

Student Trustee Report Winter 2018

Prepared by:

Student Trustee
Samantha Lin
Grade 12
Colonel By S.S.

Student Trustee
Isaac Glassman
Grade 12
Lisgar C.I.

Intention

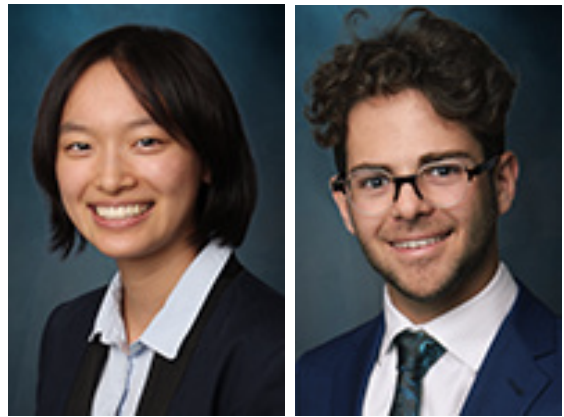
This report is intended to update OCDSB Trustees and Board Staff as to the activities and happenings of the OCDSB Student Trustees. Included are updates related to the initiatives and discussions of the OCDSB Student Senate, news regarding the work and conferences of the Ontario Student Trustees' Association, and information surrounding student trustee advocacy across Canada.

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INTRODUCTION

Student Trustees Samantha Lin and Isaac Glassman are pleased to present this report to the board to discuss the important work that is being done at the board level within their roles on Student Senate, and Student Presidents' Council, as well as the important provincial advocacy work accomplished through their membership of the Ontario Student Trustees' l'Ontario, (OSTA-AECO).



STUDENT SENATE RETREAT

We planned out our goals for the year at our Student Senate Retreat in mid-October, 2018. Together, we brainstormed the ideas and initiatives we wanted to put in our Student Senate Vision Document, containing potential Senate initiatives that can be chosen for future years (more on page 5). Our Student Senators had many ideas, and throughout the year they will be compiled into a cohesive document. The Senate Retreat was an inspirational start to the year — now, everyone is ready to get to work.

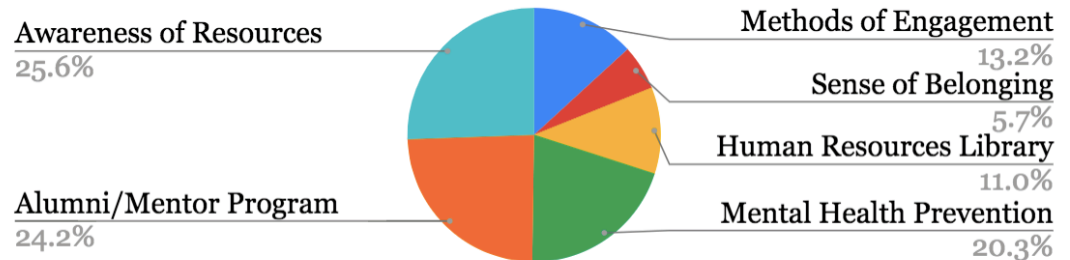


The OCSDB Student Senate for the 2018-2019 school year at the Bill Mason Outdoor Centre for their annual retreat. Each Student Senator represents a highschool from across the district at monthly Senate Meetings; consultations, initiative planning, and student engagement discussions are always hot topics. Alongside the 21 student senators are Director of Education Jennifer Adams, Superintendent Shawn Lehman, Vice-Principal Matthew Gagnier, and Trustee Erica Braunovan.

SENATE GOALS FOR THE YEAR

We were able to highlight 6 potential areas of work for the year at our Student Senate retreat in October (see chart below).

Through a “dotmocratic” process (wherein student senators vote for initiatives based on the number of paper dots they stick on a voting option), Student Senate prioritized 6 potential solutions to issues facing students across the district. Initiatives are ranked based on feasibility of execution.



Although we are consistently able to identify specific issues facing students across the district, finding precise solutions has proven to be an immense task. From this, we have concluded that an overarching impediment to helping students lies in student engagement. Communication with, to, and from students is key to the functioning of schools and, by extension, the District. Problems arise when student communication is as follows:

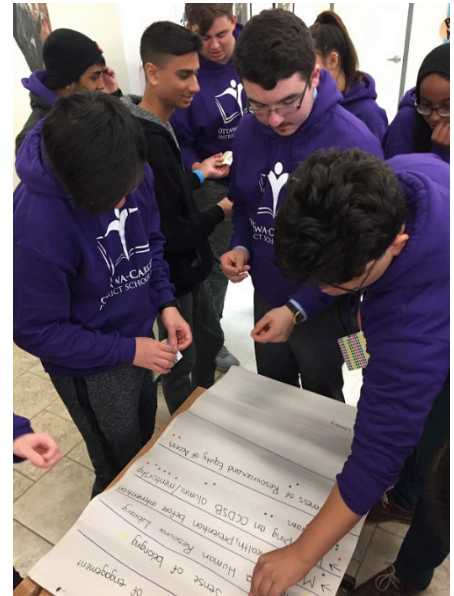
- Lacking (i.e. when school/district resources exist but students are not notified or do not have direct access to the medium/media of communications)
- Unclear or confusing (i.e. when communication leads students to misconstrue resources, e.g. the role of guidance counsellors as “suicide and mental health-experts,” OCDSB Tiered Intervention as “arbitrary triaging”)
- Poorly targeted (i.e. schools using antiquated social media for communication, e.g. twitter and Facebook, overwhelming reliance on Google surveys)

SENATE GOALS FOR THE YEAR: NEXT STEPS

Upon seeing these communicative issues, we asked ourselves: “how can we, as a Student Senate, tackle this issue?” Understanding that change cannot be created everywhere, we decided to focus on creating standardized methods of engagement for Student Senators and councils within their school. From here, we asked a few more questions:

- What systems [for communication] are already in place? (e.g. lunch with the principal, “town hall” meetings)
- Are there inequities in the current distribution of communicative resources for Student Senators?

