

TRUSTEE CONFERENCE REPORT

Please attach to your Professional Development/Conference Expense Reimbursement Form. Thank you.

Name: Karen Meissner

Date Submitted: January 28, 2019

Name of Conference: Public Education Symposium

Sponsoring Organization: Ontario Public School Board Association.
(OPSBA)

Theme (If any): “Stronger Together”

Conference Dates: January 24-26, 2019

Location: Sheraton Centre, Toronto

Workshops/Seminars/Presentations/Keynote Speeches Attended:

Jan 24 - 7:00pm

Opening Ceremonies

The symposium opened with entertainment from Runnymede Collegiate Institute Steel Pan Band.

Chief Elaine Johnston lead the Traditional Territorial Acknowledgement.

We heard from the Minister of Education who discussed balancing the government's fiscal responsibility and delivery of education programming.

Jan 25 - 8:45am

Smudging

It was an honour to participate in my first smudging alongside 50-60 other individuals. A moment to reflect on yesterday and prepare for my day of learning.

Jan 25 - 9:00am

Keynote

Michael “Pinball” Clemons delivered the weekend’s keynote speech. He was dynamic and relatable as both a parent and a leader in the community. He urged us to recognize the value in public education and how directly it can impact the lives of our students.

Jan 25 - 10:30am

Supporting Student Leaders

Trustees and other attendees were lead through a series of presentations about the role and impact of Student Trustees, why their voice and opinions are important in policy and how we can support their initiatives. Ryan Brown and Sean McCloskey shared the OSTA-AECO framework and how the organization supports Student Trustees. Isaac Glassman delivered an impressive and dynamic presentation which laid out the steps how we, as “adult” Trustees, can use this role to support and encourage our student leaders and student Trustees. Bella Frick shared her experiences as an Indigenous Student Trustee and how diverse student voice can help encourage a variety of opinion. Finally, Sarah Chun spoke passionately about her “Free the Flow” initiative. Her current school board (TVDSB) now offers free sanitary products to all female students; she was engaging and bright! Finally, the students engaged us in discussion about how we could better support Student Trustees, what their opportunities might be, and how way could better understand their role. I had some great take-aways about how Student Trustees may need encouragement and help with organization (they are students after all) and ways to include younger students’ voices. It was valuable to have Student Trustees from other boards at my table.

Jan 25 - 1:30pm

Collective Agreements are Expiring: What’s Next?

Penny Mustin and Janet Edwards lead an interactive presentation about potential changes to Regulation 274 and some basic (and advanced) information about Collective bargaining. We were asked to take part in

a consultation on class sizes and the information will be used to create OPSBA's official response to the government's consultation. We were encouraged to attend OPSBA's Education Labour Relations and Human Resources Symposium in April for a more detailed look at Collective Bargaining.

Jan 25 - 3:00pm

How OPSBA Supports Trustees

Jennifer McIntyre, May Moore and Judith Nyman shared information on the structure of OPSBA, how Trustees can get involved with the various committees they have available and the support they provide. OPSBA is seen as a provincial voice and partner in the province. OPSBA's Policy, Finance, and Communications strategies were all outlined.

Jan 25 - 7:00pm

Reception & Awards

This was a casual opportunity to sit down with Trustees within the WRDSB, other boards and staff. Congratulations to John Hendry, former WRDSB Trustee who received the President's Award in recognition of his more than 30 years of services as a public school trustee. The evening concluded with more student entertainment.

Jan 26 - 8:30am

Central West Regional Meeting

Several elections to positions on OPSBA committees took place. We also discussed opportunities that our boards have had to reach out to our local MPPs. We received a summary of the consultation that took place the previous afternoon. A opportunity to share updates within the WRDSB with other boards was cut short due to time shortage.

Jan 26 - 9:45am

Panel Discussion - "Hot Topics in Education"

Thank you to the panel for delivering pertinent and organized information to the group. They shared some strategies on French teacher recruitment and how they deliver french programming when

shortages take place (both English and French boards are having difficulty with this). They also discussed the importance of teamwork amongst board members and our role within the overall organization. Most of the comments were anecdotal in nature and I did appreciate the honesty of everyone. Finally the topic of technology in the classroom was addressed by discussing how to better leverage the fact that it exists and how we can use it to enhance the learning opportunities for our students. There was time for several questions.