

REPORT

Oakville Public Library Board

Meeting Date: April 17, 2025

FROM: Oakville Public Library

DATE: April 8, 2025

SUBJECT: Staff Engagement Survey Overview – April 17, 2025

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Staff Engagement Survey Overview be received for discussion.

KEY FACTS:

The following are key points for consideration with respect to this report:

- Oakville Public Library (OPL) participates in the Town of Oakville’s Staff Engagement Survey which occurs every 2 years with the last survey in 2022.
- The 2024 survey was available from November 20, 2024 to December 12, 2024 in partnership with McLean and Company.
- OPL received an 80% response rate, with 74% of staff indicating that they are at least partially engaged. This is down 5% from the overall engagement score received in 2022.
- The survey provides OPL leadership with areas to leverage to increase the engagement for 2026 as well as identifying key areas for improvement including:
 - Opportunities for increased collaboration between departments
 - Increased support for career advancement and development
 - Improved communication from the Executive Management team as well as clarity of their roles.
- Leadership has been tasked with further exploring the core issues driving the scores to better understand what “success” in those categories looks like to staff.

BACKGROUND:

In Fall 2024, the Oakville Public Library through the Town of Oakville underwent a staff engagement survey process with the support of McLean and Company, a research and advisory firm. The Town of Oakville has a practice of performing a Staff Engagement survey every two years. The 2024 survey was available for staff from November 20 – December 12, 2024.

COMMENT/OPTIONS:

The Oakville Public Library recently completed its annual Staff Engagement Survey, conducted in partnership with McLean & Company, with an impressive response rate of 80% with 74% of staff indicating that they are at least partially engaged. This overall engagement score is down 5% from the overall engagement score received in 2022.

The findings provide valuable insight into our current organizational climate and key areas for growth as we continue to support a strong and engaged workforce. The full survey summary report (Appendix A) is included in your board package for reference. Please note that references to 'organization' in Appendix A refer to the Town of Oakville.

Key Highlights**Strengths**

- **Peer Relationships (81%):** Strong, supportive relationships among coworkers remain a key strength.
- **Organizational Culture and Inclusion (75% and 65%):** Most staff feel aligned with OPL's mission and are comfortable being themselves at work.
- **Direct Supervisor Relationships (64%):** Supervisors are generally trusted and supportive, especially around communication and feedback.
- **Working Environment (64%):** Staff feel safe while at work.

Areas of Concern

- **Executive Leadership (33%):** Indications of a lack of trust with the executive team driven in part by lack of adequate communication surrounding rationale behind decisions made.
- **Department Management & Collaboration (49% and 39%):** Concerns around transparency, responsiveness, and cross-departmental teamwork.
- **Career Development (40%):** Limited perception of advancement and growth opportunities within the organization.
- **Organizational Potential (42%):** Lower confidence in the future direction and innovation at OPL.

It is important to consider the organizational context in which the survey was conducted. At the time of the survey, OPL had recently introduced a comprehensive overhaul of staff schedules (to be effective January 1, 2025) as a result of earlier collective bargaining outcomes. This change affected 80% of employees and, while necessary, involved a period of significant adjustment and anticipated disruption. Concurrently, there was widespread awareness among staff of the financial

challenges related to securing adequate funding for the upcoming Sixteen Mile branch. These factors likely influenced staff sentiment during the survey period, particularly in areas related to organizational potential, leadership, and communication. While these contextual elements help frame some of the feedback, they do not diminish the validity of the concerns raised, and they underscore the importance of clear communication, support, and engagement during times of transition.

Recommended Strategic Focus Areas

To respond proactively, OPL has identified the following priorities for leadership and operational planning:

1. **Rebuild Trust in Leadership**
 - Improve transparency in decision-making.
 - Communicate executive initiatives in ways that resonate with staff.
2. **Enhance Career Growth Opportunities**
 - Invest in learning and development resources.
 - Equip managers to support meaningful career discussions with their teams.
3. **Foster Collaboration Across Teams**
 - Reduce silos by enabling shared goals and cross-departmental work.
 - Improve communication flows between departments.

The following Staff Engagement Survey goal is included as part of the 2025 OPL goals:

Starting in Q1, OPL will review the results of the Fall 2024 Staff Feedback Survey to identify actions to align the rating between two key engagement results:

- a. “My contributions are important to the success of my department” which received an average 84% satisfaction result in previous years.
- b. “Taking everything into account, I like working at this organization” which received an average 69% satisfaction in previous years.

Based on the review, OPL will engage staff to identify actions to support a measurable improvement in aligning the results of those two key engagement results.

Aligning these two scores more closely in the anticipated 2026 survey — alongside an increase in overall staff engagement — will serve as a clear indicator of progress in the priority areas outlined above and demonstrate meaningful action on the concerns identified in the 2024 results.

OPL remains deeply committed to listening to staff and acting on their feedback. This survey is one of many tools OPL uses to understand how staff are experiencing their work and their workplace. Leadership has been tasked with further exploring the core issues driving the scores to better understand what “success” in those categories looks like to staff. Through ongoing conversations, targeted actions, and regular check-ins, OPL aims to create an environment where staff feel valued and heard. OPL’s goal is not only to respond to the concerns raised but to co-create solutions that reflect the strengths and aspirations of the entire team.

APPENDICES:

Appendix A – OPL Staff Engagement Survey Scorecard 2024

Prepared and submitted by:
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