

## Special Board of Trustees' Meeting

A special public meeting of the Board of Trustees was held on Thursday, September 19, 2013 at the Waterloo Region Catholic Education Centre.

### Trustees Present:

Joyce Anderson; Wayne Buchholtz (Chair); Manuel da Silva; Janek Jagiellowicz; Frank Johnson; Anthony Piscitelli; Wendy Price; Peter Reitmeier; Greg Reitzel

### Student Trustees Present:

### Administrative Officials Present:

Larry Clifford; Gerry Clifford; David DeSantis; Derek Haime; Maria Ivankovic; John Shewchuk

### Special Resources For The Meeting:

### Regrets:

Alexandru Gheorghe; Carlos Valero; Shesh Maharaj; Laura Shoemaker; Fr. Fred Scinto

### Recorder:

Barb Pilsner, Executive Administrative Assistant

**NOTE ON VOTING:** Under Board by-law 5.7 all Board decisions made by consensus are deemed the equivalent of a unanimous vote. A consensus decision is therefore deemed to be a vote of 9-0. Under Board by-law 5.11 every Trustee "shall vote on all questions on which the Trustee is entitled to vote" and abstentions are not permitted.

## 1. **Call to Order:**

The Chair of the Board called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

### **1.1 Opening Prayer & Memorials**

The opening prayer was led by F. Johnson, Board Pastoral Team. Intentions were offered for the uncle of M. da Silva's wife, Grace da Silva and the victims of bus crash in Ottawa.

### **1.2 Approval of Agenda**

**2013-133** -- It was *moved* by **F. Johnson** and *seconded* by **G. Reitzel**:

*THAT the agenda for September 19, 2013 be now approved. --- Carried by consensus.*

J. Anderson asked to have her comments recorded on the process that is being used at this board meeting: I received the seven page document in question only this evening and therefore have not had any opportunity to review it in advance.

I asked that the Chair provide copies of this document two days ago but this request was denied.

Three members of the Board have had access to the report in advance of this evening, while the remaining six members, including Mr. Piscitelli, have not had an opportunity to consider the document.

It is impossible for the Board to review and consider the contents in any meaningful way at this point in time. Such action is not aligned with our current practices as a board, and violates the most basic principles of fairness and justice.

It is important that this Board conduct itself in an open, transparent and fair manner at all times.

However, it is also important that the Board proceed with the discussion of this issue in a timely fashion and therefore despite my concerns, I will not request the matter tabled.

I do however request that the record reflect this failure in the process this evening.

### **1.3 Declaration of Pecuniary Interest**

- 1.3.1 From the current meeting – NIL
- 1.3.2 From a previous public or in-camera meeting – NIL

## **2. Consent Agenda: Director of Education (e.g. day-to-day operational matters from the Ministry of Education that the board is required to do)**

## **3. Consent Agenda: Board of Trustees (Minutes of meetings)**

## **4 Delegations**

## **5 Ownership Linkage (Communication with the External Environment)**

## **6 Actions From Board Committees/Task Forces**

## **7 Board Education (at the request of the Board)**

## **8. Policy Discussion**

### **8.1 Trustee Code of Conduct Concern**

W. Buchholtz presented the complaint against trustee Piscitelli under Section 218.3 of the Education Act from trustee Reitmeier. He gave trustees an opportunity to read the complaint. W. Buchholtz stated trustee Piscitelli had been invited to attend a meeting with himself and the Director of Education on Monday but declined to attend. Trustees will decide if a breach has occurred and if it has whether sanctions would be imposed.

Trustee Reitmeier's complaint (Appendix A) was that trustee Piscitelli violated Board Policy II 002 Governing Style and Board Policy II 007 Board Members' Code of Conduct by submitting an article to The Record on September 13 and on Twitter September 15 that contained misleading and non-factual statements.

**2013-134 --** It was *moved* by **P. Reitmeier** and *seconded* by **G. Reitzel**:

*THAT the Board of Trustees find trustee Anthony Piscitelli in violation of the WCDSB Board Policy II 007 Board Members' Code of Conduct and Policy II 002 Governing Style. --- No consensus.*

A.Piscitelli had the opportunity to read his statement (Appendix B) which he asked to have recorded in the minutes.

