

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2025

Public Session: 5:30 p.m.

AGENDA

A. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF TRADITIONAL TERRITORY

S. Jovanovic

B. CALL TO ORDER/NOTING OF MEMBER ABSENCES

S. Jovanovic

C. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

D. NEW BUSINESS:

1. 2025-2026 Equity and Inclusion Overview

Zakia Hamdani, Pratima Burton, Mary Anne Gage

2. 2024-2025 Board Action Plan on Indigenous Education

Marianne Groat, Kirsty Howie, Ann Gilmore

3. DSBN Lockdown Drills and Emergency Procedures

Ann Gilmore

4. Student Achievement Updates

Marian Reimer Friesen, Neil Sheard

E. OTHER BUSINESS

F. ADJOURNMENT

G. NEXT MEETING: February 10, 2026 - 5:30 p.m.

2025 – 2026 Equity and Inclusion Overview

Tuesday, December 9, 2025

BACKGROUND

The District School Board of Niagara (DSBN) is committed to creating learning and working environments where every student and staff member is valued, supported, and able to thrive. Guided by human rights, anti-oppression, anti-racism, and inclusive education, the Board continues to strengthen school and classroom practices and cultivate a deep sense of belonging across all DSBN communities.

Three main structures support the work of the DSBN Equity and Inclusion team: the DSBN Equity Action Plan, the Equity and Inclusion Community Advisory Committee and the Equity and Inclusion website.

EQUITY ACTION PLAN

The DSBN Equity Action Plan continues to guide the Board's long-term commitments to equity, human rights, inclusive education, and anti-oppression. This year marked an important structural shift: the plan moved from annual commitments to a three-year planning cycle. This change was introduced to promote consistency, sustainability, and deeper-long-term progress across the system.

This multi-year structure, grounded in six core tenets: Student Voice, Inclusive Spaces, Culturally and Historically Responsive Curriculum, Anti-Bias, Anti-Racism, Anti-Oppression Learning, Community Partnerships, and Identifying and Removing Systemic Barriers, continues to focus on:

- Creating inclusive spaces where students feel safe, seen, and heard.
- Honouring student voice and partnering with students to shape learning environments.
- Working closely with families and communities to build strong, respectful relationships that support student well-being and achievement.
- Removing barriers and addressing bias to ensure schools are inclusive, safe and welcoming for all.
- Designing learning that reflects the cultural strengths and diverse experiences of students.

As a living document, the Equity Action Plan is regularly reviewed, updated as commitments are achieved, and adapted in response to emerging needs. It also aligns with the DSBN 2023–2028 Strategic Plan, particularly the priorities of Learning, Belonging, and Thriving.

EQUITY AND INCLUSION COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Equity and Inclusion Community Advisory Committee (EICAC) continues to be a vital partner in strengthening relationships between the DSBN and the diverse communities we serve. The committee now meets five times a year to provide guidance, support, and input on initiatives that foster equity and inclusion in DSBN schools.

PROGRAM AND PLANNING COMMITTEE

DECEMBER 9, 2025

In its third cohort since 2021, EICAC includes representatives from equity-deserving groups across Niagara, including parents/caregivers, students, community partners, educators, support staff, a School Board Trustee, Superintendent and the Student Achievement Leaders of Equity and Inclusion.

Highlights of the committee's contributions in 2024-2025 include:

- Advising on the development of student belonging and identity resources to ensure they reflect student experiences and support inclusion across schools.
- Co-creating a resource to support schools in embracing, engaging and empowering families.
- Redesigning of the DSBN Equity and Inclusion website, offering insight on accessibility, inclusive language, and community-centered design.
- Provide feedback on system initiatives that directly impact schools.

EQUITY AND INCLUSION WEBSITE

The redesigned DSBN Equity and Inclusion website offers families, students and community partners a clear and accessible way to engage with DSBN's commitment to equity, inclusive education, and human rights. Key features of the updated site include:

- **Student Voice Opportunities:** highlighting leadership experiences across DSBN (e.g., IDEAS, Rise Up Equity Conference).
- **Equity and Inclusion Community Advisory Committee:** including its purpose, membership cycles, and opportunities for involvement.
- **Community Connections:** featuring partnerships and supports available to students and families.

Input from EICAC was central to refining the website's language, structure, and accessibility, ensuring it serves as a welcoming and helpful resource for families, community members, staff, and students.

