

Delivered via E-Mail

Date: March 18, 2025

PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL

Catherine Kronas
School Council Member and Chair 2023/24
Ancaster High

RE: Investigation Outcome to complaint regarding school council chair refusing the reading of the Land Acknowledgment during a school council meeting held on April 29th, 2024 (case #: HRO2175)

Dear Catherine Kronas,

We are writing to provide the investigation outcome and decision to complaint- case #: HRO2175. As you recall we have proceeded to investigate the incident that occurred at a school council meeting at Ancaster High School on April 29th, 2024, in accordance with HWDSB's [Human Rights Complaints Resolution Procedure](#) and [the Code of Conduct Procedure](#).

To gather information, we met with the school Principal, the school council members and other parents and school staff who attended the meeting, as relevant witnesses. We met with you and your legal representative on December 3rd, 2024 to provide you with an opportunity to respond to the allegations. We also reviewed all of the relevant correspondence collected during the course of the investigation and your written response provided by your counsel.

After a thorough review, we did not find sufficient evidence to conclude that there was a violation of the HWDSB [Human Rights Policy](#). However, we did find enough evidence to indicate that the conduct in question created significant tension and conflict within the environment, which contradicts the expected role of a school council and the chair as per the [HWDSB School Council Handbook](#), and [Regulation 612](#).

In addition, our findings indicate that your decision to exclude the land acknowledgment at the meeting was not a simple oversight or simply because it is not a requirement under any policy or the Education Act. Evidence indicates that you used your position as the school council chair to impose your own opinion and stance on land acknowledgments. While you have the right to hold and express your opinion, using your position as the chair to direct how the meeting should proceed, contrary to established guidelines, suggests that you may not have considered

the perspectives of other school council members and your role as a school chair in fostering a collaborative environment and parent engagement and in facilitating conflict resolution.

To repair the environment, we have recommended that:

- The school council to develop a by-law that aligns with the Education Act, HWDSB Board policies, including code of conduct, human rights policy and Indigenous Education policy. The by-law should clearly state the role of the school council and the role of school council chair(s).
- The school council chair to set meeting agenda in consultation with the principal and other school council members.
- Learning for school council members on meaningful land acknowledgements, according to the Indigenous Education policy.

We wish to thank you for your cooperation in this process. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Superintendent Lindsay Snell's office at vaguirre@hwdsb.on.ca.

A reminder that everyone who engages in this process is entitled to be free from reprisal for bringing forward their concerns and/or having participated in the investigation. Should you have negative repercussions as a result of your involvement in this process, we ask that you please let us know as soon as possible. Similarly, we expect that you will refrain from engaging in any negative behavior towards anyone who may have participated in this process.

Best regards,



Lindsay Snell
Superintendent of Equity and Student Achievement



Yohana Otite
Human Rights and Equity Advisor