Trustees gave their opinion on whether they felt trustee Piscitelli was or was not in violation.

A.Piscitelli requested the following statement be recorded in the minutes:

You may dislike how I went about raising my opinions and I respect your right to feel that way. I also understand that many of you may disagree with my opinion. However, I firmly believe in my freedom of speech and that I have both a right, and an obligation, to share my thoughts with the public.

P. Reitmeier as the mover and G. Reitzel as the seconder of the motion were given the option for final comments before voting on the motion. A.Piscitelli is disqualified from voting under the Education Act.

### **Vote:**

**In Favour:** G. Reitzel, M. da Silva, W. Price, P. Reitmeier, Frank, Wayne

**Against:** J. Anderson and J. Jagiellowicz

**Motion carried: 6 to 2**

**2013-135 --** It was *moved* by **F. Johnson** and *seconded* by **W. Price**:

*Whereas as trustee Piscitelli has been found to be in breach of the code of conduct for trustees he be suspended*

from attendance at committee meetings of which he is a member for the period of September to December 2013. ---  
**No consensus.**

A. Piscitelli requested that given the work of the Audit committee that he be allowed to sit on that committee. This was denied. G. Reitzel asked for clarification on the motion that it was just the committees he was suspended from attending and not Committee of the Whole meetings. The Chair stated it was just the committees he was appointed to sit on (Audit, Open Access Task Force, Suspension/Expulsion and as an alternate on the Catholic Parent Involvement Committee). The Chair called for a vote on the motion.

**Vote:**

**In Favour:** G. Reitzel, M. da Silva, F. Johnson, W. Price, P. Reitmeier, W. Buchholtz

**Against:** J. Anderson, J. Jagiellowicz

**Motion carried: 6 to 2**

P. Reitmeier moved that the Board of Trustees request that trustee Piscitelli be censured.

The Chair asked for a two minute recess to discuss trustee Reitmeier's motion.

The meeting recessed at 7:12 pm.

The meeting resumed at 7:14 p.m.

The Chair advised that the second motion would be publicly recorded suspending trustee Piscitelli from committee meetings however trustee Reitmeier had the right to make the motion regarding censure. P. Reitmeier withdrew the motion. The Chair advised trustee Piscitelli he had 14 days beginning September 20<sup>th</sup> to appeal the decision.

## **9. Assurance of Successful Board Performance**

## **10. Assurance of Successful Director of Education Performance**

### **10.1 Monitoring Reports & Vote on Compliance**

### **10.2 Advice from the CEO**

## **11. Potential Agenda Items**

### **11.1 Trustee Inquiry Report from the CEO**

### **11.2 Shared Concerns**

## **12. Announcements**

**12.1** The following reports are posted on the Board web page: [www.wcdsb.ca](http://www.wcdsb.ca)

- a) Minutes of SEAC Meetings
- b) Minutes of Parent Involvement Committee Meetings

**12.2** Upcoming Meetings/Events (all scheduled for the Catholic education Centre unless otherwise indicated):

## **13. Items for the Next Meeting Agenda**

## **14. Adjournment – Confirm decisions made tonight. Closing Prayer**

The Recording Secretary confirmed the meeting decisions.

## **15. Motion to Adjourn**

**2013-136** -- It was *moved* by **M. da Silva** and *seconded* by **W. Price**:  
*THAT the meeting be now adjourned.*

The meeting was adjourned by consensus at 7:18 p.m.

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Chair of the Board

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Secretary

## Appendix A

Formal submission of complaint with regards to Trustee Piscitelli.

### Education Act

R.S.O. 1990, CHAPTER E.2

**Consolidation Period:** From September 12, 2012 to the [e-Laws currency date](#).

Last amendment: 2012, c. 11, s. 21.