CONNECTION TO DSBN STRATEGIC PLAN

Strategic Priority: We respect and uphold the importance of equity, inclusion, dignity and human rights in all learning and working environments so individuals from all social realities and lived experiences are valued. We value caring and supportive environments that promote lifelong learning for all students, staff and community.

Strategic Actions: Examine and change policies, procedures and practices through an equity, inclusion and human rights lens to eliminate differential treatment and outcomes for sovereignty seeking and equity-deserving groups.

Respectfully submitted by:

Zakia Hamdani, Student Achievement Leader of Equity and Inclusion (Elementary)

Pratima Burton, Student Achievement Leader of Equity and Inclusion (Secondary)

Mary Anne Gage, Superintendent of Student Achievement and Well-Being

2024-2025 Board Action Plan on Indigenous Education

December 9, 2025

BACKGROUND

The Indigenous Board Action Plan (BAP) is a Ministry-mandated, annually updated plan that outlines the focused actions the DSBN will take to support the success and well-being of First Nations, Inuit and Métis students. Developed in collaboration with Indigenous partners across Niagara, the BAP guides the use of the Indigenous Education Grant and identifies priority areas such as culturally responsive programming, staff capacity-building, student voice and leadership, and meaningful engagement with Indigenous families and communities.

SUMMARY

The 2024-2025 Indigenous Board Action Plan centers on six key initiatives drawn from the Ontario Ministry of Education's First Nation, Inuit, and Métis policy framework.

1. Supporting First Nations, Inuit and Métis Students

The DSBN continued to expand Indigenous student voice and leadership through the Indigenous Student Trustee, the Indigenous Student Leadership Circle, and a range of K-12 student forums. Targeted supports - including Indigenous Supports Advisors, Student Success Teachers and a Social Worker - provided academic coaching, culturally responsive guidance, and social-emotional support. Partnerships with Brock University, Niagara College, and the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP) further strengthened transitions and helped students explore post-secondary and community pathways.

2. Engaging with Community

The Indigenous Education Council (IEC) continued to guide DSBN's planning and strengthen relationships with Indigenous communities and families. Ongoing collaboration with Elders, Knowledge Keepers, Métis Senators, community partners, parents and students ensured Indigenous voices informed board decisions and programming. Through this engagement, the DSBN deepened partnerships, enhanced cultural safety, and responded to community priorities related to student well-being.

3. Supporting Educators and Staff

The DSBN provided ongoing professional learning to deepen educators' understanding of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis histories, perspectives, and contemporary realities. Staff engaged in curriculum-focused training, community-led learning, AQ Courses, and trauma-informed practice celebrating Indigenous resilience. Teacher Navigators in schools continued to build capacity by sharing resources, highlighting opportunities, and supporting culturally responsive approaches within classrooms.

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4. Supporting All Students

Cross-curricular units, lessons, and school-based resources were developed to embed Indigenous content across all grades K-12. This work aligned with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action and provincial directions on mandatory Indigenous learning, ensuring all students - Indigenous and non-Indigenous - gained meaningful understanding of Indigenous worldviews, history, contributions, sovereignty, and contemporary Indigenous lived experiences.

5. Using Data

The Indigenous Education Team continued to monitor achievement, well-being, participation, and engagement data for self-identified students. Feedback from students, educators, and community partners informed programming and helped assess the impact of resources, professional learning and Indigenous Student Events. This evidence guided decision-making and supported ongoing improvements in educator understanding and student outcomes.

6. Indigenous Education Team

The DSBN's Indigenous Education Team, consisting of seven staff supporting students directly and five focused on system-wide educator learning, continued to strengthen cultural safety, support Indigenous student well-being, and build staff capacity to embed Indigenous perspectives across the system. Student-facing staff helped learners access resources tailored to their unique needs, including connections to cultural activities, community programs, and mental health and well-being services. System-support staff worked with educators to deepen curriculum knowledge and integrate authentic Indigenous content into instruction. Together, their work strengthened home-school relationships and reduced barriers to success.

CONCLUSION

The initiatives outlined in the 2024-2025 Indigenous Board Action Plan advanced the DSBN's strategic commitment to walking together toward reconciliation, belonging, and student well-being. The resulting partnerships, supports, and cultural learning created a strong foundation for continued growth in Indigenous education and for ensuring that Indigenous students feel safe, seen, supported, and successful in every DSBN school.

CONNECTION TO DSBN STRATEGIC PLAN

Strategic Priority: We value and respect the rights of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities, families and individuals and believe in honouring these voices.

