

## Student Senate Newsletter - April Recap

The [Student Senate](#) represents students' views to the OCDSB, meeting once per month to discuss key issues. There are two Student Senators at each secondary school; if you have any questions, reach out to them!

### April 4th Meeting Recap:

- Menstrual Equity Consultation
- Student Representation on the Senate
- Hate Speech & Discrimination
- Social Media Lawsuit
- Environmental Concerns
- Grade 11 Indigenous English Course
- Sub-Committee Updates
- Share Your Feedback

### Menstrual Equity Consultation

The Menstrual Equity project is a Senate-led initiative that was originally approved in January 2021. As we are pushing for renewing product sponsorship, we are reviewing students' happiness with the products.

Are they available to all students? Do we have enough sizes/variety of products and are they being constantly refilled? Are students misusing the products (boys & gender neutral bathrooms)? And how can we further improve menstrual equity? All of these things are being discussed as we move forward with menstrual equity in the OCDSB.

### Student Representation on the Senate

We have noticed that students generally don't talk to their Senators about issues pertinent to them - most students don't even know the Senate exists! We want student advocacy to come from all 77,000 students in the OCDSB, not just those on the Senate.

### Hate Speech & Discrimination

Senators discussed the serious problem of hate speech and discrimination faced by students at school, and the lack of consequences faced by the perpetrators. We also reflected on the importance of diversity and identity-based clubs and initiatives in combating these issues, as well as how student leaders such as Senators can help build these connections.

### Social Media Lawsuit

The OCDSB and three other Ontario school boards are suing social media companies Meta (Facebook, Instagram), Snap (Snapchat), and ByteDance (TikTok) for disrupting student learning and the education system. The lawsuit calls for social media products to be made safer for children, and asks for over one billion dollars in compensation. **School boards will not be responsible for any costs related to the lawsuit unless a successful outcome is reached.** [Read more at ocdsb.ca](https://ocdsb.ca).

## Environmental Concerns

During our last meeting, we discussed the board's efforts regarding promoting recycling. After the mixed results of introducing recycling programs at some schools, and the difficulty with waste not being organized correctly in bins - the importance and need of student-led, student-sustained recycling programs is clearer than ever!

## Grade 11 Indigenous English Course

The Senate looked at the NBE3U course (English: Understanding Contemporary First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Voices), reflecting on its merits but also raising concerns about student engagement with Indigenous studies, teachers' framing of the content, and the lack of language-based learning.

## Sub-Committee Updates

The Senate has multiple student-led sub-committees. This is where a lot of initiatives are brought forward and a lot of progress is made.

### Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Committee:

The EDI Committee has been working on the implementation of needs-based Diversity Reps on the Senate (more to come next year!). They are also moving forward with their spotlight project. (highlighting students contributions to EDI in their communities) Nominations are still open for the [April EDI Spotlight!](#)

### Outreach Committee:

The Outreach Committee is the committee responsible for making this monthly newsletter! Every month, we compile the important parts of our Senate meetings to send out to all OCDSB students. Our goal is to keep students informed about Senate initiatives. If you see something on the Newsletter that you're interested in, talk to your Senator about it and they will bring your point of view to the next Senate meeting! We are also working on the creation of a school presentation about the Senate.

## Policy Committee:

The Policy Committee proposed promoting the equal celebration of cultural days of observance in schools to better represent the culture of *all* students. Some days of observance are heavily talked about and some are not. Additionally, a policy on improving the pronouns used in board policies (Ex. Replacing “he/she” with “they”) has been proposed, in order to create a more inclusive and easier to read policy set.

## Share Your Feedback

### Valuing Voices Survey and Elementary Program Review

The OCDSB is looking for your feedback on important issues that affect student learning and well-being. Your input will make a difference for students today and in the future. Here are two ways to share your voice:

- The [2024 Valuing Voices Survey](#) is now open. Through this voluntary and confidential survey, you can share input that will help the District address issues in your school, including safety, bullying, mental health, learning, and student achievement. Check your email for details on how to participate.
- The OCDSB is reviewing its elementary programs (Full day kindergarten, English with Core French, Early French Immersion, Middle French Immersion, Alternative, and Ottawa-Carleton Virtual), along with special education and English as a Second Language supports and services. They want to hear about your elementary experiences and your ideas for changes to the program model. [Visit Engage OCDSB](#) to participate.

**Reach out to your Senators at your school!!! ([Student Senators](#))**