#### Conduct of Members of School Boards

##### Duties of board members

**218.1** A member of a board shall,

- (a) carry out his or her responsibilities in a manner that assists the board in fulfilling its duties under this Act, the regulations and the guidelines issued under this Act, including but not limited to the board's duties under section 169.1;
- (b) attend and participate in meetings of the board, including meetings of board committees of which he or she is a member;
- (c) consult with parents, students and supporters of the board on the board's multi-year plan under clause 169.1 (1) (f);
- (d) bring concerns of parents, students and supporters of the board to the attention of the board;
- (e) uphold the implementation of any board resolution after it is passed by the board;
- (f) entrust the day to day management of the board to its staff through the board's director of education;
- (g) maintain focus on student achievement and well-being; and
- (h) comply with the board's code of conduct. 2009, c. 25, s. 25.

##### Code of conduct

**218.2 (1)** A board may adopt a code of conduct that applies to the members of the board. 2009, c. 25, s. 25.

##### Minister's regulations

**(2)** The Minister may make regulations,

- (a) requiring a board to adopt a code of conduct under subsection (1);
- (b) governing codes of conduct that apply to board members, whether permitted or required under this section, including,

- (i) prescribing codes of conduct or parts of codes of conduct, and
- (ii) prescribing matters to be addressed by codes of conduct. 2009, c. 25, s. 25; 2011, c. 9, Sched. 10, s. 2.

### **Enforcement of code of conduct**

**218.3 (1)** A member of a board who has reasonable grounds to believe that a member of the board has breached the board's code of conduct may bring the alleged breach to the attention of the board. 2009, c. 25, s. 25.

### **Same**

**(2)** If an alleged breach is brought to the attention of the board under subsection (1), the board shall make inquiries into the matter and shall, based on the results of the inquiries, determine whether the member has breached the board's code of conduct. 2009, c. 25, s. 25.

### **Same**

**(3)** If the board determines under subsection (2) that the member has breached the board's code of conduct, the board may impose one or more of the following sanctions:

1. Censure of the member.
2. Barring the member from attending all or part of a meeting of the board or a meeting of a committee of the board.
3. Barring the member from sitting on one or more committees of the board, for the period of time specified by the board. 2009, c. 25, s. 25.

### **Same**

**(4)** For greater certainty, the imposition of a sanction under paragraph 2 of subsection (3) barring a member from attending all or part of a meeting of the board shall be deemed, for the purpose of clause 228 (1) (b), to be authorization for the member to be absent from the meeting. 2009, c. 25, s. 25.

### **Same**

**(5)** A member of a board who is barred from attending all or part of a meeting of the board or a meeting of a committee of the board under subsection (3) is not entitled to receive any materials that relate to that meeting or that part of the meeting and that are not available to members of the public. 2009, c. 25, s. 25.

### **Same**

**(6)** If a board determines that a member has breached the board's code of conduct under subsection (2),

- (a) the board shall give the member written notice of the determination and of any sanction imposed by the board;
- (b) the notice shall inform the member that he or she may make written submissions to the board in respect of the determination or sanction by a date specified in the notice that is at least 14 days after the notice is received by the member; and
- (c) the board shall consider any submissions made by the member in accordance with clause (b) and shall confirm or revoke the determination within 14 days after the submissions are received. 2009, c. 25, s. 25.

**Same**

(7) If the board revokes a determination under clause (6) (c), any sanction imposed by the board is revoked. 2009, c. 25, s. 25.

**Same**

(8) If the board confirms a determination under clause (6) (c), the board shall, within the time referred to in that clause, confirm, vary or revoke the sanction. 2009, c. 25, s. 25.

**Same**

(9) If a sanction is varied or revoked under subsection (7) or (8), the variation or revocation shall be deemed to be effective as of the date the original determination was made under subsection (2). 2009, c. 25, s. 25.

**Same**

(10) Despite subsection 207 (1) but subject to subsection (11), the part of a meeting of the board during which a breach or alleged breach of the board's code of conduct is considered may be closed to the public when the breach or alleged breach involves any of the matters described in clauses 207 (2) (a) to (e). 2009, c. 25, s. 25.

