Board Room
Jim McCuaig Education Centre

2025 OCT 6
6:00 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Laura Prodanyk
Tara Ingram
Terry Godick
Dawn-Marie Francis

Robin Cawlishaw, Chair
George Saarinen (virtual)
Ellen Chambers
Michelle Riemer, Vice-Chair

MEMBERS ABSENT, WITH REGRET:

Carla Mulholland
Brittany Kennedy

Terry Godick
Lorraine Mashongoane

RESOURCE PRESENT:

Sherri-Lynne Pharand, Director of Education
Jamie Smith, Communications Supervisor
Fred Van Elburg, Teacher
Christine Jones, Executive Assistant
Kali Bernst, Principal of Indigenous Education and Program
Kathleen Andrews, Student Success Lead

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

Robin Cawlishaw, Chair, welcomed the following guests:

- Kali Bernst, Principal of Indigenous Education and Program; and
- Kathleen Andrews, Student Success Lead.

2. **Land Acknowledgement**

Robin Cawlishaw, Chair, acknowledged the lands and traditional territory.

3. **Disclosures of Conflict of Interest**

There were no disclosures of conflict of interest.

4. **Approval of the Agenda – October 6, 2025**

The agenda of October 6, 2025, was approved by consensus.

5. Delegations/Presentations

5.1 2025 Summer Learning

Kali Bernst, Principal of Indigenous Education and Program, and Kathleen Andrews, Student Success Lead, presented the highlights of Lakehead District School Boards 2025 Summer Learning Programs. Sherri-Lynne Pharand, Director of Education, thanked Kali Bernst and Kathleen Andrews and their team for their support of another successful summer for student learning.

6. Approval of Minutes – May 12, 2025

The minutes of May 12, 2025, were approved by consensus.

7. New Business

7.1 Parent Involvement Committee (PIC) Recruitment

Robin Cawlishaw, Chair, shared the recruitment for PIC started in the summer and we continue to source and fill the open positions. Members are asked to share with those in their network and have them go to the boards website for applications, or have them contact Christine Jones, Executive Assistant.

7.2 Miiniwewinan: Indigenous Education Advisory Committee (IEAC) Funding Report

Robin Cawlishaw, Chair, shared that the Miiniwewinan (IEAC) Funding report is included in their package for review.

7.3 Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) Funding Report

Robin Cawlishaw, Chair, shared that the SEAC Funding report is included in their package for review.

7.4 Miinewewinan (IEAC) Report

No representative, deferred to next meeting.

7.5 Special Education Advisory Committee Report

Tara Ingram, SEAC Representative, reminded the Easter Seals week is May 25-30, 2026, with the celebration of red shirt day on May 28, 2026.

7.6 Jamie Smith, Communications Supervisor, shared the following:

- student attendance video is posted on our board website;
- they attended a 24 unique media opportunities;
- Nor'wester View Public School had their summer tree planting event;
- a successful Bruce Nugent Annual Golf Tournament;
- this years orange shirt in support of Truth and Reconciliation Day, was designed by a St. James Public School;
- Ogden Community Public School, had a visit from Terry Fox's brother;

- starting October 10, 2025, 99 The Bay radio, will host Joe Newhouse, Activities Director, to discuss LDSB high school sports; and
- an announcement is coming soon for LDSB's retro merchandise store, with all donations supporting Lakehead Public School Foundation.

7.7 2025/2026 Parent Involvement Committee Meeting Schedule

Robin Cawlishaw, Chair, shared the PIC 2025/26 meeting schedule and was approved by consensus

7.8 Director's Report

Sherri-Lynne Pharand, Director of Education, presented the following board report:

- Trustee's expressed their appreciation of the PIC letter sent to the Ministry on behalf of the committee;
- the following Character Awards were given out since May;
 - Owen Weiss, Special Olympics volunteer;
 - Branden Robb, Janae Grafham & Natalie Hache (HEAL-Healthy Eating, Active Living);
 - Ogden Community Public School hockey team;
- OPSBA Achievement Awards were given to Mike Judge, Joe Gaudreau, Elliot Cromarty & Malcome Sutherland. **ACTION:** Christine Jones, Executive Assistant, will send out the requirements for a trustee character award;
- Trustee's are sending a letter to their local MPP, and members are asked to email Christine Jones, if they would be interested in supporting this type of letter from PIC;
- the unfortunate events of the recent childcare tragedy in Southern Ontario, has resulted in barriers required to be installed in front of school areas with child care;
- members were asked if they would be interested in a speaking opportunity for parents on *Student Resilience*. **ACTION:** Christine Jones, Executive Assistant, will add to next PIC agenda;
- future presentations suggested from the committee; TVO, EQAO results;
- new programs include Anishinaabee Language Revitalization;
- French immersion program, suggestion received was researching East Coast Mi'Kmaq language program, as they have changed modern songs into Ojibway language;
- the 25-26 Order of Policies for review was provided as a handout to members and consensus was to have the 8080 School Council Policy presented;
- **ACTION:** Christine Jones, Executive Assistant, will send out the strategic plan that shows the work that is needed to be completed.

