



REGULAR BOARD MEETING

Tuesday, January 27, 2026

Jim McCuaig Education Centre

Sherri-Lynne Pharand
Director of Education

Name
Chair

AGENDA

PUBLIC SESSION

7:30 p.m. – 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	
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	R. Oikonen	Verbal
8.	CONSENT AGENDA	L. Vanderwey	
8.1	Approval of Minutes Regular Board Meeting – November 25, 2025		1-5
8.2	Approval of Minutes Annual Board Meeting – December 2, 2025		6-10
8.3	Approval of Minutes Special Board Meeting – December 9, 2025		11-12
9.	DELEGATIONS/PRESENTATIONS – N/A		

		<u>Resource Person</u>	<u>Pages</u>
10.	REPORTS		
10.1	Director's Reports		
10.1.1	Belong		
10.1.2	Succeed		
10.1.2.1	French Immersion Program Review (011-26)	H. Harris	13-20
10.1.3	Reconcile		
10.1.4	Other		
10.1.4.1	Information and Technology Report (013-26)	K. Alaksa	21-24
10.2	Chair's Reports – N/A		
10.3	Student/Indigenous Student Trustee Reports		
10.3.1	Indigenous Student Trustee January Report	E. Genno	Handout
10.3.2	Student Trustee January Report	B. Bruce	Handout
10.4	Reports of Standing Committees – N/A		
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		
12.	SPECIAL ORDERS – N/A		
13.	UNFINISHED BUSINESS AND GENERAL ORDERS – N/A		
14.	NOTICE OF MOTIONS – N/A		
15.	ANNOUNCEMENTS	L. Vanderwey	Verbal
15.1	Lost and Found Project	L. Vanderwey	Handout
16.	ADJOURNMENT	L. Vanderwey	Verbal

LAKEHEAD DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

MINUTES OF REGULAR BOARD MEETING

Board Room/Microsoft Teams
Jim McCuaig Education Centre

2025 NOV 25
7:30 p.m.

TRUSTEES PRESENT:

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

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

ABSENT WITH REGRETS:

Donica LeBlanc

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 7:33 p.m.

2. Disclosure of Conflict of Interest – None

3. Approval of Agenda

Moved by Trustee Johansen

Seconded by Trustee Oikonen

“THAT the Agenda for Regular Board Meeting, November 25, 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 Chambers read the Land Acknowledgement.

8. Consent Agenda

Moved by Trustee Chambers

Seconded by Trustee Tuchenhagen

“THAT Lakehead District School Board approve the consent agenda, including items 8.1 and 8.2 as presented.”

CARRIED

9. Delegations/ Presentations – N/A

10. Reports

10.1 Director's Reports

10.1.1 Belong – N/A

10.1.2 Succeed

10.1.2.1 International Education Report (111-25)

Superintendent Lower introduced Jon-David Dowdell, International Student Coordinator, who along with international students, Maja Hermann, and Pablo Carrascosa Bernabeu, presented the report. All trustees' questions were addressed.

10.1.2.2 Student Achievement Report (098-25)

Superintendents Harris and Lower, introduced Kali Bernst, Principal of Indigenous Education and Program, and Kathleen Andrews, Student Success Lead, who presented the report. All trustees' questions were addressed.

10.1.2.3 Early Learning Report (112-25)

Heather Harris, Superintendent of Education: Early Years and Elementary Education, presented the report. All trustees' questions were addressed.

10.1.3 Reconcile – N/A

10.1.4 Other

10.1.4.1 By-Law No. 126 – 2026 Tax Levy(113-25)

Moved by Trustee Chambers Seconded by Trustee Johansen

“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.”

CARRIED

10.2 Chairs Reports – N/A

10.3 Student/Indigenous Student Trustee Reports

10.3.1 Indigenous Student Trustee November Report (Handout)

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

- attending the Virtual Student Senate on October 29, 2025; and
- attending the Ontario Student Trustees' Association (OSTA-AECO) – Fall General meeting in Toronto with Student Trustee Bruce.

All trustees' questions were addressed.