**Same**

(11) A board shall do the following things by resolution at a meeting of the board, and the vote on the resolution shall be open to the public:

1. Make a determination under subsection (2) that a member has breached the board's code of conduct.
2. Impose a sanction under subsection (3).
3. Confirm or revoke a determination under clause (6) (c).
4. Confirm, vary or revoke a sanction under subsection (8). 2009, c. 25, s. 25.

**Same**

(12) A member who is alleged to have breached the board's code of conduct shall not vote on a resolution to do any of the things described in paragraphs 1 to 4 of subsection (11). 2009, c. 25, s. 25.

**Same**

(13) The passage of a resolution to do any of the things described in paragraphs 1 to 4 of subsection (11) shall be recorded in the minutes of the meeting. 2009, c. 25, s. 25.

**Same**

(14) The *Statutory Powers Procedure Act* does not apply to anything done under this section. 2009, c. 25, s. 25.

## Duties of Board Chair

**Additional duties of chair**

218.4 In addition to any other duties under the Act, the chair of a board shall,

- (a) preside over meetings of the board;
- (b) conduct the meetings in accordance with the board's procedures and practices for the conduct of board meetings;

- (c) establish agendas for board meetings, in consultation with the board's director of education or the supervisory officer acting as the board's director of education;
- (d) ensure that members of the board have the information needed for informed discussion of the agenda items;
- (e) act as spokesperson to the public on behalf of the board, unless otherwise determined by the board;
- (f) convey the decisions of the board to the board's director of education or the supervisory officer acting as the board's director of education;
- (g) provide leadership to the board in maintaining the board's focus on the multi-year plan established under section 169.1;
- (h) provide leadership to the board in maintaining the board's focus on the board's mission and vision; and
- (i) assume such other responsibilities as may be specified by the board. 2009, c. 25, s. 25.

Policy II are grouped under Governance Process

#### *Policy II 002 Governing Style*

*5. Enforce upon itself whatever discipline is needed to govern with excellence. Discipline will apply to matters such as attendance, preparation for meetings, policymaking principles, respect of roles, and ensuring the continuance of governance capability.*

*a. Concerns with any board member performance will be brought to the attention of the chair of the board in writing*

*b. The chair of the board will attempt to facilitate a resolution. Failing that, the issue will be brought to a meeting of the board of trustees. This meeting will be held in-camera if the concern about a board member's performance relates to an issue which the Education Act allows to be dealt with in a meeting closed to the public*

*c. The Board of Trustees will determine if the member's performance is in violation of the code of conduct*

*d. Trustees named in the complaint on a member's performance shall not vote on a resolution determining if the named trustee violated the code of conduct*

*e. Board members found to be in violation of policy by the Board of Trustees may be subject to a motion of censure at a regular meeting of the Board under section 218.3 of the Education Act.*

#### *Policy II 007 Board Members' Code of Conduct*

*The key to better board governance lies in the working relationships among Trustees and between Trustees and staff.*

*The social dynamics of board interaction and the integrity of individual Trustees reflect their responsibilities as leaders in the system. The trustees shall not cause or allow conditions, procedures, actions or decisions that are undignified, unprofessional or contrary to the preservation and promotion of Catholic values and teachings and to a positive image of the Board.*

*The Board commits itself and its members to ethical, businesslike, and lawful conduct, including proper use of authority and appropriate decorum when acting as board members.*

The complaint I bring forward will allege that Trustee Piscitelli has violated these policies. The basis for the complaint is derived from Trustee Piscitelli's written submission to the Waterloo Region Record, published on Friday, September 13, 2013, and on Twitter from September 15, 2013.

1. PII 007 *The trustees shall not cause or allow conditions, procedures, actions or decisions that are undignified, unprofessional or contrary to the preservation and promotion of Catholic values and teachings and to a positive image of the Board.*

*The Board commits itself and its members to ethical, businesslike, and lawful conduct, including proper use of authority and appropriate decorum when acting as board members.*

I submit that statements made by Trustee Piscitelli were misleading, non-factual and inaccurate as conditions that are "undignified, unprofessional or contrary to the preservation and promotion of Catholic values and teachings". The following are examples of the mis-leading and inaccurate comments.

a) from Waterloo Region Record, Friday September 13.

