

RAINBOW DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR BOARD MEETING

held in person and electronically via Google Meet
and livestreamed from the Ernie Checkeris Boardroom
at the Centre for Education, 408 Wembley Drive
on Tuesday, January 20, 2026 at 5:00 pm

Present: Trustees: D. Farrow (Chair), B. Clement, L. Corbiere-Addison, L. Debassige
(via Google Meet), A. Gibson, J. Hunda (arrived 5:14 pm), J. Kosmerly,
A. McCauley, Student Trustee Cyr, Student Trustee Guenette
Absent: D. Dewar
Officials: B. Bourget – Director and Secretary of the Board
A. Guilbault – Superintendent of Business
D. Koziar, L. Mantle, M. McNamara, D. Williamson – Superintendents
Staff: G. Bastien, M. Bertrand, B. Carr, N. Cecchetto, N. Charette,
C. Eberlein, T. Hayes, R. Jones, K. MacKenzie, T. Nadjiwon,
D. Peristeridis, C. Pitre, D. Squarzolo, C. Whitson
Other: Member of the public

Chair Farrow called the meeting to order.

Director Bourget completed roll call to establish who was participating in the Google Meet.

A. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion: 26-R27, A.Gibson/L.Corbiere-Addison

That the agenda for the Regular Board meeting of January 20, 2026 be approved.

Poll vote

Bob Clement: In-favour
Lisa Corbiere-Addison: In-favour
Linda Debassige: In-favour
Doreen Dewar: Absent
David Farrow: In-favour
Anita Gibson: In-favour
Judy Hunda: Absent
Judy Kosmerly: In-favour
Alex McCauley: In-favour

- Carried

B. PRELIMINARY DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST

NIL

C. PRESENTATIONS

Student Achievement (EQAO)

Superintendent Koziar introduced the system team of Melanie Bertrand (Principal of Student Success), Kate MacKenzie and Cori Pitre (Principals of Program), and David Squarzolo and Coleen Eberlein (Principals of Special Education), to share information with trustees about EQAO and OSSLT results over time.

Students in Rainbow Schools made significant gains in EQAO assessments during the past school year. Overall, Rainbow District School Board has the top result in all English Language School Boards, Public or Catholic, in Northeastern Ontario in primary reading and primary and junior writing and math.

The team walked trustees through the presentation that compared the 2024-2025 results to past years for all students and students with exceptionalities.

In primary reading and writing, Rainbow students outperformed the province and primary math has seen their highest result in the past ten years. Similarly, our junior results for reading, writing and math represent our best achievement since 2014.

Our grade 9 math results increased by 5% from 2023-2024 to 50%, representing the highest achievement in the past 4 years and 81% of Rainbow students met the standard in the grade 10 OSSLT.

The team thanked our classroom teachers, coordinators, consultants and school administrators, as our results in reading, writing and math continue to trend upwards, it confirms that the efforts across the board are having a positive impact on student achievement and well-being.

Trustees had the opportunity to ask questions and expressed sincere gratitude for the informative presentation, and congratulated students and parents on their success.

D. REPORT FROM THE CLOSED MEETING OF THE BOARD

No meeting held. No report.

E. OLD BUSINESS

1. Previous Minutes

Motion: 26-R28, J.Hunda/J.Kosmerly

That the minutes of the Regular Board Meeting held on Tuesday, December 9, 2025 be approved.

Poll vote

Bob Clement: In-favour
Lisa Corbiere-Addison: In-favour
Linda Debassige: In-favour
Doreen Dewar: Absent
David Farrow: In-favour
Anita Gibson: In-favour
Judy Hunda: In-favour
Judy Kosmerly: In-favour
Alex McCauley: In-favour

- Carried

2. Reports and Recommendations from Board Committees

Accessibility Planning Committee

Motion: 26-R29, J.Kosmerly/L.Corbiere-Addison

That the Board approve the Multi-year Accessibility Plan 2023-2027, as recommended by the Accessibility Planning Committee.

Poll vote

*Bob Clement: In-favour
Lisa Corbiere-Addison: In-favour
Linda Debassige: In-favour
Doreen Dewar: Absent
David Farrow: In-favour
Anita Gibson: In-favour
Judy Hunda: In-favour
Judy Kosmerly: In-favour
Alex McCauley: In-favour*

- Carried

F. NEW BUSINESS

1. Revised Estimates 2025-2026

Superintendent Guilbault reviewed the revised estimates document provided to trustees, highlighting the increase in enrolment and projected operating surplus for the year.

Trustees had the opportunity to ask questions.

2. OSTA/AECO – Education Action Conference

Motion: 26-R30, J.Hunda/B.Clement

That the Board approve the attendance of Student Trustee Cyr and Student Trustee Guenette at the OSTA/AECO Education Action Conference in Ottawa on February 19-22, 2026.

