

OCDSB Student Trustee Annual Report

June 2023



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Introduction

In 2006, the Ontario Education Act statutorily established the role of the Student Trustee. In the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board, there are two Student Trustees. Elected by the student body, the Student Trustees represent the voices of the over 75,000 students within the district. The Student Trustees for the 2022-2023 academic year are Antong Hou and Tabarak Al-Delaimi. Antong Hou is a Grade 12 student at West Carleton Secondary School, and Tabarak Al-Delaimi is a Grade 12 Student at Sir Wilfrid Laurier Secondary School.

For more information regarding the role of Student Trustees, please refer to Policy P.017.GOV: Student Trustees and Section 55 of the Education Act.

The OCDSB Student Trustee Annual Report serves to update the OCDSB Board of Trustees, senior staff, students, and general public on the work of the Student Trustees. The following report will provide information regarding the Student Senate, specific OCDSB initiatives, provincial work at the Ontario Student Trustees' Association, and more.



Student Senate Update

The Student Senate is an official OCDSB committee composed of one Student Senator from each secondary and alternate site, both Student Trustees, Superintendent Reg Lavergne, and Vice Principal Ann Arden . The Student Senate is responsible for representing the views of secondary school students to the OCDSB, meeting monthly to advise the Student Trustees on issues affecting students. Oftentimes, the committee will be joined by senior staff and Trustees, who wish to receive student input regarding specific topics.

Throughout the 2022-2023 academic year, the Student Senate has discussed the potential implementation of a mask mandate, Menstrual Equity Initiative, OCDSB Cares, 2023-2027 OCDSB Strategic Plan, 2023-2024 OCDSB Budget, OCDSB Composting Initiative, and more.

For more information, please refer to [Policy P.113.GOV: Student Senate](#).

The 2022-2023 Student Senators

School	Student Senator
AY Jackson	Aleyna Kilic
Bell HS	Elizabeth Yao
Brookfield	Ohemaa Owusu
Cairine Wilson	Emma Gabriel
Canterbury	Abigail McGhie
Colonel By	Williams Thottungal
Earl of March	Daniel Lau
Elizabeth Wynwood Alt	Chelsea Harney
Frederick Banting Alt	Kaitlyn Song
Glebe CI	Mae-Lyn Nguyen
Gloucester HS	Scarlett Punkett
Hillcrest	Rebecca Doherty
John McCrae	Sharanya Sivasathiyathan
Lisgar CI	Emily Yuan
Longfields Davidson Heights	Prionty Chowdhury
Merivale HS	Emma Hong
Nepean HS	Drew Newell
Norman Johnston Alt	Shiara Spittall
Osgoode Township	Emmy Wallace-Parekh
Richard Pfaff Alt	Margaret Osiowy
Ridgemont	Bindhya Rai
Sir Robert Borden	Tara Eipe
Sir Wilfrid Laurier	Jacob El-Arab
South Carleton	Alexis Heitman
West Carleton	Jessica Ehoru



OCDSB Initiatives and Engagement

Student Senate Restructuring

For many years, Student Senators have noted difficulties in fulfilling their responsibilities and the purpose of the Student Senate. In February of 2023, a comprehensive review and consultation process was conducted by Student Trustee Hou. The goal of these steps was to recommend changes to the structure of the Student Senate.


Consultations began with a review of the student leadership structures within six external school boards, ranging from 15,000 students to 92,000 students. There were many notable takeaways from these consultations: external boards have larger Student Senates, a more even distribution across grade levels, variations in Student Senator selection processes, and greater engagement both within the leadership group and with the student body.

Student Trustee Hou conducted further external consultations with student-leaders from secondary school identity-based clubs and the OCDSB Co-Presidents' Council. These conversations indicated a lack of coordination between student-leaders across the district. Members from both groups also indicated a desire for opportunities to work closely with the Student Senate.

After external consultations, an internal survey was conducted. Survey results confirmed previous concerns with the Student Senate: inadequate representation, difficulty pursuing actionable goals, lack of institutional memory, and little engagement with the student body.

Based on information gathered during the consultation and review process, changes were proposed to the Board of Trustees and were ratified during the April 25th, 2023 Board Meeting. Key changes included the addition of one more Senator per site and the creation of membership positions for Co-Presidents and diversity group leaders. This restructure is only the first step towards increasing student voice, student representation, and student engagement in the OCDSB.

The Student Trustees would like to thank every student who took part in the consultation process, Superintendent Lavergne, Vice-Principal Arden, Chair Lyra, Trustee Presley,



Executive Officer McCoy, and all Trustees and staff who supported the development and approval of these changes.

Identity-Based Student Support Coordinators

A key goal for Student Trustee Al-Delaimi was to conduct consultations with identity-based student groups and organizations to gather feedback on what can be done to advance equity and inclusion for all students in the OCDSB.

Consultations were conducted by Student Trustee Al-Delaimi with student leaders from eight Muslim Student Associations across the district. There were many takeaways from these consultations, including a need for greater representation in the OCDSB, a platform to connect identity-based groups together, and, most notably, a desire for increased support for Muslim students and other identity groups within the OCDSB.

Further consultations were conducted with the National Council of Canadian Muslims, and the United Muslims of Ottawa-Gatineau. The feedback from said consultations echoed the sentiments expressed by the student groups.

Based on the results of these consultations, Senior staff included the creation of an identity-based support coordinator position, which was approved by the Board of Trustees.