"the Ontario Catholic school system was slow to adopt reforms aimed at improving circumstances for gay and lesbian students."

This is a very broad and inaccurate statement based on no factual evidence. Trustees have been made fully aware and were updated regularly on supports within our schools.

b) from Waterloo Region Record, Friday September 13.

"Instead of fighting gay-straight alliances, school board leaders should have been focused on finding a way to make them work within a Catholic context."

Once again, there have been regular updates provided to the board on the efforts of the staff of our system, and also that of the OCSTA while creating Catholic context for Bill 13 in the form of the Respecting Difference framework document.

c) from Twitter post, Sunday September 15, 2013

Anthony Piscitelli @AnthonyPiscitel 15 Sep

@WCDSBNewswire the Director of Ed was provided an advance copy and did not share any factual corrections prior to publication

I understand the director did reach out to Trustee Piscitelli to attempt to clarify factual information. I defer to the director to provide a timeline of the offer.

d) from "Letter to the Editor", submitted by board chair Wayne Buchholtz to Waterloo Region Record, published Tuesday, September 18, 2013

"Anthony Piscitelli's column contains two serious factual errors.

Piscitelli, a Waterloo Catholic District School Board trustee, stated: "...in Waterloo Region we do not allow non-Catholics into our elementary schools."

This statement is not only totally false, it does a disservice to the board's staff who work diligently to provide a quality, inclusive, faith-based education in Waterloo Region and discourages families with a legitimate desire for their children to attend a faith-based elementary school from even asking if they qualify.

The fact is, for several decades Waterloo Region's Catholic schools have admitted non-Catholic students to our elementary schools. The admissions are made on a case-by-case basis by the director of education.

2. I ask you to consider the following as violation of the following policy statement in P II 002 "*policymaking principles, respect of roles, and ensuring the continuance of governance capability.*"

Also extracted from "Letter to the Editor", submitted by board chair Wayne Buchholtz to Waterloo Region Record, published Tuesday, September 18, 2013

"Piscitelli also referred to " ... the Waterloo Catholic District School Board's plans to launch a task force to study all aspects, and all the implications, of having non-Catholics attend Catholic elementary schools."

Piscitelli does not speak for the trustee task force nor does he speak for the board of trustees of the Waterloo Catholic District School Board. In fact, the terms of reference of the trustee task force have not been set — nor has the task force even met to discuss the issue — so Piscitelli can't possibly know what the committee will or will not consider.

It is not Piscitelli's role to make public announcements about board committee mandates. The terms of reference of the trustee committee will be announced by the board chair once they have been established."

Trustee Piscitelli in my view has breached the "policymaking principles" as given in the policy, but has also contravened the education act which states as a role of the chair of the board ...

[218.4](#) In addition to any other duties under the Act, the chair of a board shall,

(e) act as spokesperson to the public on behalf of the board, unless otherwise determined by the board;

## Conclusion

I ask the board to consider this submission given numerous incorrect and un-true statements made by Trustee Piscitelli as sufficient evidence that Trustee Piscitelli is in Violation of Board *Policy II 007 Board Members' Code of Conduct*, specifically for making statements that were misleading, non-factual and inaccurate as conditions that are "undignified, unprofessional or contrary to the preservation and promotion of Catholic values and teachings" as well as "The Board commits itself and its members to ethical, businesslike, and lawful conduct, including proper use of authority and appropriate decorum when acting as board members."., and, under *Policy II*

*002 Governing Style, that trustee Piscitelli be found in violation regarding “Discipline will apply to matters such as attendance, preparation for meetings, policymaking principles, respect of roles, and ensuring the continuance of governance capability.”*

**Motion**

*I move that the Board of Trustees find Trustee Piscitelli in violation of the WCDSB Board Policy II 007 Board Members' Code of Conduct, and Policy II 002 Governing Style.*

## **Appendix B**

### **A. Piscitelli's Statement**

I ask that this statement in its entirety be included in the minutes of the meeting. I will be reading the statement and I will provide a digital copy to the recording secretary when I am done speaking.

