

**SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD  
AGENDA**

Date: June 29, 2021  
Time: 7:30 pm  
Location: Catholic Education Centre - Board Room  
802 Drury Lane  
Burlington, Ontario

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**Pages**

- 1. Call to Order**
  - 1.1. Opening Prayer, National Anthem, and Oath of Citizenship (N. Gubert)
  - 1.2. Motions Adopted In-Camera
- 2. Approval of the Agenda**
- 3. Declarations of Conflict of Interest**
- 4. Presentations**
  - 4.1. Schools Update (P. Daly)
- 5. Action Items**
  - 5.1. Conduct During Board Meetings (P. Murphy) 1 - 2
- 6. Correspondence**
  - 6.1. Assumption Catholic School Council 3 - 6
  - 6.2. L. Silvestri 7 - 9
- 7. In-Camera**
- 8. Resolution re Absentees**
- 9. Adjournment and Closing Prayer (T. O'Brien)**



## Special Board Meeting

## Action Report

Conduct During Board Meetings	Item 5.1
June 29, 2021	

**WHEREAS** Trustees are required to conduct themselves in a manner that enhances confidence in publicly funded Education;

**WHEREAS** Trustees are always bound to act with dignity, civil behavior, decorum and be respectful of other Trustees, the Director of Education, staff, all members of the Halton Catholic District School Board (HCDSB) community, as well as the public;

**WHEREAS** training sessions have been provided to Trustees by certified Parliamentarians on proper parliamentary procedure and meeting conduct, and a certified Parliamentarian has provided on going advice during Board meetings on proper parliamentary procedures and conduct. In addition, Trustees have been copied on parliamentarian opinions regarding procedure and meeting conduct and Trustees have been reminded of proper parliamentary procedures and conduct in through several email communications;

**WHEREAS** according to HCDSB Procedural By-Law 8.1 – Role of Chair “In addition to any other duties under the Act, the Chair of a Board shall, (b) conduct the meetings in accordance with this By-Law or other procedures and practices for the conduct of Board Meetings, and shall preserve order and decide all questions of order subject to an appeal to the board; . . .”

**WHEREAS** Section 207 (3) of the Education Act addresses the exclusion of persons from Board meetings, it provides: “The presiding officer may expel or exclude from any meeting any person who has been guilty of improper conduct at the meeting.”

**WHEREAS** behaviour of some Trustees has been seen as disruptive and dilatory, which has delayed the Board from moving the business of the Board forward, resulting in several special called meetings, eroding public confidence in the Board, and resulting in some Trustees being expelled from Board meetings;

**WHEREAS** the integrity of the Chair has been called into question and it was alleged that the Chair is biased in his conduct of Board meetings which impacts the functioning and reputation of the Board;

**WHEREAS** accusations have been made towards staff regarding reports provided to Trustees, questioning timeliness and content;

**BE IT RESOLVED** that the Board of Trustees direct the Secretary of the Board and Director of Education to commission an investigation by an Integrity Commissioner or Lawyer to determine if the conduct of the Chair was bias as stated;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the conduct of Trustees during Board meetings be investigated with regards to their mandate as detailed in the Education Act, as directed by Board Policies and Procedure and Board Procedural By-Laws regarding civil behavior, decorum, treatment of staff, the public and fellow trustee(s) with respect;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the investigation review allegations that have been made toward staff by Trustees regarding acts that were not legal or non-complaint with regulations and are unfounded. If there has been dilatory behaviour causing the business of the Board to have been purposefully delayed and if there has been behaviour in general that has not been in the best interest of the Board and Student achievement;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that that the investigation report be completed before the September 7, 2021 Regular Board Meeting. Included in the report should be any findings with recommendations, corrective actions and recommended disciplinary actions, in accordance with Policy I-36 Trustee Code of Conduct.

