

**REGULAR BOARD MEETING**  
**Tuesday, February 24, 2026**  
**Jim McCuaig Education Centre**

Sherri-Lynne Pharand  
Director of Education

Leah Vanderwey  
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		
5. <b>COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – CLOSED SESSION – 7:00 p.m. (SEE ATTACHED AGENDA)</b>		
6. REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – CLOSED SESSION		
7. LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	D. LeBlanc	
8. CONSENT AGENDA	L. Vanderwey	
8.1 Approval of Minutes Regular Board Meeting – January 27, 2026		1-4



		<u>Resource Person</u>	<u>Pages</u>
8.2	Recommendations from the Board Advisory Committee (024-26)	D. LeBlanc	5-11
8.2.1	<u>School Year Calendar 2026-2027 (016-26)</u>		
	<i>“THAT Lakehead District School Board:</i>		
	<i>1. Approve the proposed 2026-2027 elementary school year calendar, including the opening and closing dates and professional activity days, as described in Appendix A of Report No. 016-26; and</i>		
	<i>2. Approve the proposed 2026-2027 secondary school year calendar, including the opening and closing dates, professional activity days and examination days, as described in Appendix B of Report No. 016-26.”</i>		
8.2.2	<u>Policy Review – 8080 School Council Policy (020-26)</u>		
	<i>“THAT Lakehead District School Board approve 8080 School Council Policy, Appendix A to Report No. 020-26.”</i>		
8.2.3	<u>Policy Review – 3001 Governance Policy (019-26)</u>		
	<i>“THAT Lakehead District School Board approve 3001 Governance Policy, Appendix A to Report No. 019-26”.</i>		
9.	DELEGATIONS/PRESENTATIONS		
9.1	Trustee Character Award David Kunnas	D. LeBlanc	Verbal
10.	REPORTS		
10.1	Director’s Reports		
10.1.1	Belong		
10.1.2	Succeed		
	10.1.2.1 <u>Student Success (022-26)</u>	J. Lower	12-15

		<u>Resource Person</u>	<u>Pages</u>
10.1.3	Reconcile		
10.1.4	Other		
	10.1.4.1 <u>New Teacher Induction Program Report (021-26)</u>	P.J. Pesola-Brunton	16-18
10.2	Chair's Reports – N/A		
10.3	Student/Indigenous Student Trustee Reports		
	10.3.1 <u>Student Trustee February Report</u>	B. Bruce	Handout
	10.3.2 <u>Indigenous Student Trustee February Report</u>	E. Genno	Handout
10.4	Reports of Standing Committees – N/A		
10.5	Reports of External Board or Agency Representation		
	10.5.1 <u>Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA) Report</u>	R. Sitch	Verbal
11.	REPORTS OF SPECIAL (AD HOC) COMMITTEES		
	11.1 <u>Communications Committee Request for Approval of Correspondence (025-26)</u>	E. Chambers	19-23
12.	SPECIAL ORDERS – N/A		
13.	UNFINISHED BUSINESS AND GENERAL ORDERS – N/A		
14.	NOTICE OF MOTIONS – N/A		
15.	ANNOUNCEMENTS	Chair	Verbal
16.	ADJOURNMENT	Chair	Verbal

**REGULAR BOARD MEETING**

**Tuesday, February 24, 2026  
 Jim McCuaig Education Centre**

Sherrilynne Pharand  
 Director of Education

Leah Vanderwey  
 Chair

**AGENDA**

**CLOSED SESSION**  
**7:00 p.m. – Sibley Room/Microsoft Teams**

	<u>Resource Person</u>	<u>Pages</u>
5.1 Approval of Committee of the Whole – Closed session minutes		
5.1.1 Regular Board Meeting – Minutes – September 23, 2025	L. Vanderwey	1-2
5.2 Consideration of Reports		
5.2.1 Property Matter (023-26)	K. Alaksa	3-4
5.2.2 Personnel Matter	M. Probizanski	Verbal
5.2.3 Personnel Matter	L. Vanderwey	Verbal
5.2.4 Financial Matter	L. Vanderwey	Verbal
5.3 Information and Inquires		
5.4 Rise and Report Progress	L. Vanderwey	Verbal

