

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 Tuchenhausen  
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 Tuchenhausen

*“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 Tuchenhausen attended on behalf of the Board;
- November 13, 2025 – Westgate Collegiate and Vocational Institute's Student Achievement Night, Trustee Tuchenhausen 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

CONFIRMED BY THE BOARD – January 27, 2026

  
Chair

  
Secretary