

March 2009 Student Trustee Report

V. Jeyakumaran

STUDENT TRUSTEE REPORT

At this time, Student Trustee V. Jeyakumaran made the following remarks.

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

Snow is melting, the birds are slowly coming back, and spring is in the air. As March winds down, the end of Ariya’s and my term as Student Trustees seems very near. This is because of the Student Trustee elections that are coming up in early April. Ariya and I will be conducting them through the York Region Presidents’ Council (YRPC), as has been done in the past.

More notably, however, Ariya mentioned changes in the Student Trustee electoral process in his last address, and significant progress has been made. We both had a meeting with the Chair D. Giangrande and Vice-Chair A. DeBartolo, as well as Manager, Trustee Services L. Barnes, Coordinating Superintendent of Education B. Harper and Superintendent of Education C. Roach.

Prior to this discussion, the electoral process was single-tiered. Candidates would come to a central location during an YRPC meeting with letters from their respective principals and speeches prepared. These speeches would be presented to the students attending the meeting, and after a brief question and answer session, each school would receive two votes – one per student trustee position available. This system did its justice for a few years.

Recently, more students have wanted to get involved in their education, and we saw a dramatic rise in candidates. This would result in the voters having to pick from 13 to 15 candidates. We discussed the possible issues that could stem from having too many candidates, and ideas started flowing from there.

In the future, we expect to see a two-tiered electoral process, where a committee of students would review an initial written application, and select a group of five to eight candidates. This way, we can ensure a fairer and more efficient election when the remaining candidates make their speeches. We also help create more diversity in regard to the schools that the student trustees attend and represent.

We will be discussing the prospect of such an electoral process with students at an upcoming YRPC meeting.

In the world of education, student involvement is crucial, and this could be the next step in ensuring that future student trustees can hit the ground running and produce change for the better in our already wonderful school board.

Thank you.