

Winter 2023

Engagement Matters

Parent, Family and Community Engagement (PEAC)

Advisory Committee Newsletter

- Welcome New Members
- Student Voice Matters:
An up-close and personal chat with YRDSB Student Trustees
- The Role of our Student Trustees
- Contacting PEAC



Let's Connect!

It is with pleasure that we welcome our 2022-2023 PEAC members! For a list of members, please refer to the [2022-2023 PEAC member list](#).

If you would like to connect with a member in your CEC region, please [use this form](#). For general messages to the committee, you may reach us by phone through the Leadership Development and Engagement office at 905-727-0022 ext. 3650, or via email at leadership.development.engagement@yrdsb.ca.

We would also like to say farewell to our out-going PEAC members. We sincerely thank you for your time, input and efforts and wish you the best with your future endeavours.

Save the date! Our next public meeting will be on **April 20, 2023**, and we hope you can join us. The School Council Forums will be in-person this year. Please see the dates and locations for your Community Education Centre (CEC) below.

School Council Forums

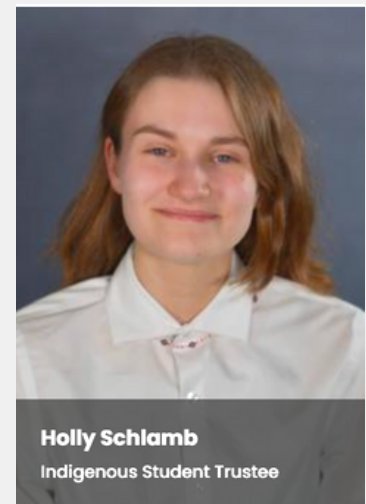
Monday, February 13, 2023	CEC West	Maple HS
Monday, February 13, 2023	CEC North - Georgina	Sutton DHS
Wednesday, February 15, 2023	CEC Central	Richmond Hill HS
Wednesday, February 15, 2023	CEC North - Newmarket	Mulock SS
Thursday, February 16, 2023	CEC East	Markham DHS

YRDSB Student Trustees: Student Voice Matters!

Smart, thoughtful, caring leadership: these characteristics shone through the screen when PEAC had an opportunity to chat virtually with two of YRDSB's Student Trustees recently. Holly Schlamb, Indigenous Student Trustee and Prisha Bhavsar, Student Trustee, are high school students who represent their classmates' voices to the York Region District School Board (YRDSB) on topics that include mental health, equity and inclusivity, education, environment/sustainability, funding, technology and many more. The YRDSB has 3 student trustees. We had the pleasure of speaking with two of them for this article.

Meet Holly Schlamb: Indigenous Student Trustee

Holly Schlamb is a Grade 12 Métis student at Richmond Hill High School and is a active member of the YRDSB's Indigenous Student Council. Holly enjoyed participating in the events developed by the Indigenous Student Council to engage the student population in learning and connecting. Her road to Indigenous Student Trustee leadership was inspired by her predecessors in the role and the impact they have had at the YRDSB level. It's her goal to similarly inspire future Indigenous students in this role.

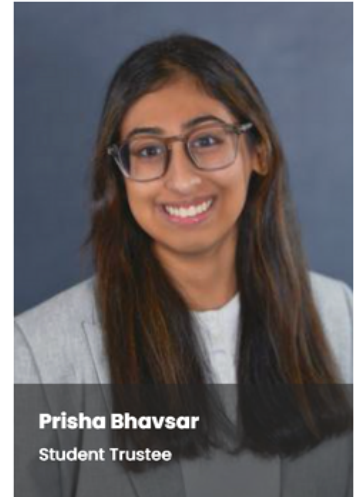


During her term as Indigenous Trustee, Holly will focus on improving the process of "self-identifying" for Indigenous students. By working with the YRDSB to simplify the current process, she hopes she can clarify the confusing and complex path and help the YRDSB to meet the needs of its Indigenous youth. Holly is also planning events to bring together students and Knowledge Keepers from the regions' Indigenous peoples to share and expand on traditional teachings. Promoting Indigenous student voice is another priority for Holly. She will work with Prisha to gather and promote student opinion with the YRDSB's decision makers.

For Holly, "the best part of being a student trustee has been meeting people and getting to experience opportunities that we otherwise wouldn't get to experience." Holly is also an active leader in her local school community. She is involved in the Gender and Sexuality Alliance and the Equity and Inclusivity Committee at Richmond Hill High. She also acts as an advisor for indigenous events in her school community.