10.3.2 Student Trustee November Report (Handout)

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

- attending Virtual Student Senate on October 29, 2025;
- a visit by MP Patty Hajdu to a civics class at Superior Collegiate and Vocational Institute; and
- attending OSTA-AECO's Fall General meeting with Indigenous Student Trustee Genno from November 13-16, 2025.

All trustees' questions were addressed.

10.4 Reports of Standing Committees

10.4.1 Recommendation from the Coordinating Committee (108-25)

Moved by Trustee Sitch

Seconded by Trustee Oikonen

“THAT Lakehead District School Board cancel the December 16, 2025, Regular Board Meeting.”

CARRIED

10.4.2 Miiniwewinan: Indigenous Education Advisory Committee Request for Approval of Correspondence (114-25)

Moved by Trustee Chambers Seconded by Trustee Johansen

“THAT Lakehead District School Board approve the request from the Miiniwewinan: Indigenous Education Advisory Committee 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.”

CARRIED

10.4.3 Parent Involvement Committee Minutes – October 6, 2025

Sherri-Lynne Pharand, Director of Education presented the minutes. All trustees' questions were addressed.

10.4.4 Recommendation from the Communications Committee (110-25)

Moved by Trustee Wemigwans Seconded by Trustee Oikonen

“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.”

CARRIED

10.5 Reports of External Board or Agency Representation

10.5.1 Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA) Report

Trustee Sitch updated members on the following items:

- Board of Directors meeting on November 23, 2025, agenda items included: finance, budget, possible changes to trustees on school boards, streamlining OPSBA organization, forthcoming changes to the Board of Directors and how OPSBA functions for trustees, upcoming public meeting on December 18, 2025, to vote on changes.

All trustees' questions were addressed.

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

12. Special Orders – N/A

13. Unfinished Business/ General Orders – N/A

14. Notices of Motion – N/A

15. Announcements

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

- November 12, 2025 – Hammarskjold High School Student Achievement Night, Chair Vanderwey attended on behalf of the Board;
- November 12, 2025 – Superior Collegiate and Vocational Institute's Student Achievement Night, Trustee Tuchenhagen attended on behalf of the Board;
- November 13, 2025 – Westgate Collegiate and Vocational Institute's Student Achievement Night, Trustee Tuchenhagen attended on behalf of the Board;
- November 13-16, 2025 – Ontario Student Trustees' Association Fall General Meeting;
- November 17, 2025 – Supreme Court of Canada Justice visit to Hammarskjold High School; and
- November 19, 2025 – Lakehead Public Schools Edge Hockey Program on ice training session.

16. Adjournment

Moved by Trustee Saarinen

Seconded by Trustee Johansen

“THAT we do now adjourn at 8:55 p.m.”

CARRIED

LAKEHEAD DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

MINUTES OF ANNUAL BOARD MEETING

Board Room/Microsoft Teams
Jim McCuaig Education Centre

2025 DEC 2
6:00 p.m.

TRUSTEES PRESENT:

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

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

ABSENT WITH REGRETS:

Michelle Probizanski, Superintendent of Education
Jane Lower, Superintendent of Education

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION:

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

PUBLIC SESSION:

1. Call to Order

Meeting called to order by Director Pharand at 6:00 p.m.

2. Land Acknowledgement

Director Pharand read the land acknowledgement

3. Introduction of Scrutineers

Heather Harris, Superintendent of Education, and Patti-Jo Pesola-Brunton, Superintendent of Education, were introduced as the scrutineer and assistant scrutineer, respectively, for the elections.

4. Election of the Chair

Sherri-Lynne Pharand, Secretary of the Board, announced the pre-nomination of Trustee Vanderwey by Indigenous Trustee Wemigwans. Trustee Vanderwey accepted the nomination. Further nominations were called for from the floor. There were no further nominations.

Moved by Trustee Tuchenhagen

Seconded by Trustee Chambers

“THAT nominations for the Office of Chair of Lakehead District School Board be closed.”

CARRIED

Director Pharand congratulated Chair Vanderwey and turned the meeting over to the Chair of Lakehead District School Board for 2026. Chair Vanderwey thanked the Board for the opportunity to serve a second year as chair of the Board.

5. Election of the Vice-Chair

Chair Vanderwey announced the pre-nomination of Trustee LeBlanc by Trustee Saarinen. Trustee LeBlanc accepted the nomination. Nominations were called for from the floor. There were no further nominations.

