

February Student Trustee Report

Kimberly Hart

At this time, Student Trustee K. Hart made the following remarks.

“Good evening, Mr. Chair, Mr. Director, Trustees, Staff, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Jeff and I have been very busy this past month, as many events are fast approaching in the near future. The York Region Presidents’ Council (YRPC) Conference, START ’07, is scheduled for March 22nd – 25th, student trustee elections will occur over the next two months, we recently attended a SEAC orientation and also attended the Ontario Student Trustees’ Association conference this past weekend.

Student Trustee elections are planned for early April. Jeff and I will be informing the Board of our two designates at the April Public Board Meeting. To publicize the elections several avenues will be used to reach the largest audience possible. We will be speaking to members of the York Region Presidents’ Council and encouraging them to spread the message to their student councils and students, and placing posters in guidance offices in each secondary school. We will also be encouraging student councils to incorporate election information into their morning announcements and writing to secondary school principals to inform them of the qualities to look for in student trustee candidates, which will aid them in deciding which students to endorse for the position.

Student Councils will be given the chance to formulate their own projects to create a healthier school environment. Similar to the school council grants, schools will be able to apply for up to a maximum of \$1,000 to fund programs, speakers, committees or a wide range of other avenues to promote healthy schools. The term ‘healthy schools’ refers not only to healthy food choices; rather it covers a broad spectrum of bullying, substance abuse, physical activity, mental health or healthy growth and development. This program is unique because it is completely student run with student councils being encouraged to find creative and out-of-the-box solutions. Jeff and I have spoken with most student councils to promote awareness of this opportunity, and will be leading more in-depth brainstorming sessions and forums at future York Region Presidents’ Council meetings.

Jeff and I attended the English Public Board Council (EPBC) meeting of the Ontario Student Trustee Association (OSTA-AECO). I have provided a handout with the structure of OSTA-AECO for trustees, to show the basic structure of this organization. The conference took place in Ottawa on February 16th and 17th. The theme of the Conference was “Imagine a day...”, an appropriate theme to mark the mid-point of our terms, as we reaffirm our role as student trustees.

The conference provided an opportunity for professional development specially tailored towards student trustees. There was an array of guest speakers, presentations, workshops and open discussions throughout the two days.

As student trustees, it is our job to represent the opinions and first-hand experiences of all students. In keeping with this concept, I have compiled several pictures of the delegates that attended the English Public Board Council Conference, who collectively represent hundreds of thousands of students. Jeff and I sit before this Board to put names and faces to the youth who are affected by our Board's programs and policies. I believe that student trustees should bring relevant stories and experiences to the table. I thought this would be an excellent way in which to do this, since as we all know, a picture is worth a thousand words.

In this spirit, I would like you show you the people behind the student trustee title in other Boards across Ontario. As students, Jeff and I see the impact of policies and programs on other students every day of the week. We would encourage the Board to continue envisioning the practical impact on students while making all decisions. This will keep students at the forefront of every decision and will help all students succeed.

Students are capable of great things and have shown this by accomplishing great things. The Ontario Students Trustees' Association (OSTA-AECO) is a prime example of students working together effectively. In addition to supporting the professional development and networking of student trustees within Ontario, OSTA-AECO regularly publishes reports on issues of student concern. They are an effective lobbyist of the Ministry of Education and constantly work on maintaining positive relationships with government officials.

At the conclusion of the conference, Jeff and I received a registration package for the Ontario Student Trustees' Association (OSTA-AECO) Annual General Meeting, the organization's largest annual meeting, aimed at both incoming and outgoing student trustees. Current keynote speakers include education critic Frank Klees, Toronto Mayor David Miller and Minister of Education, the Honourable Kathleen Wynne. Jeff and I look forward to the Board's continued support of OSTA-AECO, and encourage your support of this worthy organization, which represents the largest student stakeholders in Ontario's educational system.

Thank you."