

First Name	Last Name
Deborah	Owusu-Akyeeah
Applicant Interest	
<p>RE: Trustee for Zone 10 (Somerset/Kitchissippi)</p> <p>Dear Ottawa-Carleton District School Board of Trustees,</p> <p>I am writing this letter in an accompaniment to my application for the position of Trustee, Zone 10 (Somerset/Kitchissippi). Attached is a resume outlining my skills and qualifications. I am applying for this role with 8 years of relevant experience in youth and community engagement, policy development and analysis, project management, strategic planning, and monitoring and evaluation. I am also skilled in campaign design, child/adolescent rights and protection, and women's and girls' empowerment. Additionally, I have over 4 years of experience sitting on both operational and governance boards ranging from academic organizations to non-profits. This includes a role on Carleton University's most senior academic bodies, the Faculty of Graduate & Postdoctoral Affairs and Senate, where I was an advocate and representative for graduate students as the President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Graduate Students' Association.</p> <p>Having experienced Anti-Black racism within the education system firsthand, I never thought I could, or would even be encouraged, to form of leadership to the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (OCDSB) or its committees until now. Despite these obstacles, public education provided the pathway to the success I have now and I want nothing more to be a part of that success for young racialized students. I am a Black young person, and child of immigrants, with a diversity of qualifications and expertise. This, alongside my lived experience, creates an excellent combination of skills to best execute the remaining phases of the project plan of the Identity-Based Data Collection Project. The OCDSB can best achieve the goals of its plan if people with lived experience are at the decision-making table providing the lens needed to create evidence-based interventions.</p> <p>I have lived in Ottawa for almost ten years and during my time here I have been able to develop strong connections to the local African, Caribbean, and Black (ACB) communities. During this time, my commitment to public education has been expressed non-conventionally through the Ottawa International Writers' Festival's "Republic of Childhood" program focussing on children's literacy writing camps for underprivileged kids in Ottawa. Additionally, through my independent workshop facilitation providing educators with the tools to combat white supremacy in the classroom at the Carlingwood Community Health Centre. I have also worked in counselling and peer support at the university-level, providing safe-spaces for students to talk one-on-one about experiences of violence and other issues. As the Programming Coordinator of the university's Womyn's Centre, there was a common pattern with the Black student clientele: lingering issues caused by anti-Black racism that stemmed from grade school was affecting their school performance and sense of self-worth. Students who were</p>	

regarded as “success stories”, many of them young women, still dealt with the trauma of racism even after taking the academic path of attending university. I know this on a personal level, as well. Accurately ensuring change is met requires thinking about the futures of these young children. It also means allowing students to see themselves reflected in those making decisions that affect their education. I want to be a strong voice on the OCDSB and advocate for the students so that they can fulfill their potential in an environment that cares about their specific needs.

If given the privilege to be the Trustee of Zone 10, I would use my role to ensure interventions are well consulted with community stakeholders and culturally relevant. I would also ensure the interventions best reflect the OCDSB’s logic model, or Theory of Change, as I have done using Results-Based Management in my previous roles as a policy analyst and project officer. As a graduate research assistant, I used strong analytical skills to produce clear and concise reports. I have come to understand that good research results in good advocacy and will ultimately result in great policy change. It is the reason why I strongly advocate for applying intersectionality as a framework within research as an accountability measure. I believe I would be an excellent asset working on the OCDSB because of my strong ability to conduct research analysis using various methods that I have acquired in my Bachelor’s degree in Women’s and Gender Studies (with minors in African Studies and Political Science). For example, I had the honour of applying storytelling, a traditional form of knowledge sharing from my home country to my Masters Research Paper on return migration for Ghanaian women living in Canada and approaching retirement age.

While at the Graduate Students Association (Carleton University), I took initiative to facilitate numerous consultations meetings with campus stakeholders for the development of Carleton University’s provincially mandated sexual violence policy. As a policy analyst at the Education, Child Protection, and Gender Equality Bureau of Global Affairs Canada, I provided policy leadership and strategic advice on child protection and gender equality issues, such as female genital mutilation/cutting, child, early and forced marriage (CEFM), and broader sexual and gender-based violence, with a particular focus on adolescent girls and the girl child. As the Junior Project Officer of the Tanzania Development Division (Global Affairs Canada), I monitored and tracked the progress of several developmental programs and completed corporate reporting, including Plan International project on girls’ education. My ability to implement multiple ongoing projects also proved useful as I took over the project management of two key projects, CUSO and MEDA, for a short period where I finalized the evaluation summary reports published by Global Affairs Canada on its project browser website.

I have a very diverse skillset matched by my passion and lived-experience. I recognize that there are many things about the functions of the school board, especially within the Ottawa context, that I have to learn. My willingness to learn and a proven record of accomplishment as a team player would be an excellent addition to the OCDSB.

Thank you so much for taking the time to read my application form.

Best regards,

Deborah (Debbie) Owusu-Akyeeah