

October 8, 2022

Good day Mr. Chair,

Without prejudice, I attach for your information and that of all trustees, my letter dated, August 6, 2021, to the presiding Chair at the time.

My purpose is none other than to share my letter and offer you my personal reflections as the term comes to an end. Hopefully, it will give you and others some pause to think about the promises we made, as guardians of Catholic Education and stewards of half a billion dollars of taxpayer's money. I will leave it to the former Chair's discretion to share his response if he wishes. Unfortunately, it amounted to a denial that generated no tangible results. It is also noteworthy that my letter served to inform the ADR report at the time and although I offered to have it included in the final report, it was not.

It became clear throughout 2021 that the board was changing course, preoccupying itself more with the politics and ideologies of the day in favor of a block of trustees, than its governance and oversight role. As the Chairs drifted from their rightful role of impartial arbitrators, it became more and more apparent that the democratic right of constituents and trustees' who speak for them, would continue to be obstructed and muzzled. Muting during virtual meetings that started in 2021, supposedly as a technical problem, was used as a favored tool in 2022, expulsions from public meetings became the rule rather than the exception, delegations were declined in record numbers while future trustee candidates were permitted to delegate in co-operation with aspiring service providers, notices of motion were released without authorization before being tabled with the public agenda, trustees were sanctioned for code of conduct violations without an opportunity to defend themselves, the unprecedented decision to publish code of conduct reports launched, investigated and written by the Chair and Vice-Chair, during an election, speaks more to political opportunity than transparency. Meanwhile the school yard antics, the jeering, the sarcasm, the Cheshire smiles, the virtual cheerleaders, and the twitter trolls never relented from their canceling and shaming campaigns. Bullying skills, such as these, learned years ago in the school yard, which we do not accept from our students, should have no place with the adults running our school board. The list goes on, Mr. Chair and this governance crisis has persisted without consideration to the consequences on the Board. I can't but wonder about the opportunities we missed, the time we lost and the money we spent, especially on legal, consulting and parliamentarian fees. I wonder if we were true to our statutory responsibilities, our obligation to parents, students, and Catholic rate payors? Did we keep our classrooms well-funded? Did we set an example for our students? In the end, did we honor our Oath of Office?

Certainly, Mr. Chair my decision not to run has been a difficult and a very personal one. I made a promise to my family that I would focus my energies on a speedy recovery from a recent health issue. It is a promise that I'm keeping with the well wishes of my many supporters notwithstanding their regret that I'm not a candidate for the next term. As an optimist I hope that the board will do better next time to protect Catholic Education. As a realist I also know that next term could be a repeat of the last, where most parents and tax payors will not get representation, Catholic Education will continue to be eroded and where governance and oversight will continue to take a second place to the politics.

Respectfully,

Peter DeRosa Oakville Trustee at Large and former Chair of the Board 2018/2019