

Outgoing HDSB student trustee Dasha Metropolitanasky shares her keys for success

VERONICA APPIA
vappia@metroland.com

University-bound Oakville student Dasha Metropolitanasky is master of the balancing act. In her Grade 12 year at White Oaks Secondary School she was a Halton District School Board student trustee and president of the Ontario Student Trustees' Association (OSTA-AECO), enrolled in the rigorous International Baccalaureate program and completing essays and standardized testing to apply to Ivy League schools around the world - all while keeping her marks up.

Now on summer break with her ticket to Harvard University in hand, she says she still gets asked how she managed her workload, and explains that it all comes down to one factor: loving what she does.

"I think that there's more pressure now than ever for

students to succeed," she said. She believes that, generally, students want to excel academically, do what they love and make a difference by helping others, but believe it is impossible to achieve all three.

"I feel like it's a lot easier to manage school work with the other things that you're doing when you are doing something that you love... I want to share my experience to show how it's possible to do all of those things and to inspire more young people to reach their full potential."

Metropolitanasky spearheaded a host of initiatives during her two years in student government and in her roles within OSTA-AECO, including getting student representation on a number of board-level committees and transforming the student election process, but one of the achievements she is most widely known for is working

with student trustees across Ontario to create a "student platform" of 16 government recommendations that include a strong focus on mental health and suicide prevention.

"It's the first major platform that students in this province - maybe even in Canada - have put together to say to the government, here are policy recommendations that you need to implement in your election platforms, particularly for education, and it had a very significant impact in terms of making mental health a priority," she said. "I'm really proud of all the work that went into making that report and all the work we put into making sure the voices of students were heard."

Metropolitanasky says her main goal in getting involved with student government was to represent a variety of student voices and to make sure



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Dasha Metropolitanasky received the The Jack A. MacDonald Award of Merit at the board of trustees meeting on June 20. From left to right (back row): Leah Reynolds, Tracey Ehl Harrison, Joanna Oliver, Ann Harvey Hope, Kim Graves, Stuart Miller, Donna Danielli, Amy Collard, Richelle Papin, Jeanne Gray, Andréa Grebenc. Front row: Kelly Amos, Dasha Metropolitanasky and White Oaks principal John Stieva.

their individual opinions and concerns were heard. Prior to her involvement as a student trustee, she spent years competing as a debater on Canada's national team, travelling to national and international competitions, and the skills she acquired there propelled

her into her next role.

She says she realized she could speak confidently and had a knack for persuasion, but she wanted to hone her skills and really make a difference.

"I really love debate; I love it because it's intellectually

stimulating ... but I think what it made me realize is when you do debate, you can give the most incredible speech in the world, but there really is no impact to the speech," she said.

"I think the transition to student government was really important for me because I wanted to use the skills I had actually learned in debate to impact things, particularly for students."

At her final board of trustees meeting on June 20, Metropolitanasky received the Jack A. MacDonald Award of Merit for a sound academic record and outstanding community service and leadership.

She says she hopes future student trustees continue building upon some of the legacies being left behind, but also that they continue to put forward projects that they themselves are passionate about.

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