LAKEHEAD DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

**MINUTES OF REGULAR BOARD MEETING**

Board Room/Microsoft Teams  
Jim McCuaig Education Centre

2026 JAN 27  
7:30 p.m.

**TRUSTEES PRESENT:**

Leah Vanderwey (Chair)  
Pat Johansen  
Donica LeBlanc  
Ron Oikonen  
Trudy Tuchenhagen

Ryan Sitch  
Scottie Wemigwans (Indigenous Trustee)  
Eryn Genno (Indigenous Student Trustee)  
Breanna Bruce (Student Trustee)

**ABSENT WITH REGRETS:**

Ellen Chambers  
George Saarinen

**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 7:30 p.m.

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

3. **Approval of Agenda**

Moved by Trustee LeBlanc

Seconded by Trustee Johansen

*“THAT the Agenda for Regular Board Meeting, January 27, 2026, 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 Oikonen read the Land Acknowledgement.

8. Consent Agenda

Moved by Trustee Wemigwans

Seconded by Trustee Tuchenhagen

*“THAT Lakehead District School Board approve the consent agenda, including items 8.1 and 8.2, as presented, and 8.3 as amended to include Trustee LeBlanc.”*

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 French Immersion Program Review (011-26)

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

10.1.3 Reconcile – N/A

10.1.4 Other

10.1.4.1 Information and Technology Report (013-26)

Kirsti Alaksa, Superintendent of Business, introduced Will Fredrickson, Information Technology (IT) Committee, Michael Colistro, Cyber Security and IT Project Supervisor and John Loovere, Manager IT and Corporate Planning, who presented the report. All trustees’ questions were addressed.

10.2 Chairs Reports – N/A

### 10.3 Student/Indigenous Student Trustee Reports

#### 10.3.1 Indigenous Student Trustee January Report (Handout)

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

- reflecting on her first year as the Indigenous student trustee;
- goals as the Indigenous student trustee moving into the new year;
- making greater use of social media and the Student Trustee Instagram account; and
- collaborating more closely with Student Trustee Bruce.

All trustees' questions were addressed.

#### 10.3.2 Student Trustee January Report (Handout)

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

- attending the annual calendar committee meeting;
- participating in Superior Collegiate and Vocational Institute's Gala night;
- an impromptu meeting with one of the Thunder Bay District Catholic Board's Student trustee; and
- speaking at Superior Collegiate and Vocational Institute's International Baccalaureate Program night.

All trustees' questions were addressed.

### 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

Trustee Sitch updated members on the following items:

- OPSBA Board of Directors (BOD) have not had a meeting this month;
- currently the BOD members are working on revising OPSBA's Executive Board and Board of Directors, there will be an upcoming vote on March 12, 2026, to go over the recommended changes. This vote will give school boards an additional chance to provide their feedback to the BOD on the recommendations; and
- the next BOD meeting is on February 22, 2026, which Trustee Sitch will be attending virtually.

All trustees' questions were addressed.

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



LAKEHEAD PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

2026 FEB 24  
Report No. 024-26

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

RE: RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE BOARD ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Background

The following recommendations were received at the Board Advisory Committee Meeting on February 10, 2026, and have been referred to the Board for approval. The recommendations are as follows:

**SCHOOL YEAR CALENDAR 2026-2027 (016-26)**

*“THAT Lakehead District School Board:*

- 1. Approve the proposed 2026-2027 elementary school year calendar, including the opening and closing dates and professional activity days, as described in Appendix A of Report No. 016-26; and*
- 2. Approve the proposed 2026-2027 secondary school year calendar, including the opening and closing dates, professional activity days and examination days, as described in Appendix B of Report No. 016-26.”*

