

WATERLOO REGION DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

NOTICE OF MEETING

The regular monthly **Board Meeting** of the Waterloo Region District School Board will be held in the Boardroom, Building 2, 1st Floor, 51 Ardelt Avenue, Kitchener, Ontario, on **Wednesday, April 23, 2025, at 7:00 p.m.**

AGENDA

Call to Order

Territorial Acknowledgement and O Canada

Approval of Agenda

Announcements/Celebrating Board Activities

01 Tim Walker Memorial Awards for Environmental Stewardship

Trustee J. Meissner

Communications Good News Update

H. Hughes

Delegations

Consent Agenda**

Receipt/Approval of Minutes:

Approve Minutes - Parent Involvement Committee Meeting of February 25, 2024

Approve Minutes - Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting of March 5, 2025

Receive Minutes - Board Meeting of March 24, 2025

Approve Minutes - Committee of the Whole Meeting of April 16, 2025

Receipt/Approval of Monthly Reports:

33 Staffing Information – Retirements and Resignations

B. Lemon

36 Staffing Information – Appointments

B. Lemon

Declarations of Pecuniary Interest

Staff Follow Up

Reports

Board Improvement and Equity Plan Update - Literacy

A. Gaymes San-Vicente / B. Chatha

Board Reports

Board Communications

38 Bluewater District School Board to Ministry of Education

40 Waterloo Region District School Board to the Ministry of Education

Other Business

**All matters listed under the Consent Agenda are considered not to require debate by the Board of Trustees and should be approved in one motion in accordance with the recommendation contained in each report.

Question Period (10 minutes)

Future Agenda Items (Notices of motion to be referred to Agenda Development Committee)

Adjournment



Board Report

April 23, 2025

Subject: Recipients of the 2024-25 Tim Walker Memorial Award for Environmental Stewardship

Recommendation

This report is provided for information.

Status

At a meeting on March 21, 2025, the selection committee reviewed the applications submitted by twelve schools for the 2024-25 Tim Walker Memorial Award for Environmental Stewardship.

The Selection Committee was composed of Stephanie and Jim Walker (parents of the late Tim Walker), Trustee Joe Meissner and Student Trustee Feiyang Luo.

2024-25 Applicants	
Elementary Schools	Project Title
Blue Heron Public School	How Does Your Garden Grow?
Brigadoon Public School	Garden Beds for Peace Garden
Cedar Creek Public School	Cedar Creek Micro Forest Meeting Area
Grand View Public School (Cambridge)	Greening Grand View PS
Grandview Public School (New Hamburg)	Outdoor Classroom Project
Howard Robertson Public School	Hydroponic Growing Garden
Lackner Woods Public School	Beautify the Front Area of Lackner Woods
Margaret Avenue Public School	Self-Watering Garden Beds (Wicking Beds)
Northlake Woods Public School	Naturalized landscaping of school front
Sir Adam Beck Public School	Tree planting
Trillium Public School	Herbal Garden Expansion
Woodland Park Public School	Woodland Bloomers Community Garden
Secondary Schools	Project Title
Grand River Collegiate Institute	GRCI Garden Walls of Growth



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Jacob Hespeler Secondary School	Rear Rejuvenation and Restoration Project
Kitchener-Waterloo Collegiate	Honouring Memories, Planting Dreams
Southwood Secondary School	Microforest Support
Waterloo-Oxford District Secondary School	Compost Bin

The following criteria were taken into consideration:

1. Staff and student involvement (current and future) and environmental stewardship.
2. Impact on student learning/fostering learning and engaging students.
3. Environmental benefits: shading, greening, waste reduction, recycling, organized action/school environmental club, etc.

The following recipients were selected:

Tim Walker Memorial Award for Environmental Stewardship 2024-25 Recipients	
Elementary Schools	Project Title
Howard Robertson Public School	Hydroponic Growing Garden
Margaret Avenue Public School	Self-Watering Garden Beds (Wicking Beds)
Secondary School	Project Title
Grand River Collegiate Institute	GRCI Garden Walls of Growth
Kitchener-Waterloo Collegiate	Honouring Memories, Planting Dreams

Background

In May 2006, the Board passed a motion to administer the Tim Walker Memorial Award for Environmental Stewardship annually to honour the life of secondary school teacher Tim Walker and his contribution to education and environmental initiatives. The 2024-25 school year is the 18th year of the Tim Walker Award for Environmental Stewardship.

Financial implications

The annual award is \$2,000 and is funded by the Board of Trustees’ budget. The award is equally distributed amongst four schools, with \$500 awarded to each recipient.

Communications

The announcement of the Tim Walker Memorial Award recipients will be shared with all schools, staff, students and the public via a Board news release.



Board Report

April 23, 2025

Prepared by: Scott Miller, Director of Education,
Heather McKinna, Administrative Assistant to Chairperson and Trustees of the Board,
in consultation with Leadership Council.

