



November 24, 2025

Waterloo Region District School Board

Minutes

The Waterloo Region District School Board held a Board Meeting this evening at 7:00 p.m. in the Education Centre Boardroom, with the following members in attendance: M. Radlein (Chair of the Board), B. Cody, S. Estoesta, C. Johnson, J. Meissner, S. Piatkowski, M. Ramsay, M. Waseem, C. Watson and J. Weston.

Trustee K. Woodcock was unable to attend this evening's meeting.

Student Trustees K. Kaur and K. Trivedi were in attendance.

The following senior administration members were in attendance: S. Miller (Director of Education and Secretary), D. Ahluwalia, J. Albrecht, B. Chatha, V. Collis, J. Fedosoff, A. Gaymes-San Vicente, H. Hughes, N. Landry, D. Lane, B. Lemon, M. Newlands and K. Pividor.

Other staff in attendance: E. Bell, I. Bijl, W. Farkas, M. Mayer, S. Reidel and K. Templeton.

Guests: Keith Prudham, General Manager, and Leslie Maxwell, Supervisor of School Travel Planning, of Student Transportation Services of Waterloo Region (STSWR).

Call to Order

Chair M. Radlein called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Approval of Agenda

1. Moved by J. Weston, seconded by C. Johnson:

That the agenda of the November 24, 2025, Board Meeting be approved.

-Carried-

Announcements/Celebrating Board Activities

Chair M. Radlein shared regrets from Trustee K. Woodcock.

Trustees M. Radlein, M. Waseem and J. Weston attended the We All Belong Here event at Forest Heights Collegiate Institute.

Trustee J. Weston attended the WRDSB Student Wellness Conference for secondary students.

Trustees M. Radlein and J. Weston attended the Adventure for Change Impact Day Night Market.

Trustee S. Piatkowski attended a WRAPSC meeting for a presentation on "Smart phones, social media and mental health".

Trustees M. Radlein and S. Piatkowski visited Sandowne Public School.

Trustee C. Johnson visited Chalmers Street Public School.

Trustees C. Johnson and M. Radlein attended the Food 4 Kids grand opening of their new location.

Trustee C. Johnson was invited to the Langs Farm Village Association launch of their new Youth Wellness Hub.

Trustee C. Johnson laid a wreath on behalf of the WRDSB at the Preston Cenotaph.

Trustees C. Johnson and M. Radlein attended a panel forum at Wilfred Laurier University focussing on the importance of music in schools.

Chair M. Radlein visited Courtland Public School, Franklin Public School and Bluevale Collegiate Institute.

Chair M. Radlein attended the Remembrance Day event at the WRDSB Education Centre where Student Trustee K. Trividi provided a presentation.

Trustee C. Watson visited Southwood Secondary School and Preston High School.

Declarations of Pecuniary Interest

There were no declarations of pecuniary interest.

Communications Good News Update

Senior Manager H. Hughes introduced the Communications Good News Update video sharing highlights from the month and items of traditional media and social media interest.

Delegations

There were no delegations scheduled.

Consent Agenda

2. Moved by S. Estoesta, seconded by C. Johnson:

That the consent agenda of the Board Meeting of November 24, 2025, and the actions contained therein, be approved with the exception of Folio 9.

-Carried-

Special Education Advisory Committee Minutes - October 8, 2025

Trustee S. Estoesta noted some minor errors in the Trustee Report of the Special Education Advisory Committee minutes. She asked that corrections include:

- changing all references to “sub committees” to “standing committees”
- changing Bill 83 to “Changes to the Education Act”
- changing “and is the Chair of this committee” to “As the Chair of The Policy and Governance Standing committee”

3. Moved by M. Waseem, seconded by J. Meissner:

That Folio 9, from the consent agenda of the November 24, 2025, Board Meeting, and the actions contained therein, be approved, as amended.

-Carried-

Motions From In Camera Meeting

The following motions were approved in the In Camera session held earlier this evening.

Approval of Agenda

A. Moved by M. Waseem, seconded by J. Meissner:

That the agenda of the November 24, 2025, In Camera Board Meeting be approved and be deemed to meet the legislative requirements for discussion in camera.

-Carried-

Consent Agenda

B. Moved by J. Weston, seconded by M. Waseem:

That the consent agenda of the In Camera Board Meeting of November 24, 2025, and the actions contained therein, be approved.