Moved by Trustee Sitch

Seconded by Indigenous Trustee Wemigwans

“THAT nominations for the Office of Vice-Chair of Lakehead District School Board be closed.”

CARRIED

Chair Vanderwey congratulated Vice-Chair LeBlanc. Vice-Chair LeBlanc thanked the Board for the opportunity to serve as Vice-Chair for an additional year.

6. Election of Member of Coordinating Committee

Chair Vanderwey announced the pre-nominations for Member of the Coordinating Committee. Trustee Chambers was nominated by Trustee Sitch. Trustee Chambers accepted the nomination. Trustee Johansen was nominated by Trustee Tuchenhagen. Trustee Johansen accepted the nomination. Further nominations were called from the floor. There were no further nominations.

Moved by Trustee Tuchenhagen

Seconded by Indigenous Trustee Chambers

“THAT nominations for the Member of the Coordinating Committee be closed.”

CARRIED

Trustee Tuchenhagen inquired how Trustee Saarinen will submit his vote as he is attending virtually. Chair Vanderwey clarified that according to Lakehead District School Board's Bylaws Trustee Saarinen will submit his vote via email directly to the scrutineer, Superintendent Harris.

Each nominee was given a moment to speak. The scrutineer and the assistant scrutineer distributed the ballots and conducted the election for Member of Coordinating Committee. The Board meeting was paused to allow the scrutineers to tally the results. Upon reconvening, Trustee Chambers was declared the winner.

7. Election of Alternate Member of Coordinating Committee

Chair Vanderwey announced the pre-nominations for Alternate Member of the Coordinating Committee. Trustee Tuchenhagen was nominated by Trustee Johansen. Trustee Tuchenhagen declined the nomination. Trustee Johansen was nominated by Trustee Chambers. Trustee Johansen accepted the nomination. Further nominations were called from the floor. There were no further nominations.

Moved by Trustee LeBlanc

Seconded by Trustee Oikonen

“THAT nominations for the Alternate Member of the Coordinating Committee be closed.”

CARRIED

Trustee Johansen was declared the winner.

Chair Vanderwey declared the elections closed and requested that a motion be moved for the destruction of all ballots for the election.

Moved by Trustee Sitch

Seconded by Trustee Tuchenhagen

“THAT the ballots for the elections at the Annual Board Meeting, December 2, 2025, be destroyed.”

CARRIED

8. Trustee Appointments to Board Committees – 2026 (003-26)

Director Pharand presented the report. Trustee Wemigwans clarified and asked that an error on the communications committee members be corrected (he was listed as chair in error). Trustee Johansen inquired who the alternate for the International Education Committee is. Director Pharand confirmed that there was not one selected and called for a volunteer. Trustee Johansen volunteered to be alternate member of the International Education Committee.

Moved by Trustee LeBlanc

Seconded by Trustee Chambers

“THAT Lakehead District School Board approve the Trustee Appointments to Board Committees – 2025-2026 as set out in Appendix A to Report No. 003-26, amended to include Trustee Johansen as alternate member and the omission the of chair of the communications committee (indicated as Indigenous Trustee Wemigwans).”

CARRIED

9. Committee Reports:

9.1 Miiniwewinan: Indigenous Education Advisory Committee Annual Report (005-26)

Heather Harris, Superintendent of Education, presented the report. All trustees' questions were addressed.

Moved by Trustee Johansen

Seconded by Trustee Sitch

"THAT Lakehead District School Board receive the Annual Report of the Miiniwewinan: Indigenous Education Advisory Committee."

CARRIED

9.2 Parent Involvement Committee Annual Report (002-26)

Director Pharand introduced Robin Cawlishaw, Chair of the Parent Involvement Committee, who presented the report. There were no questions from trustees.

Moved by Trustee Chambers

Seconded by Trustee Tuchenhagen

"THAT Lakehead District School Board receive the Annual Report of the Parent Involvement Committee."

CARRIED

9.3 Special Education Advisory Committee Annual Report (004-26)

Heather Harris, Superintendent of Education, introduced Alina Cameron Chair of the Special Education Advisory Committee who presented the report. There were no questions from trustees.