All questions were answered.

8. Other Business

- #### 8.1 Michelle Riemer, Vice-Chair, shared the Crossing Guard appreciation week is in June.

8.2 Robin Cawlishaw, Chair, reviewed the PIC correspondence that was distributed during the month of September 2025.

8.3 Robin Cawlishaw, Chair, shared that the Equity and Inclusive Education Committee is in need of a PIC representative. The committees' next meeting is October 22, 2025, starting at 9:00 am.

9. Next Meeting Date:

Meeting date of November 17, 2025.

10. Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned at 6:53 p.m.

LAKEHEAD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

2025 NOV 25
Report No. 110-25

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

RE: RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

1. Background

At the November 11, 2025, Lakehead District School Board (LDSB) Trustees' Informal Session: Communications Committee meeting, members requested that Trustee Chambers, Chair of the Communications Committee, draft a letter to the Editor on behalf of the Board of Trustees advocating for public understanding of the role of democratically elected school Board trustees.

2. Situation

2.1 Trustee Chambers, Chair of the Communications Committee, composed a draft letter for the members of the Board.

2.2 The draft letter has been provided as Appendix A to Report No. 110-25.

3. Conclusion

The Trustees' Communications Committee respectfully requests that the Board approve the request to send the letter to the Editor as presented.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Lakehead District School Board approve the request from the Communications Ad Hoc Committee to send a letter to the Editor, advocating for public understanding of the role of democratically elected school Board trustees, Appendix A, as outlined in Report No. 110-25.

Respectfully submitted,

ELLEN CHAMBERS
Chair, Communications Committee

November 26, 2025

The Chronicle Journal
75 S. Cumberland Street
Thunder Bay, ON
P7B 1A3

To the Editor:

Understanding the Critical Role of Democratically elected School Board Trustees

The Minister of Education Mr. Calandra has made it clear that he is seriously looking at eliminating school board trustees. School board trustees are the only democratically elected public officials (since 1816) whose primary role is to make decisions solely in the best interests of students. The governance decisions that trustees make today are fundamental to the success and accountability of publicly funded schools.

Imagine the loss of democratically elected voices – diverse voices at the decision-making table dedicated to students and their education. There is vital representation through an Indigenous trustee who is part of the decision making. There are two student trustees at the table, one being an Indigenous student trustee. Imagine the loss of an Indigenous voice in a public forum. Imagine the loss of student voice in a public forum. Imagine the loss of the diverse voices that are there to listen to parents and community and to translate concerns into effective board policy.

Often the role of trustees is misunderstood. Trustees are not involved in the day-to-day operations of schools. They employ one person, the Director of Education, who, along with Superintendents (senior team), manages the daily operations of the school system. Trustees' work is one of governance and strategic oversight. Losing trustees may compromise the hiring of directors of education who may no longer be leaders in education but instead may only have a business background (a previous governmental change in allowing business qualifications only to be eligible). Who will hire the director of education without trustees? The government in Toronto?

Trustees set the vision and goals for the entire school board, through developing the Multi-Year Strategic Plan (MYSP). Trustees ensure that board policies align with provincial legislation. Trustees develop the multi-million-dollar budget in collaboration with the senior team and stakeholders, approve the final budget and oversee its implementation.

All trustee work is done through public meetings, development of the MYSP is done with public input as is the annual budget. There is transparency, and accountability. Trustees sit on numerous committees, including the Special Education Advisory Committee, and the Audit Committee that is a public look at all finances.

Trustees advocate. Locally trustees have advocated to change the current local bussing guidelines, created with a Toronto-centric view that does not account for our children's specific needs in our climate. As well, local trustees advocate for special education, an area that every board in the province has indicated is underfunded for today's needs. A well-functioning school board, led by informed and dedicated trustees, ensures that every child has access to a quality education, regardless of their background or where they live.

As community members, we must recognize that electing competent and committed trustees is just as vital as any other civic duty. Trustees' decisions shape the learning environments and futures of our children for years to come. Voters must actively support and defend the institution of the democratically elected school board, because without this local support, the government may centralize decision-making, and the crucial voice for students, their families, and regions like Northwestern Ontario will be effectively gone forever. We cannot afford to lose a democratic choice.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Board of Trustees of Lakehead District School Board,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Mrs. L. Vanderwey". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Leah Vanderwey
Chair