Poll vote

*Bob Clement: In-favour
Lisa Corbiere-Addison: In-favour
Linda Debassige: In-favour
Doreen Dewar: Absent
David Farrow: In-favour
Anita Gibson: In-favour
Judy Hunda: In-favour
Judy Kosmerly: In-favour
Alex McCauley: In-favour*

- Carried

3. Notice of Absence

Chair Farrow stated that Trustee Dewar is absent and Trustee Debassige requested to participate electronically, with her request meeting the criteria in by-law 14.

4. Director's Remarks

Chair Farrow and Trustees:

I would like to begin by thanking Superintendent Guilbault, Nancy Cecchetto (Manager of Finance) and Tiffany Hayes (Manager of Human Resources) for all of their hard work on the revised estimates and putting us in a slight surplus situation, a welcome improvement over our early predictions.

I would also like to acknowledge Trustees, for your unwavering commitment and support to student success.

The priorities that you have established in Strategic Directions have kept us laser focused on student achievement and well-being.

The positive gains in EQAO assessments are a direct result of our collective vision, the efforts of our staff, and the support of our parents/guardians.

Sustained gains over time will ensure that we continue to build competent and confident readers, writers and mathematicians.

I extend my deepest gratitude to our program team for sharing their expertise on a system-level for the benefit of our educators and students.

High-yield teaching strategies, intentional resources, and targeted interventions coupled with mentorship, assessments, and daily practice are proving to be effective.

I offer my sincerest appreciation to our administrators. As instructional leaders in our schools, they support staff to be the best they can be, each and every day. Regardless of what's happening in our schools from an operational perspective, they make time to be in classrooms, to see first-hand what students are learning, and to set high expectations.

I would like to thank our classroom staff for their engaging teaching. Our literacy and numeracy blocks are protected time where students work on sounds, words, sentences, paragraphs, decoding, comprehension, grammar, spelling, number sense, math fluency and problem solving.

When reading, writing and math are practiced daily at school and reinforced at home, students are being given every opportunity to reach their full potential.

It's all about consistency and repetition.

And finally, I would like to congratulate our students on their achievement. We are proud of the progress that we have made... together.

In closing, please indulge me for a moment as I share with you an excerpt from a recent article in the Globe and Mail. The article was not centered on our school board, but we were given a voice in the story because of our significant gains in math. And I am reading verbatim from the article.

Dan Koziar, the math lead for the Rainbow District School Board, in Northern Ontario, attributes the gains students there have made in EQAO math scores in recent years to several factors, not least of which is encouraging a growth mindset among students.

Essentially, a growth mindset is the belief that abilities can be gained through effort and perseverance, rather than being fixed traits.

Too often, students will give up on math, telling themselves they are simply not "math people," or they don't have a "math brain," Mr. Koziar said.

Instruction at the board is aimed at dispelling that type of thinking among students.

"It's really the idea that anyone can do math, and we're going to give you the skills and strategies that are going to let you do it in a way that's effective for you," Mr. Koziar said.

Anthony Bonato, a math professor at Toronto Metropolitan University, said encouraging students to believe they can not only grasp math but enjoy it is crucial.

"Changing the culture is really, really important," he said.

Source: The Globe and Mail, January 10, 2026

Thank you.

5. **Other Items**

OPSBA Director – Trustee Kosmerly shared an email with fellow trustees on January 7th, advising the vote at the December 18th meeting to amend and restate OPSBA's general bylaw was differed by Directors, to give trustees an opportunity to further discuss the role of regional councils in a refreshed governance structure. A recent email was sent to all trustees from OBSPA with information including draft terms of reference for regional councils, background information and questions to facilitate discussion. At the upcoming PES conference, regional councils will meet to discuss the documents and questions. Trustees were asked to share any feedback with her, Trustee Corbiere-Addison or Lisa Reinhardt directly. The vote will occur at a special OPSBA meeting on March 12th.

Student Trustee – Student Trustee Guenette thanked the board for approving them to attend the upcoming OSTA conference to further their learning experience and the professional development this conference is offering. Student Trustee Cyr shared updates from the recent Student Senate meeting around social media presence, the importance of school involvement, volunteering and leading by example. She also shared with the recent vacancy in the Vice Chair position, a re-election will be held at the next Senate meeting to fill the seat. Student Trustee Guenette and Student Trustee Cyr were appreciative to attend the School Year Calendar committee meeting to bring the student perspective and to have the opportunity to provide input to the committee.

6. **Trustees' Remarks/Questions**

Trustee Kosmerly brought forward information that was shared with trustees through the Chair, prior to the meeting, regarding 2 motions.

Motion: 26-R31, J.Kosmerly/A.McCauley

That the Strategic Planning Committee be dissolved.