Moved by Trustee Tuchenhagen

Seconded by Trustee LeBlanc

"THAT Lakehead District School Board receive the Annual Report of the Special Education Advisory Committee."

CARRIED

9.4 Audit Committee Annual Report – August 31, 2025 (006-26)

Kirsti Alaksa, Superintendent of Education, presented the report. There were no questions from trustees.

Moved by Trustee Oikonen

Seconded by Trustee LeBlanc

"THAT Lakehead District School Board receive the Annual Report of the Audit Committee."

CARRIED

10. Directors Annual Report (001-26)

Sherri-Lynne Pharand, Director of Education, along with Superintendents Harris, Pesola-Brunton and Alaksa presented the report. All trustees' questions were addressed.

Moved by Trustee Johansen

Seconded by Trustee Wemigwans

"THAT Lakehead District School Board receive the Director's Annual Report."

CARRIED

11. Director Pharand took a moment to thank Dave Covello, Manager of Information Technology and Corporate Planning, for his years of dedication and commitment to Lakehead Public Schools and wished him well in his retirement.

12. Adjournment

Moved by Trustee Saarinen

Seconded by Trustee LeBlanc

"THAT we do now adjourn at 7:06 p.m."

CARRIED

LAKEHEAD DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

MINUTES OF SPECIAL BOARD MEETING

Board Room/Microsoft Teams
Jim McCuaig Education Centre

2025 DEC 9
7:30 p.m.

TRUSTEES PRESENT:

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

George Saarinen (virtual)
Trudy Tuchenhagen
Scottie Wemigwans (Indigenous Trustee)

ABSENT WITH REGRETS:

Breanna Bruce (Student Trustee)
Eryn Genno (Indigenous Student Trustee)

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
Kirsti Alaksa, Superintendent of Business (virtual)
Michelle Probizanski, Superintendent of Education (virtual)

PUBLIC SESSION:

1. Call to Order

Meeting called to order by Chair Vanderwey at 7:30 p.m.

2. Disclosure of Conflict of Interest - None

3. Approval of Agenda

Moved by Trustee Wemigwans

Seconded by Trustee Chambers

“THAT the Agenda for Special Board Meeting, December 9, 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

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

7. Land Acknowledgement

Chair Vanderwey read the Land Acknowledgement.

8. Reports of Standing Committees

8.1 Recommendations from the Audit Committee (012-26)

Moved by Trustee LeBlanc Seconded by Trustee Tuchenhagen

Seconded by Trustee Tuchenhagen

“THAT Lakehead District School Board:

1. Approve the Audit Committee Summarized Annual Report outlined in Appendix A to Report No. 012-26; and
2. Forward the report to the Ministry of Education.”

CARRIED

8.2 Recommendations from the Audit Committee (012-26)

Moved by Trustee Chambers

Seconded by Trustee Johansen

“THAT Lakehead District School Board approve the August 31, 2025, audited financial statements as outlined in Report No. 117-25, 2024-2025 Audited Financial Statements.”

CARRIED

9. Adjournment

Moved by Trustee Saarinen

Seconded by Trustee LeBlanc

“THAT we do now adjourn at 7:35 p.m.”

CARRIED

LAKEHEAD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

2026 JAN 27

Report No. 011-26

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) 2025-2029 Education Strategic Plan outlines its commitment to providing educational environments where everyone belongs, and to holding high expectations for all learners under the pillars of Belong and Succeed. The board offers a variety of high-quality programs that support the varying interests, abilities and learning needs of all students.
- 1.2 As outlined in French Immersion Policy 4040, LDSB operates an early French Immersion program intended for children whose first language is not French. The Board also offers programs suitable for students graduating from the early French Immersion program and to any other students deemed capable of profiting from the continuing French Immersion programs.
- 1.3 Under Program Implementation Policy 4010, LDSB implements a consistent process for regular review, revision, and improvement of school programs. Senior administration and schools develop and implement programs which provide all students with a wide variety of learning experiences and opportunities.
- 1.4 The intended outcome of the French Immersion program at Lakehead Public Schools (LPS) is for students to be functionally bilingual and to have an understanding and appreciation of various French cultures.