2024-25 TIM WALKER MEMORIAL AWARD FOR ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

PROJECT SYNOPSIS

AWARD RECIPIENTS

Howard Robertson Public School – Hydroponic Growing Garden

Students and teachers will work together to grow a variety of crops (lettuce, tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, strawberries and celery) in a newly purchased hydroponic garden. When the fresh produce is ready for harvest, parent volunteers will be involved to assist with the harvesting, preparation and serving of the fresh produce to students through the Nutrition for Learning snack program.

Teachers and students grow together and work as a team to provide a learning environment to plant and maintain a hydroponic garden, which will grow produce to put back into the Nutrition for Learning snack program for students to enjoy.

The project will benefit students and teachers, creating a bond in an environmental learning setting, working together to achieve a common goal. Students will learn the steps and see the process of planting and maintaining a garden. They will see the produce being harvested by volunteers from the community. This could lead to a potential larger garden within the community if it is successful.

Margaret Avenue Public School – Self-Watering Garden Beds (Wicking Beds)

In collaboration with our school's community of parents and local experts, we concluded that we need to relocate the school's garden and incorporate some container gardening into the space due to the heavy root systems of nearby trees. In researching ways to grow gardens using as little water as possible, we came across the idea of building "wicking gardens" that use a reservoir of water beneath the layers of our soil. The water rises through the medium using capillary action. The other benefit to this method is that the beds will need to be watered less often. This will address the past challenges of providing enough water in the summer. We want to design and build wicking beds using IBC tubs.

The gardening is closely related to our grade 7 and 8 science curriculum. Grade 7 classes are involved with garden maintenance as they learn about how different environmental factors can impact the success of different crops. They carry out experiments with seedlings inside the classroom and then transplant them outdoors in the spring. The students monitor and care for the plants throughout the spring and summer. Grade 8s learn about sustainability issues relating to water and how they can optimize watering systems in agriculture. Both grades



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learn about the importance of mitigating the negative impacts of fertilizing and chemical pest control.

Our ultimate goal is for students to gain knowledge and skills for maintaining food gardens at home. With many of our population living in homes with small yards or apartments with balconies, the idea of a large garden isn't feasible for all. Introducing container gardening, which can be done on small or large scales, would address some of the barriers that our students face. Additionally, we have a population of newcomers and gardening has been a great way for students to engage in hands-on learning!

Grand River Collegiate Institute – GRCI Garden Walls of Growth

Application written and created by the GRCI Green Industries Students.

GRCI green industry students are going to be making a living wall that will help with student's mental health, air quality, and overall happiness. It will encourage student's to get out in nature and appreciate the earth around us. We will achieve this by budgeting and buying the materials we need, building it as a class, using communication, teamwork, and fun and then putting it up in an area of our school for staff, students, and guests to appreciate and love. If students don't learn to understand nature, they won't fight to protect it.

The reason why we chose a living plant wall is because of the amount of benefits included by implementing these plant walls into our schools. Living Plant Walls will raise awareness about plants and how they significantly impact our environment by bettering our air quality naturally. Additionally, plant walls are an inventive way to make our walls at GRCI more decorative. Not only do they make our walls at GRCI aesthetically pleasing, but they also have groundbreaking benefits to mental health. These plant walls will reduce stress, anxiety and depression, ultimately encouraging a more positive mood. Therefore, these living walls encourage a variety of benefits to not only people but our environment, too.

Creating a living wall for GRCI will improve the school environment and build hands-on learning skills to empower students. The benefits of green spaces within educational facilities include:

- improve the mood of students, create a more motivating environment and reduce stress.
- improve air quality within buildings that can hold large amounts of people
- improve the aesthetics of a space, making it much nicer and feel much brighter
- increase the need for windows, which encourages the use of more natural light, reduces energy usage (ex. reduces the amount of fluorescent light usage in buildings)
- encourage education about green spaces by increasing awareness
- provide a hands-on learning opportunity for students and the chance to improve their school environment

Kitchener-Waterloo Collegiate – Honouring Memories, Planting Dreams

Created by the First Nations Children and Caring Society, "Honouring Memories, Planting Dreams" is celebrated in May and June. It invites people to plant a garden to show their commitment to



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reconciliation, as both gardens and reconciliation require ongoing care and attention, as well as commitment, in order to prosper. Students will be working cross-curricularly together to create and maintain this garden.

The school is showing its commitment to reconciliation by creating this garden in memory of children lost to the residential school system, to honour residential school survivors and their families, and to support the legacy of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Students in Civics will be leading the learning portion about reconciliation, while students in Green Industries will lead the hands-on portion of creating the garden.

