

PRESENT:

Trustees:	Vice-Chair Roberta Northmore, Greg Agar, Janet Barnes, Jane Bryce, Randy Campbell, Jack Fletcher, Malinda Little, Angela Richards, David Shortt
Student Trustees:	MJ Baldwin, Kaydence George, joining virtually, Mackenzie Rankin
Staff:	Chief Executive Officer Gary Girardi, Associate Director Brian McKay, Superintendents of Education Emily Dixon, Ben Hazzard, Kelly Holbrough, Mary Mancini, Eryn Smit and Public Relations Officer Caress Lee
Regrets:	Chair Kelley Robertson, Trustee Ruth Ann Dodman
Recording Secretary:	Jaime Shannon, Executive Assistant to the Chief Executive Officer
Call to Order:	Vice-Chair Northmore, Chairing in the absence of Chair Robertson, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Vice-Chair Northmore read Section 3.19, <i>Decorum at Board Meetings</i> , of the LKDSB Procedural By-Laws.
#2026-144 Approval of the Agenda	Moved by Greg Agar, seconded by Angela Richards, "That the Agenda for the Regular Board Meeting of September 22, 2026 be approved." CARRIED. Vice-Chair Northmore presented a Land Acknowledgement.
Declaration of Conflict of Interest	None.
#2026-145 Approval of the Minutes Sept/8/26	Moved by Jane Bryce, seconded by Greg Agar, "That the Board approve the Minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of September 8, 2026." CARRIED.
Business Arising	CEO Girardi reported that, following Ministry changes, police record checks will be required for Trustees and members of Board Committees and advised that further information and direction would be shared at a later date. CEO Girardi provided notice that he was rescinding the Notices of Motion provided at the September 8, 2026 Board Meeting concerning the Procedural By-Laws and Board meeting schedule. CEO Girardi noted that the Minister of Education responded to the Chair's letter regarding First Nation student transportation and it was included in the package under Correspondence. CEO Girardi relayed that the Trustee Honoraria Policy and Regulation would normally be presented for Trustee approval prior to the Municipal election, however, the Board is awaiting final direction from the Ministry of Education following the conclusion of its consultation process.

In response to a Trustee question, CEO Girardi advised that existing policies and related documents would need to be reviewed to ensure alignment with the Ministry police record check requirements. He confirmed that community members serving on the Audit Committee would require police record checks and noted that, as volunteers, they would not be charged a fee. He added that this requirement represents a significant change from current practice.

Motions Emanating from
the Regular Board Private
Session

None.

Trustee Shortt reported that a motion to excuse Chair Robertson from the September 22, 2026 Board Meeting was approved.

#2026-146
Action of the Regular
Board Private Session be
the Action of the Board

Moved by Dave Shortt, seconded by Jack Fletcher,

“That the Action of the Board in Private Session be the Action of the Board.”

CARRIED.

Presentation - School
Climate Survey Results

Superintendent Dixon welcomed Mark Houghton, System Coordinator of Safe Schools. He presented highlights from the 2026 School Climate Survey, noting that overall participation increased significantly from 2024, although it remained below 2022 levels. Results showed that most students reported having a trusted adult at school, with notable improvement among students in Grades 7 to 12; however, awareness of and willingness to access mental health supports, particularly among older students, remained an area of focus. Students’ willingness to report bullying also improved, while staff and parent participation increased compared with 2024.

In response to a Trustee question, System Coordinator Houghton advised that staff responses were not separated by employee group. He attributed increased participation to purposeful promotion, improved timing and accessibility, mobile-friendly formatting, QR code access and support from school administration teams. Public Relations Officer Lee added that the new Board website and MyLKDSB app made the survey easier to access and share through multiple communication channels.

In response to a Trustee question, System Coordinator Houghton reported that ongoing efforts to reduce the stigma associated with mental health include normalizing requests for assistance and strengthening access to administrators, social workers, site clinicians and other school-based supports. CEO Girardi added that progress is supported by continued collaboration with parents, guardians and community partners.

In response to a Trustee question, Superintendent Dixon advised that each school receives its individual results for use in school planning and that Board-level summaries are also provided.

In response to a Trustee question, CEO Girardi confirmed that the Ministry no longer requires the survey and that related financial support has ended. He noted that the Board values input from students, staff, parents and guardians, and would need to consider alternative approaches, available funding and possible partnerships if it wished to continue the survey. He added that overall

results are posted publicly and are valuable to community organizations, including local health units.

Presentation - Student
Support Services/Well-
Being Summer Learning
Supports

Superintendent Holbrough introduced Emily Burns-Teeple, Supervisor of Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) Specialists. She presented an overview of the summer programming delivered across six elementary and five secondary schools. She highlighted five Summer Connections camps, a Kindergarten Readiness Camp, and a Workplace/Volunteer Readiness Camp, supported by student leaders, ABA and mental health staff, an elementary teacher, an early childhood educator, and volunteers. She relayed that the programs provided academic, recreational, social-emotional, safety, and workplace-readiness activities, with increased participation and positive feedback from students and families.

Delegations

None.

#2026-147
Schedule for Regular
Board Meetings for the
Period November 17, 2026
to November 15, 2027
Report B-26-136

CEO Girardi presented a revised Board meeting schedule for 2026-2027, comprising 15 meetings, including the annual Organizational Meeting of the Board. He explained that meetings were scheduled more frequently during periods of heavier Board business and reduced during periods with fewer anticipated decisions. He noted that the revised schedule reflects Trustee feedback and supports the effective advancement of Board business.