2. Situation

- 2.1 A review committee was formed in February 2024 to review the current French Immersion program at LPS and make recommendations to ensure that it remains robust, effective, and aligned with future needs. Additional Board staff also provided guidance and resource support to the committee as required. The committee is comprised of:
 - supervisory officer;
 - secondary principal;
 - elementary principal;
 - principal of special education;
 - French resource teacher;
 - French Immersion early childhood educator; and
 - elementary and secondary classroom teachers.

2.2 The committee reviewed French Immersion research, data, school board and Ministry of Education best practices, survey results, and system needs to prepare recommendations to guide system improvements in the following key areas:

- student enrolment and retention;
- French Immersion program delivery models;
- student pathways, achievement and outcomes;
- equity of access;
- resources; and
- recruitment and retention of qualified staff.

2.3 French Immersion Program Review

2.3.1 Student Enrolment and Retention

The French Immersion program continues to experience strong, stable enrolment in Year 2 Kindergarten. This may reflect the value families place on bilingualism, the cognitive benefits of learning a second language, and future opportunities associated with French Immersion programs. Lakehead Public Schools families report positive early experiences in the French Immersion program, including strong learning progress and high engagement levels for students.

Year 2 Kindergarten French Immersion Enrolment (Board)	
School Year	Student Enrolment
2020-2021	144
2021-2022	166
2022-2023	171
2023-2024	142
2024-2025	174

Year 2 Kindergarten French Immersion Enrolment (Claude E. Garton)	
School Year	Student Enrolment
2020-2021	37
2021-2022	30
2022-2023	36
2023-2024	31
2024-2025	29

Year 2 Kindergarten French Immersion Enrolment (École Elsie MacGill)	
School Year	Student Enrolment
2020-2021	47
2021-2022	64
2022-2023	64
2023-2024	53
2024-2025	78

Year 2 Kindergarten French Immersion Enrolment (École Gron Morgan)	
School Year	Student Enrolment
2020-2021	61
2021-2022	72
2022-2023	72
2023-2024	58
2024-2025	67

Surveys of French Immersion students in Grades 4 to 12 demonstrate strong support for continuing in the program, with students citing enjoyment of learning French, pride in bilingualism, friendships and a sense of belonging, cultural opportunities, and enhanced future employment/education pathways as reasons why they intend to remain in French Immersion.

Survey results also indicated that a significant majority of students in Grades 7 to 12 plan to remain in French Immersion through graduation, describing bilingualism as a key asset for post-secondary studies and careers.

Retention patterns do shift as students progress through junior, intermediate, and secondary grades. Enrolment data shows that attrition in French Immersion increases between Grades 6 to 9. Over the last 5 school years, an average of 74% of Grade 8 French Immersion students registered for French Immersion in Grade 9 at LPS.

French Immersion Grade 8 to Grade 9 Retention			
School Year	Grade 8 FI Enrolment	Grade 9 FI Enrolment	Retention Rate
2020-2021	71	51	72%
2021-2022	88	55	63%
2022-2023	85	73	86%
2023-2024	96	54	56%
2024-2025	103	96	93%

Students and families cited perceived academic pressure, concerns about maintaining a high-grade point average, limited secondary French Immersion course options, and scheduling conflicts as reasons they may consider leaving French Immersion. Students may also choose another pathway such as the IB Programme or wish to attend a secondary school that does not offer French Immersion.

Families without French at home indicated they are less confident supporting their child's learning, and this barrier may increase during all transition points.

2.3.2 Student Achievement and Language Proficiency

The design of the early French Immersion program at LPS reflects research showing that early, sustained exposure to French builds strong bilingual foundations while ensuring students maintain success across all subject areas.

Senior Kindergarten and Grade 1:

- 100% French instruction;
- all subjects are taught entirely in French; and
- English language arts is not formally introduced during these years.

Grade 2 to Grade 5:

- approximately 75% French instruction; and
- English language arts is introduced while maintaining strong immersion in subjects such as social studies, the arts, and math.

Grade 6 to Grade 8:

- approximately 50% French instruction; and
- a balanced bilingual model that prepares students for secondary pathways while continuing the development of French proficiency.