-Carried-

Rise & Report

C. Moved by B. Cody, seconded by J. Meissner:

That the In Camera Board Committee Meeting of November 24, 2025, rise and report in public.

-Carried-

This concludes the reporting of In Camera motions.

Recommendations from Standing Committees

Chair M. Radlein provided the following statement regarding Standing Committees:

The WRDSB is committed to open, transparent communication. In response to questions on why we have a new governance model, the following statement gives further clarification. The move to Standing Committees was made necessary by legislated changes in Attendance requirements for Committee of the Whole meetings.

The new Standing Committee model aligns with the revised Ontario Regulation 463/97, Electronic Meetings and Meeting Attendance which requires that all trustees be physically present in the meeting room for COW meetings unless the Chair approves the trustee to participate by electronic means.

Missing one Committee of the Whole meeting would result in a trustee vacating their seat. In the updated legislation the board has no authority to approve an absence by a trustee from a regular COW meeting. The board only has the authority to authorize an absence from a regular board meeting. While trustees strive to attend every scheduled meeting, The Standing Committee model ensures that trustees do not have to vacate their seats if they miss a meeting for reasons aligning with the legislation.

Policy and Governance Standing Committee

Trustees discussed the Anti-racism policy and a motion to send the policy to school councils for additional consultation. Staff confirmed that the policy followed the process for feedback in alignment with all other new policies.

4. Moved by C. Watson, seconded by M. Ramsay:

That the Waterloo Region District School Board send the Anti-racism policy to school councils for broad consultation; and

That the feedback be considered by the Policy and Governance Standing Committee.

-Defeated-

In Favour:

B. Cody
M. Ramsay
C. Watson

Opposed:

S. Estoesta
C. Johnson
J. Meissner
S. Piatkowski
M. Radlein
M. Waseem
J. Weston
*Kaur
*Trivedi

* Student Trustees votes are recorded for the purpose of public record and for accountability to the student body; however, it is recognized that “a student trustee is not a member of the Board” (Education Act, Section 55 (2))

Trustees continued discussion on the Anti-racism policy and staff confirmed it aligns with Ministry of Education direction.

5. Moved by S. Estoesta, seconded by J. Meissner:

That the Waterloo Region District School Board approve the recommendations from the Policy and Governance Standing Committee meeting of November 10, 2025.

-Carried-

Opposed:

B. Cody
M Ramsay
C. Watson

Business Services Standing Committee

Trustees discussed the Strategic Spending Plan. A motion to defer the Strategic Spending Plan, with the exception of time sensitive items, until feedback is received from the Strategic Plan consultation process was moved but later withdrawn. Staff noted the short timelines to access the additional funds and indicated that each item is in alignment with the current strategic plan and ministry priorities.

6. Moved by S. Piatkowski, seconded by J. Weston:

That the Waterloo Region District School Board approve the recommendations from the Business Services Standing Committee meeting of November 19, 2025.

-Carried-

Staff Follow Up

There was no staff follow up.

Reports

Student Transportation Services of Waterloo Region Annual Update

This report was provided for information.

The General Manager of Student Transportation Services of Waterloo Region (STSWR), Keith Prudham, presented the 2024-2025 Annual Report. Leslie Maxwell, Supervisor of School Travel Planning at STSWR, shared highlights and work completed during the 2024-25 school year to support active school travel.

When asked about bus driver absences, it was noted that families can sign up for late or cancelled bus notifications through stswr.ca. Trustees asked questions regarding training for bus drivers, the School Streets pilot and other expenditures. Trustees received additional information on the bikewalkroll.org data, new communication channels and the role of School Travel Planner.

Board Improvement & Equity Plan: Structured Literacy

This report was provided for information.

Staff presented the Board's comprehensive plan to strengthen literacy instruction from Kindergarten through Grade 12. The plan is grounded in evidence-based practices and includes universal screening, differentiated classroom instruction, and targeted

interventions within a Multi-Tiered System of Support. Key initiatives such as “Walk to Read” and specialized programs aim to close skill gaps and accelerate student learning. Updates on French language literacy and family engagement strategies were also shared.

Trustees asked questions regarding lower literacy level in grade one and engaging students in tier 2 and 3 activities/

7. Moved by S. Estoesta, seconded by J. Meissner:

That the Board Meeting of November 24, 2025, be extended an additional thirty minutes to 10:00 p.m.