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**From:** [Catholic School Council - Assumption](#)

**Sent:** June 25, 2021 7:07 PM

**To:** [Murphy, Patrick](#); [Marvin Duarte](#); [Iantomasi, Vincent](#); [O'Brien, Timothy](#); [Agnew, Brenda](#); [Karabela, Helena](#); [DeRosa, Peter](#); [Guzzo, Nancy](#); [ohearn-czarnotaj@hcdsb.org](mailto:ohearn-czarnotaj@hcdsb.org); [Daly, Patrick](#); [Clark McDougall](#)

**Cc:** [minister.edu@ontario.ca](mailto:minister.edu@ontario.ca); [ross.romano@ontario.ca](mailto:ross.romano@ontario.ca); [yael.ginsler@ontario.ca](mailto:yael.ginsler@ontario.ca); [jennifer.chan3@ontario.ca](mailto:jennifer.chan3@ontario.ca); [jane.mckenna@pc.ola.org](mailto:jane.mckenna@pc.ola.org); [effie.triantafilopoulos@pc.ola.org](mailto:effie.triantafilopoulos@pc.ola.org); [stephen.crawford@pc.ola.org](mailto:stephen.crawford@pc.ola.org); [parm.gill@pc.ola.org](mailto:parm.gill@pc.ola.org); [ted.arnott@pc.ola.org](mailto:ted.arnott@pc.ola.org); CPIC;

[\[REDACTED\]](#) [Chliszczyk, Christopher](#); [ThomasM@hcdsb.org](#); [DiPietro, Rosie](#);

[\[REDACTED\]](#)

[\[REDACTED\]](#)

[\[REDACTED\]](#)

[\[REDACTED\]](#)

[\[REDACTED\]](#)

**Subject:** RE: Exams for Secondary Students

Dear Chair Murphy, Director Daly and all Trustees,

We are following up on our correspondence and recommendations to the board from June 11<sup>th</sup> regarding exams for secondary students and attached below. To date, we have not received any response, not even an acknowledgement.

As you know, School Councils have a very specific mandate, and mechanism for carrying out that mandate, which is outlined in Regulation 612 (School Councils and Parent Involvement Committees). That is:

2. (1) The purpose of school councils is, through the active participation of parents, to improve pupil achievement and to enhance the accountability of the education system to parents. O. Reg. 612/00, s. 2 (1).

(2) A school council's primary means of achieving its purpose is by making recommendations in accordance with this Regulation to the principal of the school and the board that established the council. O. Reg. 612/00, s. 2 (2).

Furthermore, the Regulation imposes upon the board a duty to respond.

### Duty of Board to Respond

21. The board that established a school council shall consider each recommendation made to the board by the council and shall advise the council of the action taken in response to the recommendation. O. Reg. 612/00, s. 21.

You will note that the requirement is for the board to advise what action will be taken in response, not simply an acknowledgement. Please provide a response at your earliest possible

convenience that outlines, specifically, how our concerns and recommendations will be addressed.

Sincerely,

Maria Lourenco  
Santa Silvestri  
Co-chairs, on behalf of  
Assumption Catholic Secondary School

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10

**From:** [Catholic School Council - Assumption](#)

**Sent:** June 11, 2021 5:26 PM

**To:** [Murphy, Patrick](#); [Marvin Duarte](#); [Iantomasi, Vincent](#); [O'Brien, Timothy](#); [Agnew, Brenda](#); [Karabela, Helena](#); [DeRosa, Peter](#); [Guzzo, Nancy](#); [ohearn-czarnotaj@hcdsb.org](mailto:ohearn-czarnotaj@hcdsb.org); [Daly, Patrick](#); [Clark McDougall](#)

**Cc:** [minister.edu@ontario.ca](mailto:minister.edu@ontario.ca); [ross.romano@ontario.ca](mailto:ross.romano@ontario.ca); [yael.ginsler@ontario.ca](mailto:yael.ginsler@ontario.ca); [jennifer.chan3@ontario.ca](mailto:jennifer.chan3@ontario.ca); [jane.mckenna@pc.ola.org](mailto:jane.mckenna@pc.ola.org); [effie.triantafilopoulos@pc.ola.org](mailto:effie.triantafilopoulos@pc.ola.org); [stephen.crawford@pc.ola.org](mailto:stephen.crawford@pc.ola.org); [parm.gill@pc.ola.org](mailto:parm.gill@pc.ola.org); [ted.arnott@pc.ola.org](mailto:ted.arnott@pc.ola.org); [CPIC](#);

[Chliszczyk, Christopher](#); [ThomasM@hcdsb.org](mailto:ThomasM@hcdsb.org); [DiPietro, Rosie](#);

[Redacted]