The Ministry of Education mandates that early French Immersion programs must provide at least 50% of instructional time in French at every grade and ensure that students accumulate a minimum of 3,800 hours of French instruction by the end of Grade 8. The LPS early French Immersion program model ensures that students receive more than 6,000 hours of French instruction by the end of Grade 8. This model provides a strong foundation for bilingual proficiency, accelerates early oral language growth, and enhances students' confidence in using French in increasingly complex academic contexts.

The LPS French Immersion program's emphasis on action oriented Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) aligned instructional practices, immersive routines, and sustained daily exposure to instruction in French supports strong communicative competence for students. Foundational reading skills and instruction grounded in the science of reading are also a strong focus.

The early reading screener, Acadience Français, shows that students in Year 2 Kindergarten to Grade 2 French immersion, at the beginning of the school year, are achieving reading success at a similar level to their peers in the English stream.

Grade	Percentage of Students who met the Beginning of Year Reading Composite Benchmark (October 2025)
Year 2 Kindergarten FI	47%
Grade 1 FI	40%
Grade 2 FI	37%

The Diplôme d'études en langue française (DELF) is an internationally recognized certification of proficiency in French for those learning French as an additional language. French language skills are evaluated in the four areas of oral comprehension, oral expression, written comprehension, and written expression.

The Ministry of Education provides funding for Grade 12 students to challenge the DELF exam. Secondary students in all French pathways at LPS are encouraged to challenge the DELF in their Grade 12 year, and may become certified in Levels A2, B1 or B2.

Lakehead Public Schools also provides Grade 8 French immersion students with the opportunity to challenge the DELF exam to receive Level A2 certification.

Student results in Grade 8 and Grade 12 show strength in all three DELF levels, particularly in the areas of oral comprehension and oral expression compared to written production.

Math achievement was a particular focus for the French Immersion Review Committee. In the current LPS model, students in early French Immersion receive mathematics instruction in French from Year 2 Kindergarten through Grade 5. The committee explored whether shifting math instruction to English would improve conceptual understanding and overall achievement. After examining available research and board level data, the committee found the evidence to be inconclusive. At this time, the committee is not recommending any change to the language of math instruction but believes this area should continue to be monitored closely as more research and board data become available.

The review committee identified a system wide challenge with the limited availability of French language intervention supports. Students experiencing early literacy challenges often have fewer targeted supports compared to peers in the English program. As a result, early gaps in phonological awareness, decoding, and reading fluency can widen over time. The review committee wishes to highlight the need for more French speaking resource teachers, consistent intervention models, and structured early literacy supports aligned with the Board's student achievement priorities.

2.3.3 Equity and Inclusion

The 2015 companion document for the Ministry of Education's Framework for French as a Second Language (2013) identifies the following as a guiding principle of French as a Second Language (FSL) programs: FSL programs are for all students. This principle advances a common understanding of the importance and benefits of FSL education. It is realized when FSL classrooms from Kindergarten to Grade 12 reflect the diversity of the student population, including English language learners and students with special education needs.

Positive peer relationships, a strong sense of belonging, and inclusive classroom practices contribute to equitable participation in the French Immersion program. It is important that the program is prepared to support students with diverse strengths and needs with interventions as required, adequate and diverse resources, and additional supports for individual learners. Consistent intervention structures are required across the system, so that students requiring additional support do not fall behind.

In some cases, in order to provide the most appropriate program for students experiencing significant difficulties in French Immersion, compounded by learning a second language, the principal may recommend to parents a transfer of the student to the English program. An updated and consistent process should be established to support administrators and families through this process to determine whether French Immersion is the right fit for the student and what supports are available if they remain in the program or transition to English.

Families without French language proficiency at home identify challenges supporting their children with homework and understanding program expectations. Establishing a clear, accessible communication framework regarding available supports would help bridge this gap and strengthen family engagement and help to ensure all families can confidently support their child's learning within the French Immersion program.

2.3.4 Stakeholder Perspectives

The French Immersion Review Committee solicited feedback from students in Grades 4 to 12, French immersion educators and administrators, and families with children enrolled in the French Immersion program. Students consistently identify teachers as their most important source of support. Parents and guardians frequently praise teachers for their creativity, communication, and care, noting that educators make learning engaging and accessible. The majority of students surveyed express pride in belonging to a French Immersion community, and parents highlight long-term benefits, including enhanced cognitive development, cultural awareness, and increased post-secondary opportunities.

