

## Peel pride flag decision to be made May 22

Written By JASEN OBERMEYER

Peel District School Board Trustees will make a decision on May 22 about whether to fly the pride flag in June for pride month, an announcement that has caused many to speak up about.

"I was angry," is how Peel District School Board Trustee Candidate Dmytro Basmat put it when he woke up to the initial news. "This kind of treatment of the LGBTQ community only leads to more barriers that LGBTQ students must overcome, both in graduating from our school system and finding success in their social lives."

He told the Citizen that even though the board never put a motion to not support the flag, they still haven't done anything. "The LGBTQ is such a large community in the Peel District School Board."

He said this issue needs to be addressed by the trustees, as LGBTQ students should be able to represent themselves and not be discouraged. "They claim that they're diverse, yet they're excluding such a large population from participating in pride events and pride months."

Mr. Basmat added that one of the reasons he decided to run for the trustee position was when a friend of his committed suicide back in February, and found out from other that he was gay.

"There's no doubt in my mind that was a contributing factor."

He said that although a decision will be made, and if it is decided to raise the flag, the issue remains that the board did nothing about it in the beginning. "It should have been an instant to do it."

Asked about his time in high school, Mr. Basmat said through most of those years they didn't have an LGBTQ group. "We definitely need to change it, because there's a stigma around it."

He said that a school board that ignores a diverse group of students in the community is not an inclusive one. "We must ensure that such a talented, empowering group of students is not alienated, but celebrated for being who they are."