**Subject:** Exams for Secondary Students

Dear Chair of the Board, Director of Education and All Trustees of the Halton Catholic District School Board:

We are writing to you on behalf of the Assumption Catholic School Council to bring forward concerns regarding a serious deficit that we feel is developing for our secondary students, that is, the lack of exam writing skills resulting from not writing any final course exams since the first semester of the 2019-2020 school year - a year and a half ago. We are concerned that this deficit will continue to grow should the decision be made to continue to not provide end of course exams in the expected quadmester model for at least the first half of the 2021-2022 year, or in any other modified return to school plan. This could mean at least two full years without exams, half of a typical high school career. This is significant, particularly for our students who will be entering Grade 11 or 12 in September.

We had a fulsome discussion on this topic at our June 2nd Council meeting. During the discussion we acknowledged and thanked our teachers and administrators for their exceptional efforts and dedication since the beginning of this pandemic and before. We acknowledged that this deficit is in no way a reflection on them, their talents or dedication.

We discussed and acknowledged various issues of equity, and the value of all pathways our students

may choose, and that not all are bound for college or university.

We learned that approximately 48% of our graduating students apply to university, and approximately 80% of those proceed to university. Those numbers suggest that almost 40% of our students are university bound. (We were not provided with statistics for college applications or acceptance). We agreed that equity applies to those students as well, and that they too must be given the opportunities to develop the skills necessary for success once they graduate from HCDSB.

We discussed the impact of the COVID pandemic on our students' mental health, and that exams can be anxiety inducing. We also discussed the stress and anxiety of post secondary education, especially that first year transition, and especially where students may be living away from home for the first time, and without their usual support systems. With all of the changes that COVID has brought to our lives, these transitions now have the potential to be even more stressful than "normal".

Several of our members have children already enrolled in post-secondary, and those members shared the high value - rightly or wrongly - placed on final exams and even midterms, particularly in some university programs. Members shared the importance of exam writing skills for college bound students as well. We learned that in some programs, final exams and even midterms can be worth 40% or 50% of a final course grade. In some courses, students must obtain a certain mark or pass the final exam to pass the course, regardless of other assessments. Imagine the stress and anxiety that comes from that. Now imagine it when you haven't written an exam in two years, and when your high school education was also severely disrupted. Imagine you have four or five exams in the span of a week or two. Imagine you don't do well on the first one. Imagine the impact of all of *that* on your mental health.

We agreed that "test taking" is not the same as, and does not adequately prepare students for an end of course culminating exam - especially a post-secondary one. We also learned that in some courses, high school teachers are currently not even providing tests.

We know that HCDSB is committed to the success of its students. Graduating from high school is not success if students are not prepared for what comes next. Mental wellness must be a long term goal and must include providing our students with all the tools they need to face the challenges that await them upon graduation.

While our Council agreed on the issues and risks to our students, we had difficulty agreeing on the best solution. Some thoughts we discussed included:

- exam writing skill workshops and/or practice exams
- optional exams and/or
- exams worth as little as 5%, possibly with some flexibility for higher weighting if students do well
- focus on exam writing for students in grades 11 and 12 only

We recognize that this list is not exhaustive, and that there may be other options available.

Our Council did agree that this matter was of sufficient importance to be brought forth to the board for further review and consideration of possible solutions and direction to staff. We would encourage the board to also seek additional feedback from councils and parents of other secondary schools in our board.

Please include this correspondence in the June 15th board report. We look forward to a response from the board and are happy to be of further assistance in addressing this issue.

Yours in Catholic education,

Maria Lourenco, Co-Chair  
Santa Silvestri, Co-Chair  
on behalf of the Assumption Catholic School Council

cc: HCDSB Catholic Parent Involvement Committee  
School Council Chairs, HCDSB Secondary Schools  
Hon. Stephen Lecce, Minister of Education  
Hon. Ross Romano, Minister of Colleges and Universities  
Yael Ginsler, Assistant Deputy Minister, Student Achievement Division  
Jennifer Chan, Director, Curriculum, Assessment, and Student Success Policy Branch  
Jane McKenna, Burlington MPP  
Effie Triantafilopoulos, Oakville-North Burlington MPP  
Steven Crawford, Oakville MPP  
Parm Gill, Milton MPP  
Tedd Arnott, Wellington-Halton Hills MPP