Educators express strong commitment to the French Immersion program, noting productive collaboration among staff, improvements in structured literacy approaches, and leadership support through board-level initiatives.

Several areas for growth were also identified by stakeholders. Transition from elementary to secondary French Immersion is identified as a pressure point for students that can contribute to a decline in student confidence. Clear program messaging will increase consistency among schools and will support families to understand program goals, expectations, and graduation outcomes.

2.3.5 Staffing and Professional Learning

Lakehead Public Schools continues to offer robust and diverse professional learning opportunities for French Immersion educators, including CEFR-aligned training, structured literacy professional development, DELF examiner preparation, and regional collaboration through CEFR networks. Staff report feeling confident with immersion pedagogy and appreciate opportunities to deepen their instructional practice and collaborate with colleagues. Research supports that professional learning opportunities encourage the retention of French Immersion teachers and staff.

Recruiting and retaining French-qualified teachers, early childhood educators and support staff remains a significant systemic challenge, which is consistent with provincial and national trends. Lakehead Public Schools continues to be willing to hire teachers conditionally and support them in achieving DELF/CEFR-aligned qualifications to help maintain staffing levels in a competitive provincial landscape.

Resource gaps have also been identified across subject areas, particularly in French-language mathematics materials. French Immersion teachers can be required to seek out or create their own bilingual resources, which impacts teacher workload as well as consistency across the system.

3. Next Steps

To ensure the French Immersion program at LPS remains strong, viable, and aligned with the board's priorities the following steps will be taken by the French Immersion Review Committee:

- expand course offerings at the secondary level, including compulsory credits in French Immersion in Grades 9 and 10;
- strengthen supports for students transitioning from Grade 8 to Grade 9 French immersion;
- monitor enrolment in elementary to ensure adequate physical space in French Immersion schools;
- develop a clear communication plan for families to support their children in the French Immersion program;
- develop a staff recruitment plan specific to French Immersion teachers and other French-speaking staff;
- continue building capacity with educators to deliver instruction aligned with the CEFR and science of reading;
- develop a plan for robust tracking of when and why students leave the French Immersion program;
- identify and implement resources and intervention models that will support students who require extra support in French Immersion; and
- continue to monitor elementary math achievement in French and ensure the availability of French math resources.

Conclusion

Lakehead Public Schools will continue to offer exemplary French Immersion programming where students learn in an environment with a strong sense of belonging, gaining an understanding and appreciation of various French cultures, and achieving functional bilingualism.

Respectfully submitted,

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Superintendent of Education

SHERRI-LYNNE PHARAND
Director of Education

LAKEHEAD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

2026 JAN 27

Report No. 013-26

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

RE: INFORMATION AND TECHNOLOGY REPORT

1. Background

1.1 The rapidly evolving landscape of information technology continues to change how schools operate and how students are taught. This increasing role of technology in learning requires the effective integration and utilization of new tools to support student success.

2. Situation

2.1 In order to continue to develop the use of technology to enhance student learning, the System Information Technology Committee, which consists of senior administration, school administration, teaching staff, managers, and support staff, provides input into the annual Information Technology Plan.

2.2 Highlights of the implementation of information technology in schools at Lakehead District School Board (LDSB) in the past year include:

- the deployment of Edsby to all elementary schools in Fall 2025, replaces Seesaw for capturing evidence of learning and as a parent and student communication tool;
- Lakehead District School Board's continued membership in the Ontario eLearning Consortium (OeLC) has broadened the eLearning opportunities available to students, providing access to courses offered by the other 54 boards in the consortium;
- 811 regular-year students engaged in eLearning this school year (as of January 16, 2026);
- Summer School, facilitated through the OeLC and delivered by the Lakehead Adult Education Centre, provided access to allow out-of-board students to take our courses, and enabling our students to access courses offered by other boards. A total of 476 summer school credits were generated in 2025;
- Lakehead District School Board continues to use and train in Lexia for elementary schools to assess and monitor student literacy, as well as for targeted resources in Grades 9 and 10 English and pre-work placement; and
- Lakehead District School Board expanded its use of the Acadience Language Screener from Senior Kindergarten to Grade 8 to screen and monitor reading proficiency.

