

TRUSTEE CONFERENCE REPORT

Name: Ted Martin **Date Submitted:** June 12, 2017
Name of Conference: 29th Annual General Meeting
Sponsoring Organization: OPSBA
Theme (If any):
Conference Dates: June 8, 2017 - June 11, 2017
Location: Westin Trillium House, The Blue Mountains, ON

Workshops/Seminars/Presentations/Keynote Speeches Attended: (Include a brief Summary)

Welcome Reception and Team Trivia – Jerry Chadwick, Vice President, OPSBA

I sat at a table with people from five or six other Boards (including Bluewater, Hamilton-Wentworth, Thames Valley, Toronto). We split into two teams for the trivia challenge. It was a great opportunity to have fun – but also practice teamwork – with trustees from other Boards.

Welcome Address – Laurie French, President, OPSBA

Traditional Territory Acknowledgement – Elaine Johnston, Trustee, Algoma District School Board & Chief, Serpent River First Nation

I appreciated the extended land acknowledgement, as it makes it less a formality and more meaningful. (I took this idea and applied it at the Board retirement dinner, though no one seemed to notice, so perhaps it has already become too much of a formality.)

Assessment in Service of Learning – Sandra Herbst, CEO, connect2learning

Triangulation of assessment – not only using the product (grades) but also observation and communication. We need teachers to be “the guide at the side” of students in assessment as well as in learning.

What can we learn as leaders from what happens in schools and classrooms?

We impact teaching practice by impacting learning practice. We need to model this in our assessment of the leaders, aligning assessment practice across classrooms, schools and systems.

Have each teacher post on their classroom door what they want to be assessed on, so everyone can be aware of it.

“As leaders we cannot not model our own assessment techniques.” We should be practicing triangulation of assessment with our Director. We should be measuring performance on product + observation + communication. (We’ve had too much of the latter in the past, but perhaps I’ve been pushing us to go too far toward the former with my “show me the numbers” approach.)

Surviving and Thriving in an Era of Disruption: Preparing the Next Generation for the Age of Automation – Ramona Pringle, interactive producer and expert on digital media, Ryerson University

“Power to the people”

Many of current jobs are going to be performed by robots or artificial intelligence over the next couple of decades: over 70% of jobs in high risk sectors (transportation, manufacturing, etc.)

This is the second machine age – machines become substitutes for humans (in first age, machines complemented humans).

Most kids entering school today will work in jobs that currently do not exist. How do we prepare our students for jobs we can't imagine? What skills should we be teaching if robots and AI will do most of the things we currently do?

We need to model the behaviour we want in others. We need to learn to be adaptable, to communicate, be creative – the skills needed for the new age are those things generally learned through the arts (creativity, questioning, critical thinking, imagination)

We need to teach ethics – there are some big ethical decisions that need to be made as machines take over from humans

Annual General Meeting – Laurie French, President, OPSBA

No elections were required at the organization level, because the key positions were all acclaimed.

Policy resolutions:

1. Local Priorities Consultation (Ottawa-Carleton) – approved
2. Electronic Regional Meetings (Hastings Prince Edward) – approve
3. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (Peel) – approved
4. Student Trustee Representation on OPSBA Board (Hamilton-Wentworth) – approved with amendments
5. Governance Review (Hamilton-Wentworth) – defeated
6. Service Dogs (Waterloo) – referred to Program Work Team – I spoke briefly to this motion, but took the Executive's direction and asked that it be referred to committee (since it became obvious that it would not pass a straight vote)

Keynote Speaker – Joseph Boyden, novelist

Interesting choice, given the concerns over cultural appropriation

He told about his childhood, growing up in Toronto as one of 11 children, raised by a single mother.

Then he gave his “three act” talk, beginning each with a harmonica or jaw's harp tune:

- Act 1: creativity – teach our children to resist the voices that say you can't or you shouldn't
- Act 2: outreach and in reach – find the ember that burns inside yourself
- Act 3: ask permission for reconciliation – must always ask permission – invite reconciliation

Equity and Diversity Panel – presenters from Toronto DSB, Durham DSB, Peel DSB, Keewatin-Patricia DSB

Toronto (Parthi Kandavel, Jim Spyropoulos) – intentions and impact; we have to be willing to name it; who are we serving and who are we not serving; diversity is a fact, but inclusion is a choice; equity isn't about sending staff for training – collect data and prepare to make change

Durham (Barry Bedford, Tina Thomas) – anti-black racism initiatives; what we measure is what we do
Peel (Tony Pontes) – everything we do must be viewed through the lens of equity; it must influence our board goals, our school goals, our individual goals; measure the demographics of the organization

Keewatin-Patricia (Cynthia Seitz) – tested our knowledge of the North (I didn't do badly because I at least know the difference between a pike and a muskie, and know what a sled and a quad are);

importance of geography in the North; curriculum is both a window (to the world) and a mirror (to one's self)

Labour Relations Update – Penny Mustin, Janet Edwards

Nothing of note

OPSBA Regional Council Elections – Donna Danielli, regional vice president/chair, OPSBA

Donna Danielli (Halton) was re-acclaimed as Vice President

Carol Ann Sloat (Grand Erie) was elected regional Vice Chair

Jeanne Gray (Halton) and David Green (Peel) were elected to Policy Development Work Team (I appear to have failed to record who the alternate is)

Kathi Smith (Waterloo) and Alex Johnstone (Hamilton-Wentworth) were elected to Program Work Team, with Marty Fairbairn (Upper Grand) elected as alternate