Strategic Actions: Promote strategies to work from an asset lens and drawing from the National Centre For Truth and Reconciliation's Calls to Action to strengthen the presence of First Nation, Inuit and Métis cultures, languages, histories and current realities to promote a deeper understanding for all.

Respectfully submitted by:

Marianne Groat, Student Achievement Leader for Indigenous Education

Kirsty Howie, Student Achievement Leader Indigenous Well-Being

Ann Gilmore, Superintendent of Achievement and Student Well-Being

DSBN Lockdown Drills & Emergency Procedures

December 9, 2025

BACKGROUND

The Ministry of Education requires all schools to conduct at least two lockdown drills annually, as outlined in the *Ontario School Board Emergency Management Guidelines (2017)* and reflected in DSBN Policy G-02: Safe Schools and Policy G-24: On-Site/Off-Site Evacuations. These guidelines provide a consistent provincial approach to emergency preparedness and emphasize the need for clear, predictable safety practices. DSBN supports this through established procedures, staff training, and proactive communication, with lockdown drills playing a key role in reinforcing routines that help keep students and staff safe.

To support a coordinated system approach, DSBN designated November 3–7 and May 4–8 as board-wide windows for lockdown drills, aligning with National Community Safety and Crime Prevention Month and Emergency Preparedness Week. DSBN continues to work closely with the Niagara Regional Police Service (NRPS), whose expertise informs the development of procedures, resources, and consistent terminology. This partnership helps ensure alignment with provincial expectations and supports clear, predictable safety practices across all DSBN schools.

SUMMARY

School administrators implement the Annual Lockdown and Lock & Learn Plan for their schools in accordance with AP 3-29. This includes selecting drill dates within the designated DSBN timeframes, preparing staff and students, and ensuring that all school and emergency information is current. Administrators communicate proactively with families, staff, childcare partners, and community stakeholders to ensure that drills are predictable, and well understood.

Clear staff training, use of quick reference materials, and consistent messaging help establish calm, orderly routines during drills and reinforce DSBN's commitment to systemwide preparedness. The information collected through these drills contributes to ongoing refinement of DSBN emergency procedures and supports continued alignment with Ministry guidelines, DSBN policies, and best practices in school safety. As part of this broader work, it is important to differentiate among the four emergency procedures used across DSBN schools. Each serves a distinct purpose and is initiated based on the level and nature of the risk.

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Emergency Procedures Overview				
	DSBN Internal Process: Lock & Learn	Provincial Emergency Procedures		
		Lockdown	Hold and Secure	Shelter in Place
Purpose	To address an internal situation requiring hallway clearance while learning continues normally in classrooms	Response to an internal threat posing immediate risk to safety	Response to an external threat posing immediate risk to safety	Response to environmental hazards posing immediate risk to safety
Examples	Initiated by an Administrator in response to a medical emergency or a dysregulated student	Initiated by an Administrator or NRPS in response to an intruder or a suspected weapon	Initiated by NRPS in response to a crime in progress or police pursuit of suspects	Initiated by NRPS or a Public Authority in response to extreme weather, hazardous material spills, or poor air quality
Actions	- Hallways cleared; classes remain in session - Students/staff enter nearest classroom; door closed - Ends when the administrator lifts the procedure	- Classroom doors/windows locked; lights off; out of sight - No movement in the building - No one released until NRPS or Administrator directs - NRPS assumes command with administrator and superintendent support	- Exterior doors locked; school continues inside - No entry/exit until NRPS confirms safety - Communication coordinated centrally with Public Relations	- Students/staff remain indoors - Movement may be restricted; direction follows NRPS or Public Authority - Learning continues with modifications as required

CONCLUSION

DSBN's ongoing commitment to safety and preparedness ensures that all students and staff experience schools as secure, welcoming spaces where learning and growth are prioritized. By embedding emergency procedures—such as lockdown drills—into regular school routines, and continuously refining these practices through collaboration, clear communication, and thorough training, DSBN builds a strong culture of responsibility and care. This proactive approach not only supports student well-being, but also strengthens trust and partnership among families, staff, and the broader community.

CONNECTION TO DSBN STRATEGIC PLAN

Strategic Priority: We value caring and supportive environments that promote lifelong learning for all students, staff and community.

Strategic Actions: Establish learning spaces that are safe, welcoming and responsive to student needs.