2.3 The widespread availability and use of generative AI (Artificial Intelligence) tools provide both challenges and opportunities for staff and students. Addressing and implementing these new technologies will be key to the success of students.

Activities in AI over the past year have included:

- development of AI Guidelines, focused on data privacy, ethical and responsible use of AI, integrity, and accessibility, for both student and staff use of AI tools;
- the implementation of the 'AI for School Leaders Initiative' has provided administrators with training on topics like writing effective prompts and using Copilot Agents to perform specific tasks;
- AI training for targeted staff was provided in partnership with the NOEL (Northern Ontario Education Leaders) school boards and Future Design School; and
- AI training for principals and vice principals was delivered in January 2026, while teacher training is planned for February 2026 – also facilitated by Future Design School.

2.4 The scale, severity, and frequency of cyber-attacks targeting school boards across Ontario continue to rise. Within the past six months, LDSB has been subject to 2,828 cyber-attacks, averaging 16 attacks per day, up from six per day 14 months ago. This escalating volume of threats emphasizes the importance of the cyber security improvements being made to ensure the security and integrity of our systems.

Cyber security work over the past year has included:

- Lakehead District School Board is working with the Ministry of Education's K212 Cyber Security Operating Model (CSOM) group to prepare for Managed Security Services (MSS) and AI assistance. These services will provide LDSB with 24/7 monitoring and AI tools that are expected to improve employee efficiency in investigating and responding to less-critical cyber incidents;
- 'Red Team Penetration Testing' was completed by security experts from the Educational Collaborative Network of Ontario (ECNO), identifying areas of focus for strengthened cyber security practices; and
- the implementation of Netskope security software for school staff and administrators is ongoing, further enhancing the security of the digital environment.

2.5 Lakehead District School Board has continued to invest in technology through the budget approval process. Lakehead District School Board supports these investments through ministry cored funding and other grants, such as the grant received from Microsoft. To date, approximately two-thirds of the \$1,000,000 in Microsoft grant funding has been utilized. This funding was allocated for the purchase of Windows computers and Microsoft software for schools and will continue to be utilized until 2028. The update and plan for the utilization of this funding is as follows:

- one-third of the grant funds were utilized in the 2025-2026 school year to purchase 600 laptops for elementary school students, and 180 laptops for teachers;
- one-third of the grant funds were utilized in the 2024-2025 school year to purchase 330 laptops for teachers; and
- the remaining grant funds are anticipated to be used over the next two years for additional purchases of laptops for students and teachers.

Lakehead District School Board will need to continue to review and update the technology plan, including program delivery and device allocation to ensure sustainability into the future.

3. Next steps

- 3.1 Fine tuning of existing cybersecurity products. Utilizing built-in features to help improve efficiency.
- 3.2 The annual renewal of the Information Technology Plan will continue, ensuring alignment with LDSB priorities related to student achievement, equity of access, staff capacity, and system sustainability.
- 3.3 Continued support of the implementation and effective use of instructional and communication tools, including Edsby, eLearning through the OeLC, and literacy assessment and intervention platforms.
- 3.4 Further implement LDSB's Artificial Intelligence Guidelines, alongside professional learning opportunities for staff and administrators focused on responsible, ethical, and effective use of generative AI tools.
- 3.5 Plan for the sustainable use of technology resources, including the remaining Microsoft grant funding and begin long-term consideration of future device replacement and funding models once grant funding is fully utilized.

Conclusion

Student learning at LDSB is facilitated by skilled staff who apply effective instructional practices within safe and caring learning environments. As we prepare students to thrive in a global and increasingly digital world, it remains essential to foster and sustain pedagogies that thoughtfully integrate learning technologies to enhance student achievement.

Maintaining a philosophy and practice of ensuring that classrooms are equipped with current, high-quality technology supports effective teaching and learning. Ensuring that students have access to the tools they need further strengthens educators' ability to implement instructional approaches that build critical future-ready skills. This commitment helps prepare students for the evolving demands of learning, work, and life. The Information Technology Committee will continue to prioritize the development of teacher practice and student competencies through ongoing access to resources, training, and targeted support.

Respectfully submitted,

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