



Office of the Chair of the Board

21 April 2021

The Honourable Stephen Lecce
Minister of Education
438 University Ave, 5th Floor
Toronto, Ontario
M7A 1N3

Dear Minister Lecce:

At its meeting on 23 February 2021, following a recommendation from its Indigenous Education Advisory Council, the Ottawa Carleton District School Board unanimously approved the following motion:

THAT the Board of Trustees write a letter to the Minister of Education to allow the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board to have an Indigenous Trustee.

The OCDSB is located in the unceded and unsurrendered territory of the Algonquin people. However, Ottawa is not only home to the Algonquin Nation. Ottawa has the highest population of Inuit in Ontario, and Indigenous peoples from various First Nations and Métis communities reside here. At present, our enrolment includes approximately 1500 students who have self-identified as First Nations, Métis, or Inuit, as well as an unknown number who have not self-identified.

The OCDSB has no agreements regarding the provision of education services with any First Nations band or council. Under existing legislation and regulations, the OCDSB is not eligible to appoint an Indigenous trustee to the Board with rights and responsibilities equivalent to those of a board member elected under the Municipal Elections Act.

Our Indigenous, Equity and Human Rights Roadmap: Eliminating Barriers to Success, 2020-2023 reaffirms our unique responsibility and commitment to the diverse population of Indigenous students we serve. We wish to honour our commitment to the Calls to Action expressed in the report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in 2015. We also wish to honour the principles endorsed by Canada in 2010 in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, particularly Articles 14 and 15 which reinforce the rights of Indigenous peoples to have the dignity and diversity of their cultures, traditions, histories and aspirations reflected in education.

At present, our most recent data still indicate that Indigenous students in the OCDSB face many barriers to their success. Having an Indigenous voice and vote at the Board table, chosen by members of Ottawa's Indigenous communities, would assist us in dismantling the structures, processes and practices that are barriers to success

for our Indigenous students, and incorporating Indigenous ways of learning and knowing into our programs and policies. Representation on the Board of the OCDSB is important to Ottawa's Indigenous communities and especially to our Indigenous students. We ask you, Minister Lecce, to make it possible for an Indigenous representative to sit as a board member for the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Lynn Scott".

Lynn Scott
Chair, Ottawa-Carleton District School Board

cc:

Trustees, Ottawa-Carleton District School Board
Senior Staff, Ottawa-Carleton District School Board
Corporate Records