**POLICY REVIEW – 8080 SCHOOL COUNCIL POLICY (020-26)**

*“THAT Lakehead District School Board approve 8080 School Council Policy, Appendix A to Report No. 020-26.”*

**POLICY REVIEW – 3001 GOVERNANCE POLICY (019-26)**

*“THAT Lakehead District School Board approve 3001 Governance Policy, Appendix A to Report No. 019-26”.*

Respectfully submitted,

DONICA LEBLANC  
Chair, Board Advisory Committee

## SEPTEMBER 2026

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 **First Day of School for Students**  
September 3, 2026

 **Holidays & Breaks** *(Schools Closed)*

- Labour Day** September 7, 2026
- Thanksgiving Day** October 12, 2026
- Family Day** February 15, 2027
- Good Friday** March 26, 2027
- Easter Monday** March 29, 2027
- Victoria Day** May 24, 2027

**Winter Break**  
December 21, 2026 - January 1, 2027

**March Break**  
March 15 - 19, 2027

 **Professional Activity Day (PA Day)**

*(Students do not attend school)*

- September 2, 2026
- October 26, 2026
- November 27, 2026
- January 29, 2027
- February 26, 2027
- April 30, 2027
- June 11, 2027

 **Final Day of School for Students**  
June 29, 2027

## SEPTEMBER 2026

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## NOVEMBER 2026

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## DECEMBER 2026

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## JANUARY 2027

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## FEBRUARY 2027

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## MARCH 2027

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## APRIL 2027

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## MAY 2027

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## JUNE 2027

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 **First Day of School for Students**  
September 3, 2026

 **First Day of Semester 2**  
February 2, 2026

 **Holidays & Breaks** *(Schools Closed)*

**Labour Day** September 7, 2026  
**Thanksgiving Day** October 12, 2026  
**Family Day** February 15, 2027  
**Good Friday** March 26, 2027  
**Easter Monday** March 29, 2027  
**Victoria Day** May 24, 2027

**Winter Break**  
December 21, 2026 - January 1, 2027

**March Break**  
March 15 - 19, 2027

 **Professional Activity Day (PA Day)**

*(Students do not attend school)*  
 September 2, 2026  
 October 26, 2026  
 November 27, 2026  
 February 1, 2027  
 February 26, 2027  
 April 30, 2027  
 June 29, 2027

 **Final Day of School for Students**  
June 28, 2027

 **Examination Periods**  
 January 25 - 29, 2027  
 June 22 - 28, 2027

**SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONS****8000****SCHOOL COUNCIL POLICY****8080**1. Rationale

School boards are required to establish school councils in accordance with Regulation 612/00 of the Education Act.

2. Policy

It is the policy of Lakehead District School Board that each school in its jurisdiction annually establish and maintain school councils which will be instrumental in supporting school quality.

3. School Council Mandate

3.1 The school council shall act in an advisory capacity to the school's principal and, where appropriate, to the Board for the continued promotion of student learning and will place the overall interests of the students and the school first.

3.2 School councils shall operate within the parameters of the Education Act and other relevant legislation, the Board's Operational Plan, Board policies and procedures, and agreements, including collective agreements.

3.3 Objectives

The objectives of school councils are:

- to focus on successful learning;
- to plan for school growth;
- to establish effective communication within the school community;
- to establish effective approaches to consultative and collaborative strategies between home, school and community; and
- to increase participation of parents/guardians in the education of their children.

3.4 8080 School Council Procedures provide clear parameters for the operation of school councils while allowing procedural flexibility to accommodate individual school community needs.

4. Purpose

4.1 The purpose of school councils is, through the active participation of parents, to improve pupil achievement and to enhance the accountability of the education system to parents.

4.2 A school council's primary means of achieving its purpose is by making recommendations to the school principal and the Board, in accordance with Regulation 612/00.

**SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONS****8000****SCHOOL COUNCIL POLICY****8080**5. Review

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

<b><u>Cross Reference</u></b>	<b><u>Date Approved</u></b>	<b><u>Legal Reference</u></b>
Policy 8080, "School Council Procedures"  Policy & Procedures 8012, "Fundraising in the Schools"	May 26, 1998  <b><u>Date Revised</u></b>  May 27, 2003 June 22, 2010 April 24, 2018 February 24, 2026	Ontario Education Act R.R.O. 1990, Reg. 298 O. Reg. 612/00 O. Reg. 613/00

**BUSINESS AND BOARD ADMINISTRATION****3000****Governance Policy****3001**1. Rationale:

The Lakehead District School Board (LDSB) is a Board of Education established under the Education Act, with power to perform all of the duties conferred, or imposed upon, a public-school board by that or any other Act of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Ontario.

2. Policy:

It is the policy of LDSB to govern lawfully, in accordance with the provisions of the Education Act, other applicable legislation, the pertinent regulations of the Ministry of Education and the Board's Procedural By-Law.

3. Guidelines:

## 3.1 Board Duties

The Board shall:

- develop a multi-year plan(s);
- promote student achievement and well-being;
- promote positive school climate;
- promote bullying prevention;
- deliver effective and appropriate education programs;
- develop and maintain policies and structures;
- monitor and evaluate effectiveness of Board policies;
- monitor director's performance under the Education Act, Regulations, Board policies, and assigned duties;
- annually review multi-year plan with director;
- report to supporters re: plan and progress;
- provide effective stewardship of Board resources; and
- allocate resources towards prescribed outcomes.

## 3.2 Modelling Good Governance:

The Board and Trustees will jointly and severally model LDSB Values, Principles and Commitment to Reconciliation:

Our Values:

- Belonging;
- Empathy;
- Integrity; and
- Respect.

**BUSINESS AND BOARD ADMINISTRATION****3000****Governance Policy****3001**

Lakehead Public Schools strive to embody the following three principles:

- Belong - we provide environments where everyone belongs;
- Succeed - we hold high expectations for all learners; and
- Reconcile - we commit to a spirit and journey of reconciliation.

Our Commitment to Reconciliation:

We commit to the following four principles of reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities throughout every aspect of Lakehead Public Schools:

- Relationality;
- Relevancy;
- Respect; and
- Responsibility.

4. Review:

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

<b><u>Cross Reference</u></b>	<b><u>Date Approved</u></b>	<b><u>Legal Reference</u></b>
OPSBA's Guide to Good Governance 2022-2026	November 22, 2011	The Education Act (RSO 1990) S 169.1
Lakehead District School Board Trustee Code of Conduct	<b><u>Date Revised</u></b> April 23, 2019 May 10, 2022 June 28, 2022	
Lakehead District School Board Strategic Plan 2025-2029	February 24, 2026	

LAKEHEAD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

2026 FEB 24  
Report No. 022-26

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

RE: STUDENT SUCCESS

1. Background

1.1 As outlined in the Strategic Plan, Lakehead District School Board (LDSB) provides a variety of high-quality programs and supports that are intentionally aligned with the Board's strategic pillars of Belong, Succeed, and Reconcile, underscoring LDSB's ongoing commitment to inclusive learning environments, student success, and meaningful progress toward personal and academic excellence.

1.2 Lakehead District School Board's student success is guided by the provincial priorities of the Student Achievement Plan and the trustee approved multi-year strategic plan that includes:

- achievement of learning outcomes in core academic skills;
- preparation of students for future success; and
- student engagement and well-being.

Lakehead District School Board continues to strengthen student participation in job-skills programming by expanding access to opportunities such as the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP), Dual Credits, and Specialist High Skills Majors (SHSM). These pathways foster a sense of belonging by connecting students to authentic learning communities, supporting success by building practical skills and credentials, and contributing to reconciliation by valuing diverse strengths, experiences, and futures. Collectively, participation in these programs has a clear and positive impact on student achievement and long-term success.