It was not my intent to violate the code of conduct and I do not believe I have violated it. My goal in writing an article and speaking to the media was to encourage the Board of Trustees to take steps which will ultimately lead to the opening up of our elementary system to all students regardless of their religion.

When I decided to write a newspaper article I *expected* members of the Board of Trustees would thoroughly review it to attempt to catch me in a technicality. I thought I had covered all contingencies. I even published the numbers on my own website showing that Catholic attitudes towards same-sex marriage had become more favourable to try and anticipate where criticism might arise.

I acknowledge that my article contained a factual error, and I now know that it is incorrect to state that non-Catholics cannot attend our elementary schools. I am sorry for any misperception this may have caused in the community.

I should not have written "in Waterloo Region we do not allow non-Catholics into our elementary schools". I should have instead been more specific, as I had been in a previous article, and written "Currently anyone can attend our secondary schools but Waterloo Catholic elementary schools, with some minor exceptions, are restricted to individuals who have been baptized Catholic or are children of baptized Catholic parents."

This was an error and if I had noticed it before publication I would have corrected it.

However, based upon Administrative Procedures Memorandum APA001 I believe an error in my wording is minor in nature. This procedure defines non-Catholic stating "Non-Catholic: refers to students who would be ineligible to attend a Waterloo Catholic school because their parent(s)/guardian(s) are not Roman Catholic and cannot direct their tax support to the Board. (The Exception is outlined in #11(d) below)." 11(d) then states "An elementary student, living in a residence within the jurisdiction of the Board which is not eligible to be assessed for Catholic District School Board Support, who would otherwise be admitted – that is both parent(s)/guardian(s) are non-Roman Catholic – may be admitted to a school operated by the Board if documentation is presented as evidence that the student is a baptized Roman Catholic." In another section direction is even provided to school Principals as follows "if the family is non-Catholic and unable to direct their taxes to the Waterloo Catholic District School Board. These families should be referred to the local public school."

While I believe the wording of this procedure shows my error was minor in nature, I do acknowledge that I made a technical error in my article of September 16th.

I believe the intent of my article is still valid. Non-Catholics are not automatically accepted into our system and less than 1% of the elementary students in our system are non-Catholic. My main conclusion was that we should remove all restrictions on non-Catholics attending our elementary schools. I stand firmly behind this belief and I stand behind my right to communicate this belief to the media in my role as an individual Trustee.

I would also like to respond to another claim against me. In a letter to the Editor on Wednesday September 18th the Chair of our Board wrote "'Piscitelli also referred to ' ... the Waterloo Catholic District School Board's plans to launch a task force to study all aspects, and all the implications, of having non-Catholics attend Catholic elementary schools.' Piscitelli does not speak for the trustee task force nor does he speak for the board of trustees of the Waterloo Catholic District School Board. In fact, the terms of reference of the trustee task force have not been set — nor has the task force even met to discuss the issue — so Piscitelli can't possibly know what the committee will or will not consider."

The reason I made that statement, and used the awkward phrasing "to launch a task force to study all aspects, and all the implications, of having non-Catholics attend Catholic elementary schools" is that I was paraphrasing a CBC article which stated: "WCDSB Chair Wayne Buchholtz told CBC News that the task force would be set up in September to study all aspects and all the implications of open access elementary schools."

I believe this clearly demonstrates I was not attempting to speak on behalf of the Board but instead simply repeating statements made by the Board's spokesperson.

I would also like to add that I am disappointed that we are here tonight. I believe this could have all been avoided.

On Thursday September 12<sup>th</sup> at 4:50pm I emailed the entire Board of Trustees and the Director of Education to give a heads up that my article had been accepted for publication. I also included a copy of the article. Less than an hour later I was emailed by the Director of Education who indicated he had concerns about the article. I replied to the Director of Education, Chair and Vice Chair at 6:44pm that the article may run on Friday morning and that if there were factual corrections I needed them soon. At 7:07pm the Director of Education replied but did not provide any specific factual concerns. I responded at 7:25pm again asking for factual corrections. I did not hear back from the Director of Education again until after the article had run.