From this, we concluded that our goal is to create a consolidated and official framework for OCDSB students/teachers/administration to engage with students. How we might accomplish this is up to the discretion of our Student Senate team and their networks of students throughout the district. As well, OCDSB staff are always willing and ready to help - although student leadership is key in a situation such as ours, having help from institutionally-wise adults is a great help.



Student Senators participating in the “dotmocratic” system



Absolutely everyone contributes to the important discussion

Consultations with Student Senate

OCDSB STRATEGIC PLAN PRE-CONSULTATION

Student Senate was consulted by Executive Officer Giroux and her team on the topic of the 2019-2023 Board Strategy plan. We gave advice on the formatting of the discussed various methods to engage with students, parents, and educators. Students from across the District have been eagerly submitting suggestions to the online ThoughtExchange platform- we hope the trend continues to grow.

Moving forward, Student Senate will be participating in the second stage of the Strategic Plan consultations via a large student focus group in January. Senators will each bring another student representative from their school to engage in further discussion of the plan.

OCDSB MENTAL HEALTH STRATEGIC PLAN CONSULTATION

We were also consulted by Dr. Petra Duschner and her team in regards to the new Mental Health programs that will be implemented into schools in the future. Senate provided feedback about which areas of mental health are most important to students and how they believe students are able to best access these resources.

The Mental Health Team also consulted the OCDSB Presidents Council - a group made up of the Student Council presidents from each school across the District. Samantha and Isaac attend their monthly meetings in order to update the presidents on board-wide matters.



OSTA-AECO FALL GENERAL MEETING

The OSTA-AECO (Ontario Student Trustees' Association - l'Association des élèves conseiller/ères de l'Ontario) Fall General Meeting occurred from October 25-28, 2018. We participated in and led various workshops and professional development sessions for new Student Trustees. We heard from many different educators and keynote speakers, receiving presentations from Norah Marsh, the Chief Executive Officer of the EQAO, as well as Patrick Daly, the Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association President on the topic of managing board finances. We learned more about understanding boardroom basics and etiquette.



Isaac and Samantha with Hazel Pangilinan - a newly elected student trustee from Vancouver. OSTA-AECO conferences serve as opportunities for student trustees from across the province (and, increasingly, the country) to learn from each other and discuss student initiatives from their area.

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION CONSULTATIONS

As a response to the Open Submission facet of the Ministry of Education's consultations, OSTA-AECO drafted recommendations using suggestions from student trustees across the province. Backed up with facts and research, the submission is representative of the great diversity of Ontario students, and is publicly available for use. Students are encouraged to use the submission as a template for their own thoughts or as a direct response to the online forms.

OSTA-AECO's submission publication can be viewed at <https://www.osta-aeco.org/publications/publications-2/>



MEETINGS WITH EDUCATION STAKEHOLDERS

Over the past two months, OSTA-AECO has met with major education stakeholders, stressing the importance of student voice in all forms of consultation. Most notably, OSTA-AECO met with the Minister of Education's team at Queen's Park in Toronto. Unfortunately, the Minister herself was unable to attend due to conflicts in timing with the Ontario FES. In her lieu, Matthew Bondy, the M.O.Ed. Chief of Staff provided OSTA-AECO with lots of great insight and suggestions for moving forward. As well, OSTA-AECO represented students at the first EQAO Stakeholder Advisory Committee meeting of the year and provided feedback on EQAO's short-term changes for 2018-19 and proposed long-term changes for 2019-20 and beyond.

STUDENT TRUSTEES ACROSS CANADA REPORT

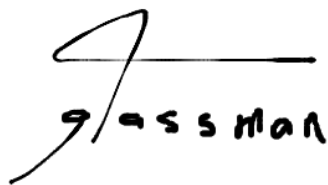
We are very fortunate to have systems in place to ensure that student voice is heard in Ontario. This, unfortunately, is not the case in every province of the country. To combat this, OSTA-AECO drafted a report titled "Student Representation Across Canada" to encourage provinces across the country to instate a student representative position similar to that of student trustee. The report covers areas such as: the state of student representation in school boards across the country, how Ontario's legislative changes in tandem with student activism created the position of student trustee, and an overview of what the role of student trustee is and how they are elec

The report serves as a guide to boards that may be interested in implementing the position of student trustee, and includes a call-to-action for school boards across Canada to consider the importance of student representation. The nationally-focused document is to be presented to the Canadian School Boards Association later this year. It can be viewed under "publications" on www.osta-aeco.org

Conclusion and Steps Moving Forward

Four months in, the position of student trustee has proven to be as rewarding as it is challenging. Being able to lead students in board consultations and discuss solutions to issues facing our district is the embodiment of student voice: simultaneously a beautiful and reckoning force. Talking to our adult trustee colleagues has allowed us to grow our education mindsets and truly absorb information, which we are then able to share with students, like a sponge. As well, the challenge of balancing our school, extra-curricular, and student-trustee lives has been an in-depth lesson on setting priorities; something that we will surely value for many years to come.

Most importantly, we have learned so much about ourselves, the OCDSB, and a multitude of other topics. We would be very lost without the support of Superintendent Lehman, Trustee Braunovan, Vice-Principal Gagnier, Myra Wells, and all the other fantastic OCDSB staff—we are extremely grateful for all the help. At first, the suggestion that the OCDSB is a “huge family” was outrageous to us; now, it seems perfectly appropriate.



Isaac Glassman
Student Trustee



Samantha Lin
Student Trustee