1.3 Providing students with authentic, real-world learning experiences and meaningful support for future career and life planning enables them to build the knowledge, skills, and confidence needed to make informed decisions beyond school. Lakehead District School Board offers a range of experiential learning opportunities that connect classroom learning to real-life contexts. Through strong local partnerships and outreach, students are engaged in rich, hands-on experiences that strengthen skill development and support purposeful pathway planning for their futures.

## 2. Situation

- 2.1 Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program, Specialist High Skills Majors, and Dual Credits, provide secondary students with opportunities to acquire knowledge and skills needed to make informed education and career/life choices. These specialized programs support students to gain clarity about post-secondary and future career pathways.

Lakehead District School Board continues to strengthen community and industry partnerships, recognizing their critical role in enriching programs such as SHSM, OYAP, Co-operative education, and broader pathway exploration opportunities for students.

The OYAP enables students enrolled in co-operative education to begin training in a skilled trade, while completing the requirements for their Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD). In 2024-2025, approximately 149 LDSB students participated in the OYAP through their co-op placements. Of these students, five secured a Registered Training Agreement with the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development, and two successfully completed level one training in Automotive Service Technician (310S).

- 2.2 The SHSM program provides students in Grades 11 and 12 with focused, sector-specific learning pathways that align with their strengths and interests while meeting all OSSD requirements. Through this program, students develop specialized skills, knowledge, and certifications, supported by intentional education and career/life planning. As a result, SHSM supports successful transitions to apprenticeship training, post-secondary education, or the workforce, while enabling students to personalize their learning and gain meaningful insight into future career pathways.

Students receive the SHSM seal on their diploma when they complete the required program components, which includes a specific bundle of 8-10 courses and industry recognized certifications and training.

Lakehead District School Board's SHSM program choices include:

- Arts and Culture;
- Aviation;
- Business;
- Construction;
- Environment;
- Health and Wellness;
- Hospitality and Tourism;
- Justice, community safety & emergency services;
- Manufacturing; and
- Transportation.

- 2.3 Lakehead District School Board celebrates the continued growth and success of its SHSM programs. In 2024-2025, the completion rate reached 90%, surpassing the provincial average of 79%. For the 2025-2026 school year, 286 students are working toward earning the SHSM seal of distinction on their diploma, marking a 42% increase in student enrollment over the past three years.
- 2.4 Dual credit programming continues to support student transitions by enabling participants to earn both secondary school and college credits while engaging in postsecondary learning experiences through their home schools and Confederation College. In 2024–2025, 75 students participated in team-taught dual credit courses in areas such as construction, manufacturing, transportation, aviation, and English. In addition, 54 LPS students accessed the College Now program, a collaborative initiative with Confederation College and the Thunder Bay Catholic District School Board, participating across 13 subject areas that support postsecondary exploration and readiness.
- 2.5 Targeted experiential learning opportunities, along with community and school-based events, continue to engage students in exploring skilled trades pathways and career opportunities. Through experiences such as career fairs, post-secondary pathway visits, Skills Ontario competitions, skilled trades focused learning events, and summer reach-ahead programs in 2024–2025, students were able to see themselves reflected in future career options, build confidence and skills for success beyond school, and engage with pathways that honour diverse identities, perspectives, and community connections.

### 3. Next Steps

Program Expansion and Capacity Building: two new SHSM programs are anticipated for approval with implementation beginning September 2026:

- a Health and Wellness SHSM at Westgate Collegiate and Vocational Institute (C.V.I.); and
- an Information and Communications Technology SHSM at Superior C.V.I.

Program staff will continue to support professional learning for educators and guidance counsellors, strengthening experiential learning and ensuring a shared understanding of post-secondary options, skilled trades, apprenticeships, and labour market needs.

## Conclusion

The Lakehead District School Board remains committed to providing high-quality programs and opportunities that help every student feel connected, supported, and prepared to thrive. By prioritizing pathways planning at both the school and system levels, students are empowered to explore their interests, make informed choices, and successfully transition to post-secondary destinations that align with their goals. These programs not only support graduation and skill development but also foster the confidence students need to shape meaningful futures, while contributing to a more inclusive and reconciled community.