Poll vote

Bob Clement: In-favour
Lisa Corbiere-Addison: In-favour
Linda Debassige: In-favour
Doreen Dewar: Absent
David Farrow: In-favour
Anita Gibson: Opposed
Judy Hunda: In-favour
Judy Kosmerly: In-favour
Alex McCauley: In-favour

- Carried

Motion: 26-R32, J.Kosmerly/A.McCauley

That the Governance Policy and By-Law Review Committee report directly to the Board and that Notices of Motion for Governance be brought to the Governance Policy and By-Law Review Committee for discussion and possible recommendation for inclusion on the Board meeting agenda.

Poll vote

Bob Clement: In-favour
Lisa Corbiere-Addison: In-favour
Linda Debassige: In-favour
Doreen Dewar: Absent
David Farrow: In-favour
Anita Gibson: Abstain
Judy Hunda: In-favour
Judy Kosmerly: In-favour
Alex McCauley: In-favour

- Carried

Trustee Hunda wished students much success going into exams.

7. **Chairperson's Remarks**

I would like to begin my remarks by welcoming Superintendent Danielle Williamson to her first Board meeting in her new role. Congratulations. We are delighted to have you here with us.

I also want to start off tonight's remarks by sending our heartfelt congratulations to Princess Anne's Vice Principal Sandy MacEwen whose team won the Northern Ontario Men's Curling Championship and will be representing Northern Ontario (as the skip for team Northern Ontario) at the Montana's Brier in St. John's, Newfoundland from February 27th - March 8th, 2026. I worked with Sandy for many years and I know how hard he has personally worked towards this goal. I want to send along my personal congratulations and tell Sandy and his team how proud we are that he achieved this remarkable goal and that we will be watching and cheering loudly for him during the Brier.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I would like to extend a sincere thank you to those families who visited Rainbow elementary schools for our **Kindergarten Information Nights** last week. If you were unable to attend and have a child starting school, you can register by contacting your area Rainbow school.

Last week, Kindergarten students from **MacLeod Public School** received a private curling lesson from two-time world champion Tracy Fleury. Tracy, an alumnus of the school, has been busy preparing to represent Team Canada at the Milano Cortina 2026 Winter Olympics in Italy next month. We extend best wishes to Tracy and Team Homan.

Secondary School Information Nights will continue in the coming weeks including **Manitoulin Secondary School** on Wednesday, February 11th at 7 pm and **Espanola High School** on Thursday, February 12th at 6 pm. For the Information Nights that have already taken place, there is still time to register. Visit the board website to learn more.

The **Environmental Education Committee** has challenged Rainbow Schools to kick off the new year with an e-waste clean up drive. Personal electronics have a large environmental impact. Over the last decade, there has been a substantial increase in ownership of personal electronics and the lifespan of our devices is becoming increasingly shorter. Next month, all schools will be challenged to reduce their electricity consumption.

The next **Parent Involvement Committee Meeting** will take place on Tuesday, January 27th at 7 pm. There will be a panel presentation on attendance/lates and what can be done at home. Parents/guardians are welcome to attend in person at the Centre for Education or online. The agenda is posted on the Board website.

Some 39 elementary students in Grades 4 to 6 from Rainbow Schools will test their technical skills during Science North's first annual **Robot Builder Showdown** on Monday, February 9th in the Vale Cavern. Students will compete in teams of three to build a robot using LEGO Spike Prime Essential Kits to complete a series of challenges. Good luck to all participants.

Parents/guardians of students with special needs in Rainbow District School Board are invited to provide **input for the 2026-2027 Special Education Plan**. The deadline to complete the survey is Friday, March 7th. The survey link is currently available on the board website.

A friendly reminder that **secondary exams** are coming up soon. We encourage students to give these exams their full focus and thank parents/guardians for supporting student success.

There will be no school for students on Friday, January 30th for our fifth **Professional Activity Day** of the 2025-2026 school year. Information about the PA Day is on the board website.

There will also be no school for students and staff on Monday, February 16th for **Family Day**.

And that concludes my remarks for this evening.

Thank you.

G. INFORMATION AND PROPOSALS

1. **Reports from Officials and Staff**
Special Education Advisory Committee minutes November 5, 2025 (official)
2. **Tenders/Requests for Proposals**
2026-FAC01 – Dedicated Courier Service
3. **Non-Staff Communications**

H. FUTURE MEETINGS

Parent Involvement Committee January 27, 2026 7:00 pm
Student Senate Meeting February 2, 2026 5:30 pm
Governance Policy & By-Law Review Committee February 3, 2026 12:00 pm
Environmental Education Committee February 18, 2026 3:30 pm
First Nations Advisory Committee February 19, 2026 10:00 am
Equity and Inclusive Education February 19, 2026 3:30 pm
Board Meeting February 24, 2026 5:00 pm

I. ADJOURNMENT

Motion: 26-R33, J.Kosmerly
That we do now adjourn at 6:23 p.m. – **Carried**