The Student Trustees thank the Muslim Student Associations of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, Colonel By, West Carleton, Nepean, South Carleton, Earl of March, and Longfields Davidson for their time and incredible advocacy on behalf of their student members. Many thanks to the National Council Department of Education and United Muslims of Ottawa-Gatineau's president for their valuable insights.

Lastly, the Student Trustees are endlessly grateful for the support of Superintendent Farrish, Superintendent Symmonds, Superintendent Lavergne, Chair Lyra, Trustees Amanda Presley, Donna Blackburn, and Alysha Aziz. Their support and insights were instrumental to the consultation process.



Principal's PD Day

On February 17th, 2023, Student Trustee Antong Hou and Student Senators Emma Hong (Merivale High School) and Alexis Heitman (South Carleton High School) hosted a session at the PD Day attended by K-12 Principals and Vice-Principals from OCDSB sites. During the session, the speakers shared student perspectives regarding topics such as student leadership, student mental health, breakfast programs, OCDSB Cares, and the Menstrual Equity Initiative.

Social Media


At the beginning of the year, the Student Senate indicated an interest in better leveraging social media platforms to engage with students across the district. Over the course of the year, more than 22 posts were added to the Student Senate Instagram. These posts included culturally significant holidays, monthly Board and Committee meeting recaps, information about OCDSB projects, and more. Now with over 1,000 followers, the Instagram account has seen a significant increase in engagement.

Closing

Student Trustees Antong Hou and Tabarak Al-Delaimi would like to thank all of the Student Senators for their dedication to their schools and the district. They would also like to thank Superintendent Lavergne, Vice-Principal Arden, and Trustees Blackburn, Dickson, and Nash for their support and commitment to student voice. Finally, the Student Trustees would like to thank Dr. Andrea Rahim, System Principal Krista Hudson, and all OCDSB staff who have taken the opportunity to engage with and seek input from the Student Senate. The Student Trustees look forward to seeing the exciting work of the newly-structured Student Senate in the coming years.

OSTA-AECO Update

The Ontario Student Trustees' Association - l'Association des élèves conseillers et conseillères de l'Ontario (OSTA-AECO), is the largest official student stakeholder group in Canada. The organization is made up of student trustees from Ontario's 72 publicly funded school boards, collectively representing Ontario's 2.1 million students. Since 2001,



OSTA-AECO has held official stakeholder status from the Ministry of Education and is the only student organization in the province with this status.

For more information regarding OSTA-AECO, please refer to the [OSTA-AECO website](#).

During the 2022-2023 year, both OCDSB Student Trustees served on OSTA-AECO's Executive Council. Student Trustee Antong Hou was elected as the Public Board Council Vice-President and Student Trustee Tabarak Al-Delaimi was appointed as the Professional Development Coordinator.

Vice-President, Public Board Council

Alongside Public Board Council President Tiya Patel, Antong Hou led OSTA-AECO's Public Board Council (PBC). In this work, Student Trustee Antong Hou chaired the PBC Cabinet, worked closely with partners, like OPSBA, hosted sessions at conferences, and spoke at events, like the Ontario Principals' Council Symposium in Toronto.


Professional Development Coordinator

Student Trustee Tabarak Al-Delaimi is OSTA-AECO's Professional Development Coordinator for the 2022-2023 year. In this position, she was the conference planning committee chair and events lead for all three of OSTA-AECO's annual conferences. Tabarak planned conferences that enriched the knowledge of Student Trustees and prepared them for their advocacy roles and enhanced the advocacy goals of the organization.

Executive Council Update

Student Trustees Antong Hou and Tabarak Al-Delaimi both sat on the OSTA-AECO Executive Council, which represents the advocacy leadership of the organization. There were a number of key events and advocacy points that the executive council was involved with, including multiple consultations with the Ministry of Education and Minister Steven Lecce, advocacy on the issue of grade inflation, and the release of public statements in support of CUPE workers and the display of Pride flags in schools across the province.

In addition, the Student Trustees attended all 3 of OSTA-AECO's conferences: the Fall General Meeting in October, Board Council Conferences in February, and Annual General



Meeting in May. Alongside the current Student Trustees, the incoming Student Trustees for the 2023-2024 school year also attended the AGM in May. In addition to conferences, the Student Trustees attended multiple Executive Council meetings in Toronto. Through these conferences and meetings, the Student Trustees were able to receive valuable professional development, connect with colleagues across the province, and engage in provincial advocacy.

Closing Remarks

Just as we began to settle into our roles, our terms as Student Trustees have come to an end. The role of Student Trustee has been both the most challenging and rewarding experience of our lives, and we are eternally grateful for the opportunity to serve the students of the district.

We would like to thank all those who have supported us in our roles. Thank you Superintendent Lavergne, Vice-Principal Arden, Nicole Guthrie, Chantelle Olson, the Board of Trustees, Senior Staff, Student Senate, Co-Presidents' Council, and all OCDSB students. Our work would not have been possible without the immense support that we received.

During the inaugural Board Meeting, we posed a few questions to the incoming board: how can we build schools that are welcoming and safe for all students; how can we ensure that all students are equipped with the necessary resources to reach their full potential; how can we make sure that all students graduate from our schools not just as stronger thinkers but as better people who are ready to embark on whatever path they choose.

Throughout the past year, we have seen how the Board of Trustees and staff are working to answer these questions, and we are confident that the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board will continue to put students at the forefront of every decision they make. Though we will no longer have a seat at the board table, you can be sure that we will be watching the livestreams!

With sincere gratitude,

Antong Hou & Tabarak Al-Delaimi