Respectfully submitted,

ROGER DRCAR

Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Recruiter/Specialist High Skills Major/School College Work Initiative

Student Success Resource Teacher

KATHLEEN ANDREWS

Student Success Lead

JANE LOWER

Superintendent of Education

SHERRI-LYNNE PHARAND

Director of Education

LAKEHEAD PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

2026 FEB 24  
Report No. 021-26

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

RE: NEW TEACHER INDUCTION PROGRAM - NTIP

1. Background

- 1.1 The New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP) supports new teachers' professional growth during their first two years. It builds on initial teacher education and provides schools with the strategies and funding needed to help new teachers develop the skills and knowledge required to succeed in Ontario classrooms.
- 1.2 New teachers are defined as all teachers certified by the Ontario College of Teachers who have been hired into permanent positions, full-time or part-time, by a school board to begin teaching for the first time in Ontario. Teachers are considered "new" until they successfully complete two Teacher Performance Appraisals (TPAs) within the first 12 months.
- 1.3 Upon successful completion of the NTIP, the Ontario College of Teachers places a notation on the teacher's Certificate of Qualification and Registration. This provides public assurance that the teacher has demonstrated successful teaching in an Ontario publicly funded school board.

2. Situation

- 2.1 All teachers new to Ontario's publicly funded schools must participate in the NTIP. Publicly funded school boards are required to provide three core components: orientation to the school and board, professional learning tailored to individual needs, and mentoring by experienced teachers.
- 2.2 School boards now include beginning long-term occasional (LTO) teachers in the NTIP induction components, recognizing the importance of early support in strengthening their practice and helping them develop effective teaching skills from the outset.
- 2.3 Professional development priorities include explicit instruction in literacy and numeracy, differentiated instruction, effective assessment practices, special education, Indigenous education, classroom management, communication with parents, itinerant teaching strategies, and the effective use of technology. These learning opportunities ensure that all Lakehead Public Schools (LPS) educators are prepared to create inclusive and responsive learning environments that align with the Board's pillars of Belong, Succeed, and Reconcile, supporting the success and well-being of every learner.

- 2.4 Presently at Lakehead District School Board (LDSB), there are 17 new permanent elementary and 19 secondary permanent and long-term occasional teachers participating in NTIP. An additional 31 long-term occasional and occasional elementary teachers are participating in voluntary after school sessions.
- 2.5 The 2026 secondary NTIP is designed to support new teachers through a practice focused model centered on classroom observation, professional dialogue, and mentorship aligned with school and board priorities. The program includes two half day release sessions: one board-based session, introducing program goals and shared learning intentions, and one school-based session featuring lesson observation, facilitated professional learning conversations, and debriefs supported by program staff and experienced teachers. Each NTIP teacher is paired with a mentor and participates in an observation group, with a focus on key instructional practices such as formative assessment, high impact instructional strategies, differentiation, classroom routines, and assessment and evaluation, supporting both professional growth and completion of NTIP requirements.
- 2.6 The 2026 elementary NTIP provides a structured system of support grounded in Ontario's provincial NTIP components: orientation, mentoring, and job-embedded professional learning. In the elementary panel, collaborative learning pods enhance mentorship by connecting new teachers with divisional colleagues and system experts, providing coordinated guidance in planning, assessment, and creating effective learning environments. Professional development is differentiated to meet individual teacher needs and includes literacy, numeracy, Indigenous Education, Special Education, assessment, and support for itinerant subjects.
- 2.7 While the teacher is in their first year of the NTIP, two teacher performance appraisals are required. If, during the first year, a principal determines the teacher needs development, that teacher would continue in the NTIP for another 12-month period. Once teachers have completed the NTIP successfully, the Ontario College of Teachers is notified so that this information may be recorded on the teaching certificate.

