

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Tuesday, October 14, 2025 | 5:30 PM

AGENDA

1.0 Call to Order

1.1 Land Acknowledgement

We would like to open this meeting by acknowledging the traditional territories of the Anishinaabe, on which all schools of the NNDSB are situated. The Board Office is specifically located on the traditional territory of the Nipissing First Nation. We value the cultures, histories and relationships with the Indigenous People of Turtle Island. We are grateful to be gathered here today.

1.2 Attendance and Confirmation of Quorum

1.3 Declaration of Conflict of Interest

2.0 Approval of the Agenda ✓

Motion:

That the agenda for the Committee of the Whole meeting of October 14, 2025, be approved.

3.0 Review of Previous Minutes ✓

Motion:

That the minutes for the Committee of the Whole meeting of September 9, 2025, be approved.

4.0 Business Arising

4.1 Parry Sound New JK-12 School update ✓

5.0 New Business

5.1 OPSBA Emerging Issues information ✓

5.2 Notice of Motion B. Steer re letter to Premier and Education Minister ✓✓

6.0 Adjournment

Motion:

That on October 14, 2025 we do now adjourn at _____ pm.



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Ashley St. Pierre, Chair

Craig Myles, Director of Education

The September 9, 2025 **Committee of the Whole Public Session** of the Near North District School Board was held in person at the Head Office and via a Zoom video and/or teleconference.

Trustees Present:

Ashley St. Pierre, Chair
Howard Wesley, Vice Chair
John Arkwright
Jay Aspin
Caren Gagne
Shane Hall
Louise Sargent
Student Trustee Trudeau
Student Trustee Bassi

Administrative Staff Present:

Craig Myles, Director of Education
Gay Smylie, Superintendent
Seija Van Haesendonck, Superintendent of Business
Timothy Graves, Superintendent
Melanie Gray, Superintendent
Kim Pauli, Superintendent
Deb Bartlett, Communications
Maureen Egan, Director's Office
Glenn Morrison, Manager IT
Liana Blaskievich, Officer Corporate Affairs

Regrets: B. Steer

Other:

Staff, media

1.0 Call to Order

Chair St. Pierre called the Committee of the Whole meeting to order at 5:30 pm.

1.1 Land Acknowledgement

Vice-Chair Wesley read the declaration aloud.

1.2 Attendance

Attendance indicated that 8 trustees and two student trustees were present.

1.3 Declaration of Conflict of Interest

Chair St. Pierre asked for declaration of conflicts. None arose.

2.0 Closed Session

Motion: CW 25-09-01, S.Hall/C.Gagne

That the Committee move into closed session in order to discuss items pertaining to *The Education Act* RSO 1990, c.E.2 section 207 (2)(e). – CARRIED

3.0 Approval of the Agenda

Motion: CW 25-09-02, L.Sargent/H.Wesley

That the agenda for the Committee of the Whole meeting of September 9, 2025 be approved. - CARRIED.

4.0 Review of Previous Minutes

Motion: CW 25-09-03, C.Gagne/S.Hall

That the minutes for the Committee of the Whole meeting of June 10, 2025 be approved. – CARRIED.

Trustee Sargent asked for minutes of the Special Board meeting on August 19 and Chair St. Pierre advised that she consulted with OPSBA and since a delegate for the Director was not assigned it did not constitute a meeting. She also noted that OPSBA's letter is included in today's agenda package. Trustee Sargent and Wesley asked that there be a record of the meeting minutes for future reference. The Chair advised it would be included in a future agenda.

5.0 Business Arising

5.1 AG School Openings, Closures and Consolidations (Trustee Sargent)

Trustee Sargent explained that in February 2024 this AG was on the agenda as an information item after having gone through the consultation phase. Trustee Sargent had some concerns with language in the AG that was trustee related. She briefly reviewed some of the changes she felt were necessary. Chair St. Pierre deferred to Director Myles who noted staff had not received the changes from Trustee Sargent and therefore were not prepared to discuss. He asked that it be presented in writing for proper consideration and discussion.

Trustee Aspin said he appreciated Trustee Sargent's concerns but would like to see them in written format with some time to review before discussing at the board table. Trustee Gagne suggested this item go to the Governance Committee first and then to board. Friendly consensus reached that it would be sent to the Governance Committee.

