

AGENDA - ANNUAL BOARD MEETING

Wednesday, December 1, 2021 – 6:00 PM

Limestone Education Centre

220 Portsmouth Avenue, Kingston, ON

Link: <https://bit.ly/LDSBAnnualBdMtgDec1>

PUBLIC MEETING – 6 PM

Acknowledgement of Territory: “The Limestone District School Board is situated on the traditional territories of the Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee. We acknowledge their enduring presence on this land, as well as the presence of Métis, Inuit, and other First Nations from across Turtle Island. We honour their cultures and celebrate their commitment to this land.”

1. **CALL TO ORDER**
2. **LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**
3. **OPENING GREETINGS AND INTRODUCTIONS**
4. **DECLARATION AND OATH OF ALLEGIANCE**
5. **ELECTION OF CHAIR**
6. **ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR**
7. **REPORTS FOR INFORMATION**
 - 7.1 Directors Annual Report – Director Burra (Page 2)
 - 7.2 OPSBA Report – Trustee French
8. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**
 - 8.1 Correspondence from Jennifer Kehoe, Parent of past Sistema Kingston participants, School Advisory Council Member of MBES, dated October 26, 2021 (Page 3-5)
9. **ADJOURNMENT**

Limestone District School Board

Limestone District School Board is situated on traditional territories of the Anishinaabe & Haudenosaunee.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT: DIRECTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT 2020-2021 INITIAL BOARD MEETING

December 1, 2021

Purpose

To provide the Board of Trustees with information on the 2020-2021 Director's Annual Report.

Background

In compliance with the Education Act, the Limestone District School Board's 2020-2021 Director's Annual Report includes information on the Board's strategic goals and progress the Board has made against these goals in the previous year; and actions the Board is taking in those strategic priority areas where goals are not being met.

Current Status

In keeping with the requirements under the Education Act, the Director of Education must report annually on the board's multi-year strategic plan via the Director's Annual Report. In Limestone, the Director provides progress on the Board's strategic goals and actions twice a year, through a mid-year report in May and a year-end report in November

The Strategic Plan Year-End Report is provided within the online Director's Annual Report along with stories from the 2020-2021 school year that highlight some of the initiatives supporting the Board's strategic pillars of Wellness, Innovation and Collaboration.

Review the report online at <https://seeyourselfinlimestone.ca/directors-annual-report> (effective December 1, 2021). The report will be submitted to the Ministry of Education in compliance with the January 31, 2022 deadline.

Recommendations

That this report be received for information

Prepared by: Karen Smith, Communications Officer

Reviewed by: Krishna Burra, Director of Education

October 26th, 2021

Greetings Trustees and Secretary to the Board/Director of Education Burra,

I hope this email finds you and your family in good health and spirits as we continue to navigate the ever-changing landscape and the challenges of COVID 19 Pandemic.

I am reaching out to you today with deep concerns and hopefully some support to advocate for Sistema Kingston, a music program that calls Molly Brant Elementary School home to be able to resume in person learning inside the school.

A little bit of history surrounding Sistema Kingston; this intensive music program was born in 2015 at First Avenue Public School (and has called Molly Brant home since we opened in 2016) with a partnership between the Limestone District School Board (Jan LeClair - Administrator) and Queen's Faculty of Education (Karma Tom) and the Joe Chithalen Musical Instrument Lending Library.

The primary objective of this free educational opportunity is to focus on positive social change through music. The Sistema mantra of PRIDE.

P- Perseverance
R- Respect
I - Inclusive
D - Doing the right thing
E - Excellence

Sistema Kingston offers students a safe inclusive space to learn and grow in through the Venezuelan El Sistema model which embraces the following 5 principals:

Social Change - social transformation through the pursuit of musical excellence. One happens through the other and neither is prioritized at the expense of the other.

Ensembles - The focus is on the group experience (orchestral/choral) and working toward a common goal. Peer mentoring is integral to the experience.

Frequency - El Sistema ensembles meet multiple times every week for multiple hours at a time over extended periods.

Accessibility - El Sistema programs are free and inclusive to all.

