

**Name: Andy Boschy**

**Summary of main points for the issue/ concern:**

Protecting the rights of transgender and gender diverse students, ensuring that there are protections and stipulations in place for their safety on school grounds and while attending school, denouncing transphobic hate from former trustee candidates, speaking on lived experience as a transgender person.

**Recommendation(s) for resolution of issue:**

Establishing, maintaining and enforcing a professional code of conduct for all potential trustee candidates that extends to online behaviour and harassment. Ensuring teachers, administrative staff and students are educated on transgender issues and that capable adults are trained on how to handle transphobia or transphobic behaviour on school property. Ensuring that transgender and gender diverse students have access to a welcoming environment where they are safe to ask questions and explore on their identity free of judgement from any staff or fellow student.

**Speech Notes**

**OCDSB Board Meeting Speech**

**March 28th, 2023**

Good evening, everyone. My name is Andy Boschy, I am 20 years old, and I am transgender. You might recognize my name from last year's school board trustee elections. I am speaking to you tonight to express my concerns regarding the safety, dignity, and respect of transgender students in the Ottawa Carleton District School Board, particularly considering recent political events.

I would first like to share with you all that, in order to speak to you this evening, I have had to make arrangements to keep myself safe. I owe immense gratitude and thanks to the individuals who have volunteered to come here with me and ensure my safety.

Before I go any further, I would like to state that the fact I must come in here and defend my fellow trans siblings' right to exist in public is abhorrent, and that it should not be my, or any other trans person's job to come here and denounce bigoted and hateful ideologies attempting

to override the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

During the OCDSB trustee election, many issues surrounding my community were brought to public attention. Particularly, the rights of transgender students to use the restroom

corresponding to their gender identity, the rights of transgender students accessing same-gender spaces, and their right to a safe, secure space where they can explore their own

identities free of judgement. This speaks to a rising tide of hatred against the transgender community. Most recently, several states have moved to restrict or outright ban transgender healthcare, and many states are moving towards banning transgender children from sports. This is terrifying to see, and even more terrifying to see similar rhetoric coming from my own country, and my own family.

I would like to share a few statistics with you. According to the Williams Institute out of UCLA, transgender people are over four times more likely to face violent crime than any of their cisgender peers. From 2017 to 2018, transgender people faced 86.2 victimizations for every 1000 transgender people, compared to 21.7 victimizations for every 1000 cisgender people. When hearing these statistics, please keep in mind that transgender people make up less than one per cent of the global population. This was 6 years ago, and it has only gotten worse. With growing frequency, we are seeing attacks on the rights of transgender people as a whole. We are called groomers, predators, and violent. We are accused of mutilating children, and endangering women. All of this, simply for existing and living our lives as anyone else would. My generation was among the first to be raised on the internet, and I can assure you, your queer

and gender diverse students have seen the vitriol aimed at them. They are scared, and it is our job to be there for them and show them we can do better

Schools are a place where students deserve to be safe. Students should be able to focus on learning and engaging productively with their peers. They should not have to worry about whether they will be allowed to use the bathroom corresponding to their gender identity, or about bigotry from staff or other students. And they should not have to worry about trustees potentially implementing policies that may increase their risk of violence.

Teachers and administrative staff need to be aware of the issues their minority students face, and they need to be trained and educated on how to handle situations in which one of their students has been victimized for a part of themselves they cannot control.

I urge the board to please do your research into what the so-called gender critical movement is aiming to accomplish. I urge you to denounce any former and future bigoted ideology that attempts to infiltrate our school boards and to establish a professional code of conduct for any person attempting to run for a trustee position. This code of conduct must extend to online behaviour; no trustee candidate should be allowed to share private school meeting details with

the public, discuss the genitals of students on public social media platforms, and under absolutely no circumstances should ever be allowed to espouse hate speech against any protected class.

We must make sure the safety and dignity of students is protected. It is our duty to make sure that from the second they step foot on school grounds, to the moment they step off the graduation stage, students feel safe, respected, and dignified. It is our duty to educate our children and teenagers on societal issues, and most importantly, it is our duty to protect our kids from bigotry and bigoted ideology.

On a more personal note, gender affirming care saved my life. I would not be here today if it were not for the amazing team at CHEO, and if not for the kind, supportive friends, and family in my life.

To any transgender, gender diverse or queer high school students listening this evening: I hear you, I see you, and I will fight for your right to be who you are no matter what.

Thank you.