

TRUSTEE CONFERENCE REPORT

Name: Karen Meissner

Date Submitted: Feb 4 2022

Name of Conference: Public Education Symposium 2022

Sponsoring Organization: OPSBA

Theme (if any): Public Education

Conference Dates: January 28, 2022

Location: Virtual

Workshops/Seminars/Presentations/Keynote Speeches Attended:

The virtual conference began with several keynote speakers and concurrent workshops throughout the day.

Poet Laureate - Randell Adjei

Randell commented on the importance of public education and specifically the arts in ensuring his commitment to lifelong learning. He shared personal stories about the importance of teachers in his life. His presentation reminded attendees to focus on the “why” of public education.

Moving Forward with Anti-Racism in Every Classroom - A workshop with Matthew R. Morris

Matthew led the group through a presentation which challenged out thinking about representation in the teaching profession and what an anti-racist classroom and school can look like. Morris noted that it must go beyond representation as all teachers need to create safe and healthy classrooms; this work is not dependent on representation alone.

Nicholas A. Christakis, MD, PhD, MPH

Was wonderful to hear from an expert in public health. Dr. Christakis provided a historical scan of pandemics and the patterns they follow. He noted we are at the tail end of the initial phase of the pandemic, with a rebuilding phase on the horizon. After about two years, we will find ourselves in a “boom” (think the roaring twenties). Another variant of concern could impact this trajectory. He recommended the swiss cheese respiratory pandemic defense model as how we mitigate the impacts of covid19 on the healthcare system and on systems such as education and community wellbeing.

Ontario School Boards 2022 and Beyond

This was a great discussion about the role of school board trustees. It was noted by one speaker that only 6% of School board trustees have marginalized identities. Municipal elections favour incumbents and present challenges to those with marginalized identities. One solution was term limits.