

LAKEHEAD DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

MINUTES OF REGULAR BOARD MEETING

Board Room/Microsoft Teams
Jim McCuaig Education Centre

2026 MAY 26
7:30 p.m.

TRUSTEES PRESENT:

Ron Oikonen(Chair)
Ellen Chambers
Pat Johansen
Donica LeBlanc
George Saarinen

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

ABSENT WITH REGRETS:

N/A

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION:

Sherri-Lynne Pharand, Chief Executive Officer
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 Oikonen at 6:30 p.m.

2. **Disclosure of Conflict of Interest:**

None.

3. **Approval of Agenda**

Moved by Trustee Tuchenhausen

Seconded by Trustee Saarinen

"THAT the Agenda for Regular Board Meeting, May 26, 2026, be approved."

CARRIED

4. Resolve into Committee of the Whole – Closed Session

Moved by Trustee Chambers

Seconded by Trustee LeBlanc

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

- Confirmation of Committee of the Whole – Closed Session Minutes- Regular Board Meeting – April 26, 2026

- Personnel Matters

- Legal Matters

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

CARRIED

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – CLOSED SESSION – 6:30 P.M.

5. Committee of the Whole – Closed Session

PUBLIC SESSION – 7:30 P.M.

6. Report of the Committee of the Whole – Closed Session

Moved by Trustee Saarinen

Seconded by Trustee LeBlanc

1. *'THAT Lakehead District School Board approve the Committee of the Whole – Closed Session Minutes of Regular Board Meeting, April 28, 2026;*
2. *Approve the appointment of Trustee Chambers as Vice-Chair and Trustee Sitch as Chair of the Director's Performance Appraisal Committee; and*
3. *Approve the appointment process, authorize the immediate public posting of the vacancy and approve Option A (with interviews) for the selection and swearing-in of the successful candidate, with August 3, 2026 serving as the latest date for completion of the appointment process should additional time be required.*

And;

Option 1: That the Lakehead District School Board approve a process under which all trustees are allowed to participate in the review of qualified applications, the interview of shortlisted candidates, and the selection of the successful candidate for appointment to the current trustee vacancy.

Or;

~~Option 2: That the Lakehead District School Board approve a process under which a committee of the following trustees _____, _____, and _____ be appointed to review qualified applications, interview shortlisted candidates, and bring forward a recommendation to the Board regarding the appointment to the current trustee vacancy.~~

CARRIED

7. Land Acknowledgement

Trustee LeBlanc read the Land Acknowledgement.

8. Consent Agenda

Moved by Trustee LeBlanc

Seconded by Trustee Tuchenhagen

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

CARRIED

9. Delegations/ Presentations

9.1 Celebrating Student Achievement – Kakabeka Falls Public School – Experiential Career Connections

Jane Lower, Superintendent of Education, introduced Catherine Jonas, Principal, Kakabeka Falls Public School, who introduced Elementary Teachers, Kelsi Dillon and Joanna Martins, who presented the report. All trustees' questions were addressed.

10. Reports

10.1 Chief Executive Officer's Reports

10.1.1 Belong

10.1.1.1 Mental Health - Annual Report (047-26)

Kirsti Alaksa, Superintendent of Business, introduced Megan Semeniuk, Mental Health Lead, who presented the report. All trustees' questions were addressed.

10.1.2 Succeed – N/A

10.1.3 Reconcile – N/A

10.1.4 Other – N/A

10.2 Chair's Reports – N/A

10.3 Student/Indigenous Student Trustee Reports

10.3.1 Student Trustee May Report (Handout)

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

- participating in Student Senate;
- being Co-Master of Ceremonies for the Grade 8 Awards of Excellence; and
- a brain-storming session for the Student Challenge Videos for the Thunder Bay Police (with SCVI students).

10.3.2 Student Trustee April Report (Handout)

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

- attending a Miiniwewinan: Indigenous Education Advisory Committee meeting;
- participating in Student Senate; and
 - being Co-Master of Ceremonies for the Grade 8 Awards of Excellence.