Had I been told at this time there was a factual error I could have contacted the Record and corrected the article before it went to print.

On Friday September 13<sup>th</sup> and Saturday September 14<sup>th</sup> various concerns were shared with me by email about the article from multiple Trustees on the Board. No one expressed to me a concern that I had made a factual error with respect to my statement about non-Catholics attending our elementary schools. Had I been told on Friday or Saturday morning that I had made a factual error with respect to my statement about non-Catholic students attending our elementary schools I could have approached the Record and asked for a correction or retraction.

Trustees did indicate to me that they had concerns about one section where I wrote: “Last year, for example, the Ontario Catholic Trustees Association aggressively fought the provincial governments attempts to ensure that Gay Straight Alliances (GSAs) were available as a student support for every student in this province. Instead of opposing GSAs school board leaders should have been focused on finding a way to make them work within a Catholic context.” I stand behind this opinion and I firmly believe the public record from Provincial Committee hearings and media articles provide sufficient evidence to back it up.

On the morning of Saturday September 14<sup>th</sup> I sent an email to give the Board of Trustees and the Director of Education a heads up that I had been asked to do an interview with CTV news. No one indicated to me that I had previously made a factual error about non-Catholics attending our elementary schools.

On Sunday September 15<sup>th</sup> I received an email indicating that a Trustee had filed a complaint against me. Based on the previous emails I had received I assumed this complaint was with respect to the opinions I expressed in my article with respect to gay straight alliances. I was not sure though so I asked if I could see a copy of the complaint. Then on Sunday afternoon I received a tweet from the Board account which said “Despite what trustee [@anthonyiscitel](#) says [@WCDSBNewsWire](#) does admit non-Catholic students - case-by-case. [@anthonyiscitel](#) is totally wrong” Shortly after receiving this tweet I received an email indicating that the specific written complaint would not be shared with me at that time. I now feared a meeting scheduled for Monday afternoon might be an attempt to ambush me as such I indicated that I would no longer be participating in the meeting and I asked for the reasons the meeting was requested to be shared with me in writing.

On Monday September 16<sup>th</sup> I was told that a special board meeting was being held on Thursday to discuss the complaint brought against me. I asked the Chair of the Board to provide me the specific nature of the complaint to prepare for the meeting. I also indicated that the process does not appear to be procedurally fair.

On the morning of Tuesday September 17<sup>th</sup> when I read an article in the Waterloo Region Record I learned that the complaint brought against me was with respect to my statement regarding non-Catholic students attending our elementary schools. I still did not know the specific details of the complaint, or if any other concerns were being brought forward. The agenda package was released for the meeting on Tuesday and

the package did not contain a copy of the complaint. I did not receive a copy of the complaint until today.

I have recapped these events in detail because I believe it shows that this entire process has not been procedurally fair. I believe it also shows I have not been given enough information to defend myself at this meeting.

Aside from reviewing the events that occurred, I believe it is important to state that despite these proceedings I will not be changing my views on the important issues facing Catholic education in Ontario. I will also not back down from expressing these views.

I will continue to state I am pleased the government mandated that Gay Straight Alliances be allowed in Ontario schools  
I will continue to advocate for allowing non-Catholics to attend our elementary schools.

And I will continue to argue that we need to do more to ensure that our gay and lesbian staff are comfortable being open about their sexuality in our schools.

These are my major concerns as a Trustee because I believe they are the areas where we are failing as a Catholic school system. I also believe it is in our systems self-interest to address these areas.

According to polls conducted by Forum Research about half of Ontarians oppose a publicly funded Catholic Education system. I believe some individuals oppose funding our system because they think we treat LGBTQ staff and students poorly. I believe others oppose funding our system because they see it as unfair that Catholics are the only religion that receives public money for education.

In the long term I think the only way the Catholic school system keeps its public funding is by changing to find a way to gain supporters among other faith communities. Society moves towards fairness and it's not fair to deny non-Catholics a religious education. In the long run this will likely either be resolved by finding a way to accommodate other faiths in a way that seems fair or by abolishing our system.