-Carried-

Trustees continued to ask questions regarding supporting students who join us after junior kindergarten, early literacy work in the community and engaging secondary students.

Board Reports

2025/2026 Board Committee Membership

Based on trustee preferences, the Chair, Vice-Chair and Past Chair developed recommendations for committee membership for the one-year term ending on November 14, 2026.

8. Moved by J. Weston, seconded by J. Meissner:

That the Waterloo Region District School Board approve the 2025/2026 Board Committee Membership selections as outlined in Appendix A titled “2025/2026 - Board Committee Membership” dated November 24, 2025.

-Carried-

Ontario Public School Boards’ Association (OPSBA) Update

Trustee S. Piatkowski provided an update from the recent OPSBA Board Meeting. Due to the recent supervision of a number of school boards, OPSBA did not receive payment from those boards for membership, resulting in budgetary constraints including staff reductions. The largest cost to OPSBA is board meetings which include representation from all member school boards. OPSBA is recommending downsizing to 18-19 representatives. As a result, OPSBA’s bylaws require changes to be passed at a general meeting called for December 18, 2025. The WRDSB will need to appoint

someone to vote on their behalf at the upcoming general meeting. It was noted that OPSBA has no more information than school boards regarding the future of trustee positions.

Trustee C. Johnson nominated Trustee S. Piatkowski to represent the WRDSB at the OPSBA general meeting. Trustee S. Piatkowski accepted the nomination and was acclaimed to represent the WRDSB.

Trustee S. Piatkowski nominated Trustee C. Johnson to be alternate representative for the WRDSB at the OPSBA general meeting. Trustee C. Johnson accepted the nomination and was acclaimed as alternate representative of the WRDSB.

Board Communications

The Waterloo Region District School Board received the following communications:

- Waterloo Region District School Board to the Premier, Minister of Education & Minister of Transportation - Automated Speed Enforcement
- Simcoe County District School Board to Minister of Children, Community & Social Services
- Simcoe County District School Board to Peterborough Child & Family Centres

Other Business

There was no other business.

Question Period

9. Moved by C. Watson, seconded by J. Meissner:

That the Board Meeting of November 24, 2025, be extended an additional thirty minutes to 10:30 p.m.

-Carried-

Opposed: J. Weston

Trustee S. Piatkowski asked if the trends of increased student absenteeism described in the CBC story are showing up in our schools and, if so, what our strategy is to address it. Associate Director A. Gaymes-San Vicente shared that we would not be out of line with the trends and that there is a defined procedure for steps to take regarding absences and have put a number of supports in place for students.

Future Agenda Items

Trustee C. Watson served the following Notice of Motion with support from Trustee B. Cody.

Motion: Reassess (and Reform) of the WRDSB Book Selection and Review Process:

Whereas Boards are solely responsible for the selection and evaluation of supplementary resources and are to ensure age appropriateness and educational relevance – a process established by the WRDSB which did not include proper or broad parental consultation regarding the decisions by which resources are selected, approved, or maintained; and

Whereas parents have repeatedly expressed objections to books that promote ideological or identity-based political agendas, as well as to materials containing sexual content that is not age-appropriate, and have therefore not given consent for such content to be made accessible to their children; and

Whereas a majority of trustees opposed the request to implement age-appropriate filters for online library platforms.

Therefore, let it be resolved that:

1. The WRDSB immediately undertake a full, transparent, and independent review of how the Selection of Educational Resources Procedure takes place, including the well-defined criteria, advisory sources, and decision-making process used to select and retain library (including online library commons) and classroom materials.

2. This review shall include formal, documented, and broad parental consultation, ensuring that the values, expectations, and concerns of parents of diverse views and beliefs are fully represented.

3. This review shall include a comprehensive audit of existing library (including online library commons) and classroom resources to:

- (i) identify sexually explicit content or promotion of identitarian political frameworks such as critical race theory and gender ideology and
- (ii) assess the educational value, developmental appropriateness, and weigh the benefits versus risks of exposing students to these materials.

4. The Board publicly disclose a summary of findings and proposed reforms arising from this review, including timelines, responsible departments, and clear accountability measures

And that the information collected by staff be presented to trustees in a board report by the end of March 2026.

Notices of Motion will be scheduled for a future meeting.

Adjournment

10. Moved by J. Weston, seconded by J. Meissner:

That the Board Meeting of November 24, 2025, be adjourned.

-Carried-

The meeting adjourned at 10:02 p.m.