Connectivity - El Sistema programs foster connectivity between students, teachers and families to build stronger communities. El Sistema programs are linked at the community, regional and national levels, forming a cohesive network of services, resource sharing, collaborative opportunities and advocacy in support of each other.

This program for those of you who may not be familiar with it offers free musical instruction 4 days a week at Molly Brant Elementary School, Monday - Thursday from 2:45 pm - 5:15 pm (pre pandemic). The students learn how to read sheet music, play an instrument (violin, viola, cello or bass) solo as well as ensembles.

<https://educ.queensu.ca/tags/sistema>

One cohort of the program played on stage at the Grand Theatre for the Limestone Learning Foundation gala. Every year pre pandemic there was a year-end concert hosted by the Isabel Bader Center for the Performing Arts.

Sistema Kingston has been resilient and creative persevering through the COVID 19 pandemic by hosting the program outdoors at local parks and by the way of Zoom. This model of delivery has proven detrimental to engagement and students' ability to participate for a variety of reasons such as:

Ability to get to the program as it is no longer accessible at the school right after regular school ends.

Colder weather and inclement weather prevent the programming to take place in the parks to protect the instruments.

Switching to online programming without sufficient notice is problematic for parents who are at work and must now pick up their children at the end of the school day based on the forecast. Not every parent/guardian/caregiver has the flexibility at their place of employment to accommodate this therefore causing a decrease in the enrolment.

Access to technology and or the internet to attend the Zoom lessons.

Parents with limited technology literacy to be able to support their child/children on the online platform.

The above examples are just a few of the barriers preventing equitable access to many students at Molly Brant Elementary School who wouldn't otherwise have access to this opportunity to be exposed to the arts and learn through music.

Sistema Kingston offers more than the opportunity to learn how to play an instrument; that is the bonus; what this extension of learning provides is confidence, self-esteem, self-worth to name a few. There are no words to describe the profound impact this program offers to Nero-diverse students who have challenges in the mainstream classroom when you witness them center stage of the Isabel Bader Center for the Performing Arts playing in an ensemble or solo on the Cello!

The impact for learners who struggle with mental health struggles and social emotional regulation have had paramount successes when in regular attendance of Sistema Kingston programming due to their intentional approach to anti-racism and inclusion. This has a direct impact on our larger school community and culture when those with complex learning needs are able to regulate themselves.

To witness students who struggle with behavioural challenges not struggling due to the impact of the positive reinforcement that Sistema Kingston offers through their approach is unexplainable. Especially given the complex learning environment that is not uncommon at Molly Brant for some of our students.

TD Bank believes so much in this program and what it has to offer that pre pandemic they donated \$25,000. BMW Kingston donated a Bass to be added to the musical instruments to be added to the ensemble. .

This programming is offered exclusively to the students at Molly Brant Elementary School when it is offered at the school however enrolment numbers are down due to access barriers the program has now had to open up to participants outside of Molly Brant. My fear is that if we do not advocate for Sistema Kingston to be able to return to our school that they will be forced to find another space to call home.

This extension to learning should be viewed as it was intended to be from its inception; a partnership, not a community use of schools after school program. Given that extracurricular sports have been able to resume within our school Board teacher candidates are being permitted to be able to come into our schools and the Province of Ontario has lifted most of the COVID 19 restrictions as it relates to capacity limits in restaurant, gyms and theatres I am asking for your support to advocate to have Sistema Kingston granted access to resume this invaluable opportunity for the students of Molly Brant Elementary School.

In closing I appreciate, acknowledge and value all the work that the Senior Staff have done operationally to keep our spaces safe. The balancing act that each decision requires doesn't go unnoticed. This situation that I am requesting your support for is ensuring equitable access for all learners of Molly Brant to participate without barriers that we are able to prevent.

If you have any additional questions, comments or concerns please do not hesitate to contact me at 613-583-2667 or respond to this email. I look forward to working in collaboration with all the partners and stakeholders to find the solution that resolves this situation.

With Respect and Gratitude,

Jennifer Kehoe

Parent of past Sistema Kingston participants
School Advisory Council member of MBES
Concerned parent at MBES

"There are no great things, only small things with great love. Happy are those..." - Mother Teresa