

July 2009 Student Trustee Report

A. Hagh and V. Jeyakumaran

STUDENT TRUSTEE REPORTS

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

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

Just one year ago, I was an incredibly stressed out Grade 11 student. I was worried that I was not going to be able to get into the universities I wanted to get into. I was worried that I would not be able to handle the workload or the pressure of being the Student Trustee, and I was worried that people would look at me in the Board Room and see me as just another kid trying to boost his resume. In fact, I vividly remember stuttering through my first student trustee report.

I do not think I could have been any more wrong. Now, a year later, I believe I have grown as a person, and I definitely think I am a very different Student Trustee than I was in September, and I have learned many things during my tenure.

For one, I know how every aspect of the education process is interrelated and must be examined carefully. At first glance, the process of opening a new school may seem like a simple investment, but I have learned that in reality, there is a lot more to it. Population growth trends must be examined, and although the population of an area might be increasing, data must be obtained to make certain that the school will be home to as many students as possible. Teachers must be allocated appropriately, to make sure that each teacher is educating as many students as possible while at the same time being able to tend to the needs of each individual student. Perhaps the surrounding schools may have many students interested in a particular field, and special programs would be put in place accordingly.

I have also seen, first-hand, how successful the democratic body is at dealing with the concerns of the people and ensuring the greater good for students. Being a teenager, I have had my fair share of doubts about “the system” and my experience as Student Trustee has taught me that every single opinion is truly valued, and that all voices are heard.

It took Ariya and I a few months to really get used to the role of student trustee, but it would have taken much longer without the help of many people.

Firstly, I must express my gratitude to Sepideh Soltaninia and Jen Serdetchnaia, our predecessors. They took quite a bit of time out of their busy lives to ensure that Ariya and I would have a smooth transition into the position. We plan on doing the same for our successors Khizer Amin and Maria Bun during the summer, as this guidance was invaluable to us.

Secondly, I would like to thank the wonderful people who do quite a lot of the work behind the scenes. The Trustee Services Team A. Ballard, L. Barnes and L. Reinhardt, who helped us deal with any doubts, questions, or concerns that we had, and who sent us meeting plans that ensured that Ariya and I got our work done.

I must also thank the trustees and superintendents not only for helping Ariya and I to familiarize ourselves with the Board Room environment, but for making this Board the wonderful place it is.

Finally, I must thank my partner, Ariya, for enriching my experience as a Student Trustee, and being there any time a random idea popped into my head. I feel we worked quite well as a team, and that we did in fact make a positive impact on the education of our peers.

No matter how many times Ariya and I bounced ideas off of one another; every so often we would step back and appreciate how great the York Region District School Board already is. In fact, I have realized something over the past few months. Our job here at the Board is not to come up with initiatives for the sake of saying we accomplished something. Our job is to ensure that the young people of the York Region District School Board get the education that they need, and from all of the statistics that I have seen at various meetings, I can assure you that we are doing a formidable job of this at the very least.

I have had a great year, and I am truly grateful that I had the opportunity to represent the students of the Board. A wise person once said "all good things must come to an end," and although this is the case with my term as Student Trustee, it certainly is not the case when we are looking at the wonderful things that the York Region District School Board does.

Thank you."

Student Trustee A. Hagh continued my making the following comments.

"Madame Chair, Mr. Director, Trustees, Staff, Ladies and Gentlemen.

I would like to take a moment to thank each and every one of you for providing the warm support and cooperation that made my stay as Student Trustee not only a memorable experience, but also a highly proficient one. I would also like to express my confidence in the merits and abilities of the new student trustees, who I am sure will continue our efforts in ameliorating the election process for such a role, as well as bringing productive amendments to ESL programs and examination timetables in secondary schools. I am certain that this Board will be able to continue its fine record in improving and refining the experience of all students in and out of the classroom.

Thank you."