### 3. Next Steps

Lakehead District School Board will continue to offer mentoring and targeted professional development opportunities for new and beginning teachers that are aligned with its pillars of Belong, Succeed, and Reconcile. Ongoing supports will focus on strengthening classroom practice through explicit instruction in literacy and numeracy, differentiated instruction, special education and inclusive practices, formative assessment, high-impact instructional strategies, classroom structures and routines, and assessment and evaluation, as well as culturally responsive and Indigenous education. Through sustained mentorship and job-embedded professional learning, these initiatives will ensure all educators are prepared to create inclusive learning environments where students experience a strong sense of belonging, achieve academic success, and engage in learning grounded in reconciliation and respect for Indigenous perspectives.

## Conclusion

In summary, the NTIP program reflects the Board's strong and ongoing commitment to cultivating confident, well-supported new educators through intentional mentorship, collaborative learning structures, and focused professional development aligned with Board priorities. By providing responsive guidance and meaningful opportunities to refine core instructional practices, the program helps new teachers build the skills and relationships essential for contributing to inclusive, high-quality learning environments. Together, these efforts not only strengthen professional success but also reinforce our shared vision of ensuring every classroom is a place where both educators and students can thrive and where great teaching continues to grow.

Respectfully submitted,

KALI BERNST  
Principal of Indigenous Education and Program

KATHLEEN ANDREWS  
Student Success Lead

PATTI-JO PESOLA  
Superintendent of Education

SHERRI-LYNNE PHARAND  
Director of Education

LAKEHEAD PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

2026 FEB 24  
Report No. 025-26

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

RE: COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF  
CORRESPONDENCE

1. Background

At the February 17, 2026, Lakehead District School Board (LDSB) Coordinating Committee meeting, members requested that the Communications Committee:

- 1.1 Draft a letter to the Minister of Education, Paul Calandra, on behalf of the trustees, requesting a province-wide consultation regarding English public school board trustees.
- 1.2 Draft a letter to Ombudsman Dubé, on behalf of the trustees, advocating for a review of the proposed removal of English public school board trustees.

2. Situation

- 2.1 The Communications Committee, along with the chair of the Board, composed two draft letters and circulated them to all members of the Board for input.
- 2.2 The draft letters are attached as Appendix A and Appendix B to Report No. 025-26.

3. Conclusion

The Trustees' Communications 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 Communications Committee to send correspondence to the Minister of Education and the Ombudsman as outlined in Report No. 025-26.

Respectfully submitted,

ELLEN CHAMBERS  
Chair, Communications Committee

February 26, 2026

Paul Calandra, Minister of Education  
Ministry of Education 5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
438 University Ave.  
Toronto, ON  
M7A 2A5

**Subject: Urgent Request for Province-Wide Consultation Regarding English Public School Board Trustees**

To the Honourable Paul Calandra, Minister of Education,

On behalf of the Lakehead District School Board, I am writing to formally request that the Ministry of Education initiate a comprehensive, province-wide consultation process or a referendum before any final decision is made to eliminate English Public School Board Trustees.

As the provincial government reviews the current school board governance model, it is vital that the voices of those directly impacted—students, parents, staff, and the broader community—are central to the conversation. School Board Trustees serve as a critical democratic link between local communities and the provincial education system. They provide essential oversight and ensure that the unique needs of local students are reflected in board policies. Lakehead District School Board believes that removing this elected layer of governance without robust public engagement would significantly undermine local accountability. **We are deeply concerned with how the elimination of elected English Public School Board trustees will impact the voice of our First Nations communities. Their voices are heard as part of the board table through an Indigenous Trustee but how will that voice be heard if that "table" no longer exists.**

To ensure a transparent and evidence-based decision, the Lakehead District School Board urges the Ministry to implement a consultation process that includes:

- **Public Forums:** Province-wide Town Hall meetings and virtual/in-person focus groups;
- **Broad Engagement:** Targeted surveys and round table discussions involving students, families, and education sector partners;
- **Research Transparency:** A public review of the "pros and cons" concerning the elimination of local English Public School Trustee representation; and
- **Two-Way Dialogue:** An open platform that promotes authentic conversation between the Ministry and the constituents it serves.