5.2 Parry Sound Build JK-12 School Update

Director Myles noted the significant documentation in the agenda package re planning surrounding the build. He said that he wanted to reassure the board of trustees, staff, students and families and the communities that we continue to work extremely hard, to ensure we deliver a quality product. He advised that Executive Superintendent Graves is overseeing the project to ensure it has the necessary support needed as we continue to deal with unexpected issues. He asked Executive Superintendent Graves to continue this update including the most recent news received.

Executive Superintendent Graves announce that we received notification from the Town of Parry Sound that we have occupancy for staff and students. He acknowledged the hard work of the Facilities department staff throughout. The next step of our

process is to invite our union partners and admin to reintroduce them to the building followed by staff. He acknowledged the work ahead for teachers and support staff. Teachers normally come in a week before school to unpack and this wasn't the case. Teachers will need an opportunity to set up their classrooms, unpack their resources and teach at the same time. We are working closely with the union to support them. We expect to announce students' occupation very soon once transportation is in place.

Vice-Chair Wesley thanked the parents and municipalities who opened their doors to assist. This will be welcome news. He also acknowledged the efforts of all who worked hard including bus drivers who have done a great deal of extra work and ensured the best for our students. Trustee Gagne echoed the VC's remarks also thanking the senior administration for their work.

Director Myles expressed his sincere gratitude to the trustees for their recognition, acknowledging the dedication of the senior staff who went above and beyond, often making personal sacrifices. He emphasized that their actions reflect the core values of the organization – student success. He highlighted the contributions of principals, IT staff, custodial teams, and those working on the construction site, who not only faced challenging situations but also endured unfair criticism while maintaining professionalism and resilience. Director Myles shared he is deeply moved by the commitment displayed under significant external pressure, acknowledging the added stress that was placed on everyone involved.

6.0 Adjournment

Motion: CW 25-09-04, J.Aspin/L.Sargent

That on September 9, 2025 we do now adjourn at 6:22 pm. – CARRIED

Title:	Parry Sound Jk-12 Build
Contact:	Director of Education Craig Myles
Date Submitted:	October 14, 2025
Background	The Near North District School Board (NNDSB) remains committed to the successful completion and future occupancy of the new Parry Sound JK–12 School. While a confirmed occupancy date has not yet been established, the building progress continues across key areas of construction, safety compliance, and regulatory approvals. Families were provided with an update on September 26, outlining recent developments and milestones achieved in the building process. This report provides Trustees with a current overview of the project’s status and highlights the work underway to bring the new school to completion.
Current	Building Systems and Inspections <u>Water Service:</u> Although water was turned off for a period of time due to a water main break on site, it was reinstated following the submission of an engineer’s report with direction to provide additional information to the Town’s Public Works Department and temporary approval by this department enabled the continued commissioning of building systems. <u>Electrical:</u> Progressing, with some outstanding installations of specific receptacle requirements for technology closets/UPS hardware and eventual final installation of switches/Wi-Fi and internet service throughout the site. Deficiencies are being addressed, and ESA inspections are ongoing as work is completed. Life Safety Components – annunciator panel installed, electrified wayfinding signage (exit signs) installed, horns and lights currently being installed, BAS system installed, yet to be programmed, security system currently being set up with service provider and hardware installer. <u>Mechanical:</u> Sprinkler systems, heating, and ventilation systems are nearing completion. Some final connections and testing remain. <u>Interior Finishes:</u>

- The gymnasium and stage flooring are complete. Line painting to follow curing.
- Painting and millwork deficiencies are being addressed.
- Acoustic and custom ceiling work is ongoing.
- Audio-Visual: Installation in the cafetorium and drama room is nearing completion.

Hexpods and Site Work

All six hexpods are on site and connected to foundations. Exterior finishing of wood decking, ramps and stairs is nearing completion with minor work remaining. Interior radiant heating units and electrical hook up underway. Interior painting and painting of exterior doors is ongoing.

Temporary staff parking is complete and in use. Permanent asphalt, sidewalks, curbs and landscaping/sod complete in the majority of areas around the new build.

Next Steps Toward Occupancy

To occupy the premises, all inspections as required by the building permit, and a notice of completion/notice of substantial performance issued by the Architect is required. The general contractor is currently working towards closing off any outstanding inspections, and inspections are occurring regularly.

Life Safety Certifications:

Final testing and certification by Electrical Safety Authority, Technical Standards and Safety Authority, and the Prime Consultant are ongoing.

Municipal and Ministry Approvals:

North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit, Parry Sound Fire Department, and Emergency Services site visits will be scheduled over the coming weeks as work is completed, and sign off's to be submitted to the Town of Parry Sound to issue the Occupancy permit.