**From:** Lucas Silvestri

**Sent:** June 21, 2021 8:18 AM

**To:** Daly, Patrick <DalyP@hcdsb.org>; Murphy, Patrick <MurphyP@hcdsb.org>; DiPietro, Rosie <DiPietroR@hcdsb.org>

**Cc:** Karabela, Helena <KarabelaH@hcdsb.org>; DeRosa, Peter <DeRosaP@hcdsb.org>; Guzzo, Nancy <GuzzoN@hcdsb.org>; Duarte, Marvin <DuarteM@hcdsb.org>; O'Brien, Timothy <O'BrienT@hcdsb.org>; Iantomasi, Vincent <IantomasiV@hcdsb.org>; Agnew, Brenda <AgnewB@hcdsb.org>; O'Hearn-Czarnota, Janet <O'Hearn-CzarnotaJ@hcdsb.org>

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] The Importance of Exams - Student Perspective

Dear Trustees of the HCDSB and Director Daly,

My name is Lucas Silvestri, and I am a high school student currently enrolled at Assumption Catholic Secondary School in Burlington. In September I will be beginning my Grade 12 year at Assumption, and it is a year for which I have high aspirations and a positive outlook. The quality of education I receive in Grade 12 is very likely to have a large impact on the post-secondary path I choose, which for myself is attending university in a math or science program. However, the HCDSB's decision to eliminate exams for the 2021-22 school year has me worried about the achievability of my post-secondary goals. As a student who has not written an exam since my Grade 10 year, in January of 2020, to graduate high school and continue onto post-secondary with such inexperience in the field of exam-writing is something that I am greatly concerned about. Post-secondary exams are often weighted as much as 40-45% of the final grade for some classes which I have done research into online, signifying the inherent need for students to be well prepared for exam writing before they advance into post-secondary schooling.

Exams are incredibly important to me as a Grade 12 student, as they provide students an opportunity to combine all of their learnings throughout the course of a class, and apply that knowledge in a unique assessment which challenges and encourages deeper thinking than smaller assignments and tests. Exams require much more preparation, and they force students to use all six of their core learning skills, namely organization in the sense of keeping class notes and lessons organized, and initiative, as students must plan and carefully consider their time while studying



for exams. As students, we have been assessed on these six learning skills since kindergarten, which proves even the school board deems them of great importance, as every student receives a letter grade based on their proficiency in these learning skills. By giving students the opportunity to write exams in secondary school, educators will be better preparing students for success in post-secondary, through the usage of the six learning skills and by providing students with a unique challenge through the exam, which is not found within any other assessment given in secondary school.

Throughout the pandemic, the removal of exams as a part of students' final assessment has led to myself and countless other students feeling unprepared for our future endeavours into post-secondary. Throughout high school we have consistently been told by teachers, parents, and other adult figures in our lives of the importance of exams towards our success in not only high school, but in university and college as well. We have been told the importance of studying efficiently and effectively, and to always be well prepared for writing final exams. With all of this encouragement from teachers and parents to do well on exams, I and many students like myself struggle to grasp why exams would be removed for yet another year, when clearly the vast majority of the adult population is in support of exams, and the positive benefits they have on the learning progression of students. Without exams over the course of the pandemic, I also feel that I have lost some of the skills I previously mentioned, as there is no longer an effective way for me to apply those skills in studying and preparing for school assessments. For these skills to truly become second-nature for students, it is inherent that students are continuously brought to apply those skills, which is evidently best done through the means of exams, of which students have been without for nearly 18 months.

Looking forward to my planned enrollment in university for the 2022-23 school year, I rarely feel adequately prepared for the heavy toll of writing exams in university. University exams require students to have built up the skills and knowledge from writing high school exams to succeed, and without those exams for the previous year and a half I struggle to see how I will cope with university exams with my current skill set in exam writing. The only way for students to develop these skills to a level at which they will yield success in post-secondary is to instill these skills within students through exam-writing in high school. The concern for both myself and other students in being unprepared for post-secondary can be eased by the HCDSB by reversing their decision and reinstating exams for the 2021-22 school year, to ensure that we will all be prepared for university beyond. After all, our students are the future, are they not?

Thank you,

Lucas Silvestri.