10.4 Reports of Standing Committees

10.4.1 Special Education Advisory Committee Minutes – April 15, 2026

Kirsti Alaksa, Superintendent of Education, presented the minutes. All questions from trustees were addressed.

10.4.2 Approval of Appointment of Alternate Representative to Special Education Advisory Committee (048-26)

Moved by Trustee Tuchenhausen

Seconded by Trustee Chambers

"THAT the Lakehead District School Board approve the appointment of Amy Brissette, Manager, Client Services at George Jeffery Children's Centre, as an alternate representative to the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC). Amy Brissette's appointment would be for the term ending November 30, 2026, as outlined in Report No. 048-26."

CARRIED

10.5 Reports of External Board or Agency Representation

10.5.1 Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA) Report

Trustee Sitch provided Board members with the following update:

- New legislation regarding School Boards funding to External Organizations so OPSBA Annual General Meeting (AGM) has been moved to Virtual.

Trustee Saarinen added that there was an email sent out regarding upcoming Professional Development for trustees during the AGM at no cost to trustees.

Trustee Sitch informed the Board that the hotel will be refunded for those who have registered for the AGM, but full registration will not.

11. Reports of Special (Ad Hoc) Committees

11.1 Recommendations from the Communications Committee Re: Correspondence on Bill 101 (064-26)

Moved by Trustee Chambers

Seconded by Trustee Saarinen

"THAT Lakehead District School Board:

- 1. Rescind the motion to draft a letter to Premier Doug Ford and Minister Paul Calandra regarding potential changes to the English Public School Board Governance.*
- 2. Defer the motion to draft a letter to Ombudsman Barbara Finlay regarding the impact of Bill 101 on LDSB students until the fall when the Board will have had a chance to track the impact."*

CARRIED

12. Special Orders – N/A

13. Unfinished Business/ General Orders – N/A

14. Notices of Motion – N/A

15. Announcements

15.1 Chair Oikonen informed the Board that the following events were attended by trustees, and senior administration:

- May 13, 2026 –Creative Movement Jamboree;
- May 14, 2026 – Grade 8 Awards of Excellence;
- May 19, 2026 – Speaker of the House of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, the Honourable Donna Skelly's visit to McKenzie Public School/Take your MPP to School visit from MPP Vaugeois;
- May 21, 2026 – All Star Concert – École Elsie McGill;
- May 22, 2026 – MPP Kevin Hollands Visit to Algonquin Avenue Public School Special Needs Classroom;
- Trustee Sitch – stated that viewers and parents should consider becoming a School Board Trustee as it is a great way to learn about all of the programming and initiatives the Board has to offer students. Trustee Saarinen added that Superior Greenstone District School Board put out an ad to inform the public about what it is to become a trustee and information on how to run in the Municipal Election and wondered if LDSB could do something similar. Chief Executive Officer Pharand will look at the ad and discuss options with Jamie Smith, Communications Supervisor;
- Chief Executive Officer Pharand informed trustees that she along with Don Porter, Manager of Plant, Kirsti Alaksa, Superintendent of Business, and Ryan McDonnell, Principal of Westgate Collegiate and Vocational Institute (Westgate CVI) went to see the upgraded boiler in place at Westgate CVI, which is already saving money in energy costs.
- Chief Executive Officer Pharand attended a round table event with the Honourable Minister Hajdu on the skilled trades and job opportunities in the north and what the barriers to receiving continuing education in the trades are, how the government could help school boards and post-secondary schools retain students in the skilled trades programs.
- Chief Executive Officer Pharand extended thanks on behalf of the Board to Principal Lori Carson, who was present at the meeting, for her many years with Lakehead Public Schools and will be retiring in June.

16. Adjournment

Chair Oikonen declared the meeting adjourned at 8:52 p.m.

CONFIRMED BY THE BOARD – June 23, 2026



Chair



Secretary