Ministry of Education inspection of the Child Care space to be scheduled once resources provided by the NNDSB are installed.

Transition Planning

Prior to occupancy being granted, certain new resources or some currently in storage may be relocated and positioned within the new building. This should not be interpreted as an indication that a move is imminent, but rather as an opportunity to begin setting up in preparation for eventual occupancy.

As we move towards obtaining occupancy, NNDSB will initiate:

- Delivery and setup of new furnishings.
- Transition of remaining resources and equipment.
- Move coordination.

Conclusion	The Near North District School Board (NNDSB) continues to advance toward the completion and occupancy of the new Parry Sound JK–12 School. While a firm occupancy date is not yet available, significant progress has been made across key construction, safety, and regulatory milestones. NNDSB will communicate a detailed transition timeline to staff, students, families, and community partners once confirmed in consultation with the Ministry of Education.
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Revisioning OPSBA's Governance Structure

September 29, 2025

To: All OPSBA Member Board Chairs and Directors of Education

cc: All OPSBA Board of Directors Members

Background

As you are aware, since April 2025, the provincial government has taken the following steps in relation to Ontario's publicly funded education system:

- Appointing a supervisor to oversee the Thames Valley DSB on April 23
- Tabling Bill 33, *Supporting Children and Students Act* on May 29
- Placing two additional English-public school boards (TDSB & OCDSB) under supervision on June 27
- Initiating a governance review of the Near North DSB on September 2
- Regular public statements by Minister Calandra hinting that trustee roles could be eliminated or overhauled by the end of the year

Impact on OPSBA

In July, OPSBA was advised that boards placed under supervision were directed to not pay OPSBA's 2025-2026 membership fees. This constitutes an immediate budget reduction of 25% for the Association. OPSBA took immediate steps to implement cost mitigation strategies to address the budgetary shortfalls. That said, as the Association navigates the current and potential future uncertainty that Bill 33 presents, the Executive Council is leading the initiation of a discussion with members, via Regional Councils, to review our governance structure. The review aims to:

- Address the current and potential future budgetary challenges while maintaining opportunities for direct engagement with OPSBA members
- Better align OPSBA financial resources with strategic priorities
- Create a more responsive governance structure in line with leading governance practices
- Elevate member engagement, closer to home, through enhanced regional structures

Proposed Governance Changes

This past weekend, OPSBA Board of Directors members exercised their fiduciary duty to the Association by considering how OPSBA's governance model could be re-visioned so that the Association can continue to fulfill its mission as a School Boards' association regardless of the changes in the landscape of school board governance. OPSBA can



and will remain a relevant, credible, and an influential force in shaping public education in Ontario.

A proposed two-tiered model that transitions the Board of Directors from a 52-person board to an Executive Board of between nine and 13 members that is supported by a more robust Regional Council structure was presented. The Board of Directors reflected on how the model supports the long-term sustainability of OPSBA, what a streamlined Board would look like, identified opportunities and risks, and what success might look like for OPSBA.

Next Steps

As we move forward this fall, all trustees will have an opportunity to participate in facilitated discussions about OPSBA's governance, scheduled at the Fall Regional Council meetings (October 18 for Northern Region and November 1 for all other Regions).

Trustees who are unable to attend their local Regional Council meeting will be provided with an opportunity to share their input through their region.

Feedback will be used to inform revisions to the OPSBA General By-Law which will be presented to the Board of Directors with the potential of a mid-year Special Meeting of the Association.

We would sincerely appreciate hearing from you, should you have any questions. As always, we are pleased to have the opportunity to support good information sharing and awareness at your board table and trust that your OPSBA Board member(s) would be pleased to discuss this with you as well.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Woodcock
President

Stephanie Donaldson
Executive Director

Local Government Week: Additional Ideas for Trustees and School Boards

October 20 to 24, 2025

For Trustees & Boards

- **Host a “Local Leaders Lunch”** – bring trustees, student trustees, and municipal counterparts together for an informal lunch or coffee chat at a school or community centre.
 - **Feature “Trustee Spotlights”** – short social media posts or board website features about trustees’ community work, why they serve, and what local democracy means to them.
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For Communities

- **Joint Proclamation** – encourage municipalities and school boards to issue a joint proclamation declaring Oct. 20 to 24, 2025 as *Local Government Week in (Community Name)*.
 - **Library & Community Centre Partnerships** – work with local libraries to set up LGW book displays on democracy, civic engagement, and leadership for kids/teens.
 - **Neighbourhood Walks** – a trustee and a municipal councillor walk through a community together, chatting informally with parents, students, and community members.
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Online / Digital Engagement

- **Daily Social Themes** – each day of LGW, post about a different aspect of local democracy (e.g., Monday: What trustees do; Tuesday: Why local voice matters; Wednesday: Partnerships; Thursday: Student trustee voices; Friday: Looking to the future). Use the hashtag #LocalGovWeek.
- **#MyLocalVoice Campaign** – invite students, parents, and teachers to post short videos or comments about why having local trustees matters.