We believe that a decision of this magnitude, which affects the democratic rights of Ontarians to have a voice in their public education system and in Northwestern Ontario, includes the voice of our Indigenous communities, must not be made in isolation. According to one poll, “Support for elected trustees climbed to 59 per cent among parents with school-aged children” and according to another poll, Ontarians “believe the [proposed] changes would either make no difference for students or actively make things worse.”

We look forward to your response and to the opportunity to participate in a meaningful dialogue regarding the future of educational governance in Ontario.

Regards,

Leah Vanderwey  
Chair, Lakehead District School Board

cc: Lakehead District School Board Trustees  
The Honourable Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario  
Members of Provincial Parliament (MPPs) for Thunder Bay Region  
Local Mayors  
Fort William First Nation  
Ontario Public School Board’s Association (OPSBA) and Member Boards  
Lakehead District School Board’s Parent Involvement Committee  
Lakehead District School Board’s Special Education Advisory Committee  
Miiniwewinan: Indigenous Education Advisory Committee  
Lakehead District School Board School Councils

February 26, 2026

Paul Dubé, Ombudsman  
The Office of the Ontario Ombudsman  
483 Bay Street  
10<sup>th</sup> Floor, South Tower  
Toronto, ON  
M5G 2C9

**Subject: Formal Request for Review: Proposed Removal of English Public School Board Trustees**

Dear Ombudsman Dubé,

On behalf of the Lakehead District School Board, I am writing to formally request that your office review the process being used to remove English public school board trustees, as well as, the potential impacts of their removal. As an independent officer to help keep the government and public services accountable and protect the rights of Ontarians, your oversight is essential in evaluating whether this proposed transition aligns with the principles of accountability and transparency.

The role of the trustee is fundamental to Ontario Education, serving as a direct link between local families and the provincial education system.

We hold significant concerns regarding the following:

- **Fairness:** The Minister of Education has stated the intention to remove the role of democratically elected English public school board trustees and has stated that French and Catholic Trustees, due to the constitution and the charter of rights, will not be removed.
- **Accountability:** Removal of democratically elected trustees at some supervised boards has resulted in less open and transparent, public meetings.
- **Truth and Reconciliation:** **The removal of English public school board trustees would result in the loss of our Indigenous trustee who represents a role in the governance of the school board and a role which is an essential part of the truth and reconciliation journey.**
- **Student Voice:** The removal of English public school board trustees would also result in the loss of student trustees, which is the sole legislated role giving voice to Ontario students in English public schools. **Lakehead District School Board has both an Indigenous student trustee and a student trustee.**
- **Public Support:** There has been no formal public consultation on the proposal to remove the role of English public school board trustees. Polls have shown support for the role of trustees and skepticism that the proposed governance changes will improve public education. According to one poll, "Support for elected trustees climbs to 59 per cent among parents with school-aged children" and according to another poll Ontarians "believe the [proposed] changes would either make no difference for students or actively make things worse."

Given your office's mandate to investigate the administrative conduct of school boards and the provincial government, we believe a systemic review is necessary to ensure that efficiency is not prioritized at the expense of procedural fairness.

The Lakehead District School Board remains committed to ensuring that any changes to educational governance are rooted in evidence and maintain the highest standards of transparency for all people of Ontario and especially within our region of Northwestern Ontario. The Minister of Education has indicated that a decision regarding the future of English public trustees is imminent. Therefore, we request that this review be considered a priority.

We look forward to your guidance on this matter.

Regards,

Leah Vanderwey  
Chair, Lakehead District School Board

cc: Lakehead District School Board Trustees  
The Honourable Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario  
The Honourable Paul Calandra, Minister of Education  
Members of Provincial Parliament (MPPs) for Thunder Bay Region  
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