

TRUSTEE CONFERENCE REPORT

Name: Mike Ramsay

Date Submitted: January 29, 2024

Name of Conference: OPSBA SYMPOSIUM

Sponsoring Organization: Ontario Public School Boards Association

Theme (if any): Leadership Excellence: Strengthening Public Education Together

Conference Dates: January 24, 2024 to January 26, 2024

**Location: Sheraton Centre Hotel, 123 Queen Street, 123 Queen Street West,
Toronto ON**

Workshops/Seminars/Presentations/Keynote Speeches Attended:

I am pleased that I was able to attend this year's Public Education Symposium (PES). I attended a number of Workshops/Presentations and a Keynote Speech.

I was substantively impressed with the variety and quality of the Workshops that were on offer. I attended the following Workshops:

- 1. Understanding Hate in Canadian Classrooms that was presented by the Director of Education (Melissa Mikel) of Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Centre (FSWC);**
- 2. The EQ Leader in Industry Keynote by an Emotional Intelligence Coach (Janelle Lindo);**
- 3. Bill 98, Better Schools and Students Outcomes Act 2023: "What it means for Trustees" that was presented by Dianne E. Jozefacki, Partner Hicks Morley LLP;**
- 4. Rising Antisemitism: "Old Ideas, New Problems" presented by Melissa Mikel and Zach Sadowski of FSWC;**
- 5. Black Trustees' Caucus Meeting.**

I was impressed with the depth of knowledge of the Speakers from the FSWC who presented and shared historical evidence of the challenges faced by Jews in years past. The presenters also connected the dots on what gave rise to those challenges and how history in many respects is repeating itself as viewed through the lens of the atrocities of October 7, 2023. I can't speak on behalf of the other participants, but as a policy maker it gave a lot of pause for reflection and made me think.

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I was also impressed with the keynote presentation from Jamelle Lindo who emphasized and shared amongst other things the importance of how we should/can “Strike that balance between viewpoints that are at odds with each other”. I would suggest that it was a timely presentation.

I found the presentation on Bill 98 from a Hicks Morley LLP Partner to be quite informative, as it provided key insights as to the possible next steps as it may relate to the proclamation of portions of the Bill that are yet to be proclaimed. This includes but is not limited to the part of the Bill that are intended to fix the many “procedural concern issues” that are of concern as it relates to the current “Code of Conduct” regime.

I found the discussion at the Black Trustees’ Caucus Meeting to be informative as many participants strived to discuss and navigate around issues impacting student learning and achievement of black students. I was impressed with the presentation from a student trustees who spoke from the perspective of students.

All in all, I want to thank the organizers for putting on a very good program that was fairly balanced.