Moved by Randy Campbell, seconded by Jane Bryce,

“That the Board approve the Regular Board Meeting Schedule for the period November 17, 2026 to November 15, 2027 and the cancelation of the December 22, 2026, January 12, 2027, February 9, 2027, March 9, 2027, and April 13, 2027 Regular Board Meetings.”

CARRIED.

#2026-148
Establishment of the
LKDSB Compliance Audit
Committee
Report B-26-137

CEO Girardi reported that the Municipal Elections Act requires each school board to establish a Compliance Audit Committee to consider applications related to candidates' election campaign finances. He noted that the proposed committee meets the legislated membership requirements and was established in partnership with the Municipality of Chatham-Kent. He supported the continued use of this established and effective process to ensure compliance.

Moved by Angela Richards, seconded by Jane Bryce,

“That the Board approve the appointment of Cathy Hoffman, Scott McCharles, Nancy van den Boorn, and Daniel Whittal to the Lambton Kent District School Board Compliance Audit Committee for the term November 15, 2026 to November 14, 2030.”

CARRIED.

Audit Committee Meeting
Update
Report B-26-138

Trustee Shortt reported that the Audit Committee held its first meeting of the school year on September 14, 2026 and elected him as Chair until the Committee is reconstituted in November. He relayed that the Committee reviewed its annual self-assessment, outstanding audit findings, and the draft schedule of activities, and that no critical outstanding issues or significant risks were identified. He noted that the August 31 year-end audit was underway with

no concerns reported to date and that the Committee would review the financial statements at its November 3, 2026 meeting before making a recommendation to the Board.

Ontario Public School
Boards' Association
(OPSBA) Update

Vice-Chair Northmore reported that Chair Robertson had requested OPSBA's assistance in determining whether other school boards had experienced difficulties or delays in collecting and accessing Jordan's Principle funding. She attended a September 17 meeting with OPSBA representatives and noted that these matters had not been identified as a province-wide issue, although OPSBA continued to gather information and advocate through its partners. She advised that recent administrative and policy changes to the funding process may have contributed to delays experienced by the Board.

School Climate Survey
Results
Report B-26-139

Superintendent Dixon referred Trustees to the Board report corresponding with the presentation delivered earlier in the meeting.

Student Support
Services/Well-Being
Summer Learning
Supports
Report B-26-140

Superintendent Holbrough referred Trustees to the Board report corresponding with the presentation delivered earlier in the meeting.

Correspondence

CEO Girardi shared the Minister of Education's response to Chair Robertson regarding First Nation student transportation. He highlighted the reference to a ministerial working group concerning the Reciprocal Education Approach framework and noted that the correspondence reflected support from the Chiefs of Ontario. He reaffirmed the Board's commitment to advancing this work.

In response to a Trustee question, CEO Girardi advised that the Board would continue to advocate respectfully while also pursuing local solutions. He noted that several matters raised in the Minister's letter remained unresolved and that further provincial direction could take time.

In response to a Trustee question regarding fuel pricing, Associate Director McKay explained that the Ministry provides additional funding to school boards when fuel prices increase and that the Board then flows the funding to transportation operators. He confirmed that the funding covers the related costs.

New Business

None.

Trustee Questions

A Trustee presented a question from a parent/guardian regarding combined-grade classes at Zone Township Central School, asking the Board to explain the classroom organization decisions considering the permittance of students within the attendance area to attend elsewhere, which they felt had contributed to the declining enrolment. CEO Girardi reported that elementary staffing is conducted in accordance with the collective agreement and that the staffing committee meets by the third week of September to review enrolment and recommend any required reorganization. He noted that the committee considers student needs, parent and guardian concerns, available Board

resources and Ministry class-size requirements when making difficult staffing decisions. He advised that three triple-grade classes had been established at Zone Township Central School and that the students referenced in the question had not affected that decision. He noted that the Board has operated triple-grade classes in each of the past five years, including at other schools, and confirmed that the classes meet Ministry requirements. He added that the Board had provided additional teaching time, Early Childhood Educator and Educational Assistant support, and would continue to monitor the classes.

In response to a second parent/guardian question submitted through the Trustee, CEO Girardi acknowledged that a triple-grade class had operated at the school two years earlier. He advised that staff had reviewed that experience and applied the learning to the current arrangement. He noted that single-grade classes are not always possible within the Ministry funding model, particularly in schools with smaller enrolment, and that the Board remains committed to supporting student success.

A Student Trustee shared a positive student perspective from participating in a combined-level secondary Spanish class, noting that students at different grade and ability levels were able to learn together and build connections.

A Student Trustee asked whether the Board could support participation in the Ontario Student Trustees' Association (OSTA) or provide an alternative learning opportunity. CEO Girardi acknowledged Trustees' previous support for Student Trustee learning and invited the Student Trustee to share the information gathered so that staff could assess possible options within available funding.

In response to a Trustee question, CEO Girardi advised that staff are assigned through established processes and that additional supports have been provided based on identified student and classroom needs. He confirmed that the Board had no concerns about staff capacity to support the triple-grade classes. He further explained that concerns regarding student behaviour should first be addressed through the classroom teacher, school principal and education support staff. He emphasized the Board's belief that all students can succeed.

Notices of Motion

None.

Announcements

The National Day for Truth and Reconciliation is on September 30, 2026. Students and staff are encouraged to wear orange shirts on Wednesday, September 30, 2026 and use this day as a catalyst to encourage learning and understanding about the residential school system and the impacts that system has had on First Nations, Métis and Inuit people.

The next Regular Board Meeting will be held on October 6, 2026 at the Chatham Regional Education Centre at 7:00 p.m.

Adjournment

There being no further business of the Board, Vice-Chair Northmore declared the Meeting adjourned at 8:18 p.m.

Chair of the Board

Chief Executive Officer