In combining both Green Industries and Civics curriculum, students will learn about native plants, sustainable gardening practices and incorporate two-eyed seeing. They will also learn about reconciliation and the ongoing civically-engaged movements to make changes.

This project will outwardly show KCI's commitment to reconciliation and land stewardship. The students will gain hands-on experience tending to land and participating in a Canada-wide reconciliation project. The school community will benefit from a new green space as it would revitalize the current outdoor learning environment.



Report to Board of Trustees

April 23, 2025

**Subject: Staffing Information –
Retirements and Resignations**

Recommendation

This report is provided for information of the Board.

Status

The employees listed in Appendix A of this report have received acknowledgement of their retirement or resignation.

Background

The board's practice is to receive information regarding staff retirements and resignations at regular monthly board meetings.

Financial implications

Expenses are within the existing approved budget.

Communications

Employees listed in this report have communicated through Human Resource Services.

Prepared by: Bill Lemon, Interim Associate Director, in consultation with Leadership Council.

Staffing Statistics – Retirements
Current at April 23, 2025

Retirements: Elementary Teaching Staff				
First	Last	Position/Location	Retirement Date	Years of Service
Bonnie	Berg	Teacher, Coronation PS	August 31, 2025	26
Tamiko	Boug	Teacher, Avenue Road PS	June 27, 2025	30
Jennifer	Burke	SERT, Oak Creek PS	June 30, 2025	29
David	Cottenie	Teacher, Moffat Creek PS	June 30, 2025	27
Pino	Esposito	Teacher, Wilson Avenue PS	June 27, 2025	17
Lisa	Gillians	Teacher, Keatsway PS	June 30, 2025	35
Carole	Hayes	Teacher, Wilson Avenue PS	June 30, 2025	36
Robert	Jensen	Teacher, On Leave	April 30, 2025	17
Bruce	Jones	Teacher, Grand View PS (C)	June 30, 2025	34
Krista	Mallon	Occasional Teacher	June 30, 2025	34
Ellen	Matthews	Teacher, Courtland Avenue PS	June 30, 2025	28
Leanne	Mccutcheon	Teacher, Bridgeport PS	June 30, 2025	36
Deborah	Mossey	Teacher, Highland PS	June 27, 2025	20
Marjorie	Siertsema	Teacher, Elgin Street PS	June 30, 2025	35
Anna	Soares	Teacher, JF Carmichael PS	June 30, 2025	32
Jeff	Witmer	Teacher, Laurentian PS	June 30, 2025	26

Retirements: Secondary Teaching Staff				
First	Last	Position/Location	Retirement Date	Years of Service
Diane	Babensee	Teacher, Bluevale CI	June 30, 2025	31
Rosemary	Berndt	Teacher, Waterloo CI	June 30, 2025	33
Kathy	Brook	Teacher, Huron Heights SS	June 30, 2025	31
Anne-Marie	Fingland	Teacher, Grand River CI	June 30, 2025	43
Leena	Girsa	Teacher, Preston HS	June 30, 2025	30
Warren	Hill	Math Department Head, Grand River CI	June 27, 2025	32
Kristine	Kominar	Visual Arts Department Head, Bluevale CI	June 30, 2025	30
Laurie	Lehmann	Visual Arts Department Head, Kitchener CI	June 30, 2025	31
Kirsten	Rowatt	Teacher, Grand River CI	June 30, 2025	35

Retirements: Administrative & Support Staff				
First	Last	Position/Location	Retirement Date	Years of Service
Stephen	Coe	Vice Principal, Lackner Woods PS	August 31, 2025	30
Colleen	Dietrich Sisson	President, Educational Assistants Association	July 27, 2025	25
Keith	Halley	Vice Principal, Westheights PS	July 31, 2025	32
Karen	Harris	Office Supervisor, Galt CI	March 28, 2025	26
John	Martz	Head Custodian, WT Townshend PS	June 30, 2025	35
Patricia	Offinga	Educational Assistant, Centennial PS (C)	June 30, 2025	17
Eric	Richards	Early Childhood Educator, Centennial PS (C)	June 27, 2025	11
Steven	Sanderson	Head Custodian, Pioneer Park PS	June 30, 2025	39
Deborah	Tyrrell	Principal, Bluevale CI	June 30, 2025	38

Staffing Statistics – Resignations
Current at April 23, 2025

Permanent Staff Resignations			
First	Last	Position/Location	Resignation Date
Marie-Helene	Brais	Elementary Teacher, WT Townshend PS	April 6, 2025
Kandice	Johnson	Educational Assistant, Rosemount PS	June 27, 2025
Stephanie	Laflamme	Early Childhood Educator, King Edward PS	April 14, 2025
Nickole	LeVear	Elementary Teacher, Hespeler PS	March 28, 2025
Jennifer	Montgomery	Educational Assistant, Smithson PS	April 30, 2025
Olasunkanmi	Ogunnubi	Educational Assistant, Waterloo CI	April 11, 2025
Jennifer	Reid	Custodian, Doon PS	April 4, 2025
Travis	Subedar	Custodian, Grandview PS (NH)	April 4, 2025



Report to Board of Trustees

April 23, 2025

Subject: Staffing Information – Appointments

Recommendation

This report is provided for information of the Board.