Meet Prisha Bhavsar: Student Trustee

Prisha Bhavsar is passionate about elevating student voice. A grade 11 student at Stouffville District Secondary School, Prisha started her road to Student Trustee via “Future Majority,” a nonpartisan, non profit organization for young people that makes politics more accessible (futuremajority.ca). Involvement with her school’s Student Council and York Region’s President’s Council allowed her to connect with likeminded students and to act as a bridge between the YRDSB and its student population. Now, as Student Trustee, she is a leader who represents her peers as a powerful influence within the YRDSB.



Prisha’s plans for her term as Student Trustee start with gathering feedback using a student survey to understand the top areas of concern. One of her priorities will be developing Board programs to help facilitate mental health related to exam stress. Prisha feels “this is understandable. Some of the students have never taken an exam before, or they’re in grade 12 and it has been years since they’ve taken one, so there is a lot of stress around what to expect.” She will also work on developing transparent communication with students using multiple social media platforms including Instagram, Twitter and YouTube.

Prisha has found that the best part about her role as Student Trustee is connecting with students and her ability to influence what is happening at the board level. She has seen firsthand how many ways students can become involved to positively impact the YRDSB’s direction and policy development. She encourages students to get involved within their schools by participating in Student Council and in York Region’s President’s Council. Both provide opportunities to participate in student lead initiatives and “to meet and work with really cool people.”

Prisha acts locally in her role as Co-Chair in her school’s “Empower Student Partnership.” The group partners with community organizations to support student wellness and develop events such as visits with therapy dogs to promote mental health. STEM Club and Student Council round out her high school experience.

What is a Student Trustee's role?

Student trustees work at three different levels:

At the YRDSB board level

.Attending board meetings and advisory committees representing student voice and input

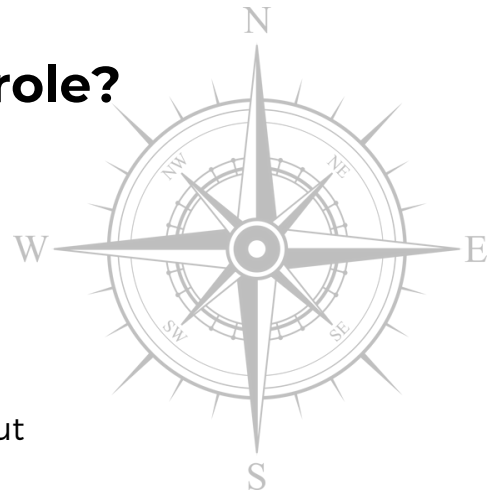
At the executive level of the York Region President's Council

Collecting and representing the opinions of students across the board.

At provincial level through the Ontario Student's Trustees Association

Representing YRDSB, they share initiatives and best practices and develop a student platform to provide recommendations to the Ministry of Education.

To learn more about your student trustees or to contact them directly, visit their [webpage](#).



Compass Point Event

Recently, Holly and Prisha were MC's at the YRDSB's Compass Point Event. At this event, the Director shares the education plans set for the year.

The Student Trustees were able to see the process of how pillars like mental health are incorporated into the Directors Action Plan. Student Trustees partner with adult Trustees to work on committees as part of their student voice advisory role.

Follow the Socials

Find Prisha, Holly and Teerka on Twitter and Instagram @yrdsbstudents. They also produce videos for the YRDSB Youtube channel



Communicating with School Councils and PEAC

Your voice matters, especially when it comes to your child's education. Finding ways to be involved, sharing your ideas, and learning more about how to support your child are just some of the ways that you can enhance your engagement with the school. Here are some access points to help you connect with your school council or PEAC. You may also contact your school office for information that is specific to your school council.

Who...	What...	How...
PEAC	Great for board-wide resources, Ministry documents, calendar of events, meeting links, newsletters, inspiring ideas	Email: leadership.development.engagement@yrdsb.ca Website: YRDSB PEAC Website Contact form Phone: 905-727-0022 ext. 3650 Twitter: @leadershipyrdsb Instagram: ld_yrdsb EDSBY: School Council Hub (for council chairs) Video Resource: Using Groups in Edsby
School Councils	Great for activities and resources specific to your school, volunteering, staying up-to-date with your school community, sharing your ideas.	Email: "schoolname"@sc.yrdsb.ca Website: link on school's webpage