Respectfully submitted by:

Ann Gilmore, Superintendent of Achievement and Student Well-Being

Student Achievement Updates

December 9, 2025

BACKGROUND

The Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) assessments are based on Ontario Curriculum expectations for reading, writing, and mathematics. These assessments provide a standardized measure of student learning at key transition points in a student's educational journey. EQAO results indicate the percentage of students who achieve at or above the provincial standard (Level 3).

Students in Grades 3 and 6 complete reading, writing, and mathematics assessments in the spring. Grade 9 students write the mathematics assessment near the end of their math course, in either semester one or two. In Grade 10, students complete the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT), which is a graduation requirement.

In the 2023–24 school year, the Ministry of Education introduced the Math Achievement Action Plan (MAAP). MAAP requires school boards to review student data, identify needs at both the school and board levels, and develop strategies to support designated priority schools as well as the entire system.

The EQAO assessments and associated MAAP work support DSNB's strategic priorities; by using data to guide our decisions, we ensure every student has the opportunity to succeed and thrive.

ELEMENTARY EQAO

EQAO results in elementary were positive, with DSNB building on strong achievement and outperforming the provincial average in Reading, Writing, and Math for both Grade 3 and Grade 6.

Grade 3

Grade 3 students topped the provincial averages by as much as 15%, with reading at 87%, writing at 80%, and math at 79 %.

Grade 3	2023/2024 DSBN	2024/2025 DSBN	2024/2025 Province	DSBN Change	DSBN vs Province
Reading	88%	87%	74%	-1%	+13%
Writing	81%	80%	65%	-1%	+15%
Math	81%	79%	64%	-2%	+15%

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Grade 6

Grade 6 students achieved great success, improving in all areas over 2023/2024 and performing above the provincial average by 20% in math, and 9% in both reading and writing.

Grade 6	2023/2024 DSBN	2024/2025 DSBN	2024/2025 Province	DSBN Change	DSBN vs Province
Reading	92%	94%	86%	+2%	+8%
Writing	92%	94%	85%	+2%	+9%
Math	68%	71%	51%	+3%	+20%

Elementary Math Achievement Action Plan

MAAP schools made great strides in the 2024/2025 school year with an average achievement of 87% in grade 3 math and 85% in grade 6 math, both averages being well above both board and provincial data. This also represents a 24% increase in grade 3 and 52% increase in grade 6 since 2022/2023. These positive results can be attributed to a combination of job-embedded professional learning, solid instruction and intervention support.

MAAP Schools	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	Change
Grade 3 Math	63%	78%	87%	+9%
Grade 6 Math	33%	80%	85%	+5%

SECONDARY EQAO

Grade 9 Math

We are pleased to share that our students achieved strong results on the Grade 9 Mathematics EQAO assessment. The board recorded an 8 % increase in scores compared to the 2023–24 school year. Over the past two years, overall performance has improved by 15%, reflecting our continued commitment to student success. Further to that, all sixteen secondary schools saw an increase in their scores compared to the previous school year.

	2023/2024 DSBN	2024/2025 DSBN	2024/2025 Province	DSBN Change	DSBN vs Province
Grade 9 Math	58%	66%	58%	+8 %	+8%

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Math Achievement Action Plan

Our single MAAP school achieved significant progress in the 2024–2025 school year, with a 24% increase over the previous two years. This improvement places the school well above provincial results.

	MAAP School 2022/2023	MAAP School 2023/2024	MAAP School 2024/2025	Change
Grade 9 Math	38%	55%	62%	+7%

Grade 10 OSSLT

DSBN's OSSLT results have remained strong and show continued growth since 2022–23. This year, our overall success rate increased by 3% compared to the previous school year, and we continue to perform above the provincial average by 4%

	2023/2024 DSBN	2024/2025 DSBN	2024/2025 Province	DSBN Change	DSBN vs Province
Grade 10 OSSLT	86%	89%	85%	+3%	+4%

CONCLUSION

EQAO results from the 2024–2025 school year highlight the impact of DSBN's system improvement strategies and the dedication of staff in supporting student learning. The data reinforces our continued focus on mathematics and will be integrated into our existing data review process. This approach will inform the development of student, class, and school summaries that drive both school- and board-level Student Achievement Plans.

Connection to Strategic Plan

Strategic Priorities: We value the uniqueness of each individual and believe everyone can excel and achieve excellence at the DSBN.

Strategic Actions: Using innovative, engaging and culturally-responsive programming to support students now and as they transition to their future pathways.

Respectfully submitted by:

Marian Reimer Friesen, Superintendent of Student Achievement & Well-being

Neil Sheard, Superintendent of Student Achievement & Well-being