Status

The staff appointments as noted on Appendix A of this report are effective the dates indicated.

Background

The board's practice has been to have appointments presented for information at regular monthly board meetings.

Financial implications

Expenses are within the existing approved budget.

Communications

Employees listed in this report have been advised of the appointments.

Prepared by: Bill Lemon, Interim Associate Director, in consultation with Leadership Council.

Staffing Information – New Appointments
Current at April 23, 2025

New Appointments: Elementary Teaching Staff			
First	Last	Location	Effective Date
Denisha	Naidoo	Hespeler PS	April 22, 2025

New Appointments: Administrative and Support Staff			
First	Last	Position / Location	Effective Date
Leuchiamle	Newme	Secretary, WT Townshend PS	March 20, 2025
Sirisha	Puli	Secretary, Laurel Heights SS	March 24, 2025
Priya	Singh	Secretary, Winston Churchill PS	March 31, 2025

New Hires - due to retirements, resignations or leaves and are to replace full or part time vacancies.

Human Resources & Equity Services



Bluewater District School Board

351 1st Avenue North
Chesley ON N0G 1L0
Telephone: (519) 363-2014
Fax: (519) 370-2909
www.bwdsb.on.ca

Sent by email: paul.calandra@pc.ola.org

March 25, 2025

The Honourable Paul Calandra
Minister of Education

Dear Minister Calandra:

Congratulations on your recent appointment as Minister of Education. We look forward to our important work together in the future to support the success and well-being of the students we serve.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, we are reaching out to bring to your attention the following motion, which passed unanimously at the Regular Meeting of the Board on Tuesday, March 18, 2025:

Moved by Jan Johnstone; Seconded by Katie Lutz

Whereas Bluewater District School Board (BWDSB) is a Canadian entity that prioritizes supporting domestic industries and economic stability; Whereas recent trade policies have created challenges that may negatively impact fair and reciprocal trade between Canada and the United States;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT BWDSB evaluate and implement measures to prioritize the procurement of Canadian products wherever feasible, and to immediately transition away from purchasing from American Suppliers as defined by Supply Ontario, where viable;

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Board send a letter to the Minister of Education requesting that similar procurement measures be considered and implemented province wide.

Like many other communities across Ontario and Canada, there has been a recent groundswell of support in our area for the strengthening of our local, provincial, and Canadian economies. Given the volatile trade situation that is unfolding between Canada and the United States, we are especially concerned about the impacts that this may have on our families, and by extension, our students.

While our board already does a lot to buy domestically, it is especially important now for us to stand with our many education partners and fellow Canadians, in prioritizing local businesses and those within Ontario and Canada, wherever possible. As a show of solidarity, we are strongly encouraging your government to formalize measures that can be implemented across the province ensuring a 'Canada first' approach to procurement.

Sincerely,

Jane Thomson
Chair

Jan Johnstone
Vice-Chair

cc: Paul Vickers, MPP, Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound
The Honourable Lisa Thompson, MPP, Huron-Bruce
Ontario Public School Boards' Association
Chairs of Ontario English Public School Boards

/jp

**Waterloo Region District School Board**

51 Ardelt Avenue
Kitchener, ON N2C 2R5
T: 519-570-0003
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wrdsb.ca

April 17, 2025

The Honourable Paul Calandra, Minister of Education
Ministry of Education
315 Front Street West, 14th Floor
Toronto, ON, M7A 0B8

Dear Minister Calandra,

On behalf of Waterloo Region District School Board (WRDSB), I am writing to voice concerns about the Ontario Regulation 463/97: Electronic Meetings and Meeting Attendance. At its meeting on March 24, 2025, the Board of Trustees for the WRDSB approved a motion to write a letter supporting the concerns about this regulatory provision raised by Ontario Public School Boards' Association, Council of Ontario Directors of Education, and other Ontario school boards.

The WRDSB asks for amendments to Ontario Regulation 463/97: Electronic Meetings and Meeting Attendance so as to allow boards to approve an absence of a trustee from a Committee of the Whole meeting in the same way that the regulation gives them the right to do so for a regular board meeting.

Thank you for your consideration and supporting education in Waterloo Region and the province.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Maedith Radlein".

Maedith Radlein
Chairperson of the Board of Trustees
Waterloo Region District School Board

cc: WRDSB Trustees
Local Member of Provincial Parliament
Council of Ontario Directors of Education
Ontario Public School Boards' Association
Ontario public school boards