Title:	Notice of Motion – Letter to Premier and Minister of Education
Contact:	Bill Steer
Date Submitted:	September 25, 2025
Mandate:	In alignment with NNDSB Bylaw 102, TRUSTEE Steer provided notice to the Secretary of the Board, Director Myles, requesting an item be placed on the agenda for discussion during the October 14 Regular Board meeting.
Background:	The Ontario government is reviewing its governance model and considering eliminating elected trustees with the possibility of appointed individuals. Concern centers around consolidating provincial power over education; losing connection between communities and parents and undermining local democracy.
Resolution:	Be it resolved that the Board of Trustees direct the Chair to write a letter to Premier Doug Ford and Minister of Education, Paul Calandra, with a copy OPSBA and OSTA-AECO and the media, regarding the work of School Board Trustees and Student Trustees in fulfilling the mandates of the Board as set out in the <i>Ontario Education Act</i>, and that the Minister conduct a public consultation before making any changes to the <i>Education Act</i> regarding the role of Trustees. Draft letter attached.

DRAFT

October 15, 2025

Honourable Doug Ford Premier of Ontario
Honourable Paul Calandra Minister of Education

Dear Premier Ford and Minister Calandra:

Re: School Board Trustees and Request for Public Consultation

At the October 14 Board meeting of the Near North DSB Trustees voted in favour of the following resolution:

Be it resolved that the Board of Trustees direct the Chair to write a letter to Premier Doug Ford and Minister of Education, Paul Calandra, with a copy OPSBA and OSTA-AECO and the media, regarding the work of School Board Trustees and Student Trustees in fulfilling the mandates of the Board as set out in the Ontario Education Act, and that the Minister conduct a public consultation before making any changes to the Education Act regarding the role of Trustees.

The position of School Board Trustee is the longest-serving democratically elected position in what is now known as Canada, serving our communities since 1816. Trustees are the only elected representatives whose primary responsibility is student achievement and well-being. We carry out our role and fulfill the mandate of our elected position through our deep connection and familiarity with the needs of the communities in which we live and whom we serve.

The requirement that Trustees must live in the area we serve and bring the concerns of the community to the attention of the board, ensures that Trustees represent their communities' interests and needs while acting as liaisons between the families we represent and the provincial government. When we reach out to our community for their input and feedback, we get engagement that is relevant and meaningful.

Trustees are responsible for the oversight of their local school board through the *Education Act* and associated regulations. We support the Ministry by ensuring the implementation of the provincial curricula, strategies and mandates, supporting the Ministry's consultation needs, and by bringing local and provincial issues and concerns to the Ministry's attention while keeping student achievement and well-being in sharp focus.

We are the greatest advocates and supporters of Ontario's publicly funded education system, always cognizant of our responsibility to uphold public support of publicly funded education.

We engage with all key stakeholders in meaningful and extensive consultations, respond to parents' concerns and sometimes opposition, navigate challenging community dynamics. On a daily basis, Trustees help students and their families navigate the education system, whether they are concerned about academics, have questions about program placements, want to report bullying, need mental health resources, or are seeking information about special education, all with the goal that no student be left behind.

We chose to become Trustees because we care deeply about providing excellent public education in Ontario, and have a passion to fulfill our role with a deep sense of responsibility and dedication to every student and their success. By doing so, Trustees support their respective school boards and the provincial government in delivering on the mandate to provide the best possible learning experience for students.

As elected representatives, we have an opportunity to continue working together in partnership with MPPs to focus on student success. Working as a team we can build a better, stronger public education system in Ontario.

For all of the reasons mentioned above, we strongly recommend that the Minister engage in public consultations regarding Trustees' continued role in strengthening public education prior to making any changes to the Education Act.

Sincerely,

Ashley St. Pierre, Chair NNDSB

cc: Ontario Public School Boards' Association OSTA-ACO
Local Union partners
Media