

→→→ **Reports to ECNO  
Board of Directors  
and Membership**  
*for the*  
**Annual General  
Meeting**

December 5, 2024



**Technology Leadership for  
Ontario's School Boards**

**Ecno.org**

# ECNO Advisory Committee 2023-2024 Report

## In support of ECNO's Strategic Plan Directions (2022-2025)

1. **Expand and evolve our services to meet emerging Board needs.**
2. **Enable high quality technology staff and resources in education.**
3. **Clear, relevant, sustainable positioning as Ontario's leaders in school board IT.**

The ECNO Advisory Committee (EAC) is delighted to present its annual report for 2024, highlighting a year of significant accomplishments and progress in support of ECNO's strategic goals.

Earlier this year, the EAC welcomed two new members: Cathy Thier (Halton DSB) and Sandy Owens (Ottawa-Carleton DSB). Elkan Lee (York Region DSB) assumed the role of EAC Chair, Abdu-L-Kerim Sandooya (CSC MonAvenir) became the EAC Vice-Chair, and Bill Cripps (Halton Catholic DSB) took on the role of EAC Scribe, in accordance with EAC Procedures & Guidelines. We extend our sincere thanks to the entire committee for their dedication, valuable input, and recommendations to the ECNO Board of Directors.

This year, several ECNO initiatives were introduced to school boards, thanks to direct input from EAC members. These initiatives include the Information Research service offering, providing access to InfoTech templates and resources at a significant discount to school boards, and the creation of the ECNO Vendor Primer documentation, a valuable resource for current and new vendors, offering insights into the governance and inner workings of school boards.

The EAC continues to collaborate closely with ECNO staff, receiving regular updates from the Director of Business Development, the Director of Collaborative Services, and the Director of Security Services. At our monthly meetings, we reviewed updates on topics such as EES Licensing, ECNO Security Services offerings, VASP and PIA updates, Cyber Awareness and Cyber Challenges initiatives, and more. The EAC also brainstorms on the future direction of Shared Technical Services, with the sunsetting of current offerings such as Azure Labs and App-V.

The EAC supports the work of the ETAC Chair, Shaw Pomfret (Halton DSB), and the committee's efforts to bring ETAC meetings to board staff throughout the school year. EAC members have also worked tirelessly to facilitate roundtable discussions at the IT Managers Meeting, presentations and sharing at the ECNO Showcase at the annual ECNO Conference and continue to participate in joint EAC / ECNO Board of Directors meetings, providing input and recommendations into the ECNO strategic planning process.

Once again, our sincere thanks to each and every member of the EAC for volunteering their time and efforts. We also extend our appreciation to the ECNO Board of Directors for their support and collaboration. We look forward to another year of working together and supporting the work of ECNO.

**Elkan Lee,  
EAC Chair**

# Director of Business Development Report 2023-2024

## Director of Business Development Responsibilities

The Director of Business Development, working through the Executive Director, will liaise with the ECNO Board and other ECNO sub committees to identify and deepen member/vendor/education partnerships and explore new business opportunities pursuant to and supported by the ECNO Strategic Plan.

### Principal Strategic Functions:

- To endeavour to strengthen partnership relations through collaboration with members, vendors, and other educational partner groups both in Canada, the US, and abroad where strong strategic synergies are believed to exist.
- Serve as a working point of contact for Vendor relationships to establish and/or expand member services and professional development opportunities.
- Provide direct liaison to the EAC and operational committees as required.
- To ascertain the product and service needs of the member boards and our vendor partners and determine the most cost-efficient way to develop and support these services.
- To strengthen strategic liaisons in member School Boards, Ontario Senior Education and Government Partners, Vendors, and other mutually aligned organizations to facilitate stronger collaborations, communications, and sharing of mutual interests.
- To work with ECNO staff and the Letter M to support and build out the ECNO website as a strong marketing environment for all stakeholders.

### Communications and Reporting:

- Reporting weekly to the Executive Director, update staff on project progress and new initiatives.
- Review and align current activities with the Executive Director (monthly) and with Director level colleagues (weekly) to ensure continuity and strategic fit for all activities.
- Reporting monthly to the Board of Directors and various ECNO sub committees, maintain currency of information and progress against the strategic plan initiatives.
- Support the Executive Director as required in monthly meetings/reports/newsletters to ensure open communications with members/vendors/other partners are enriched and expanded.

### Committee Responsibilities:

- Until recently, the DBD has supported several committees (EAC, ETAC, STSAC, VASP, AI joint Committee). Many of these are co-supported with either the Director of Customer Solutions or the Director of Security Solutions or both so detailed descriptors for these services are found in their reports.
- Recent shifts in organizational focus as defined by the Executive Director and supported by the Board of Directors has shifted responsibility of the VASP team to the Director of Security Solutions and the STS team to the Director of Customer Solutions.

## 2023-24 Accomplishments:

2023-24 was another year of significant change for the ECNO team. The senior team expanded and quickly found their legs for division of duty and operational accountability. The addition facilitated re-ordering of responsibilities permitted the DBD with an opportunity to focus more fully on Business Development and in particular Vendor relations. A summary of these developments include:

- Development of a new service focussed on provision of Information Research resources to all Ontario school Boards. Discussions with both Gartner and InfoTech led to the formation of a new partnership with InfoTech to provide both artifact documents and a limited access to analysts through the ECNO resource.
- Organizational work was provided to OASBO subcommittees in developing draft structures for the Gen AI Joint committee work as well as to the ICT and Privacy communities on the subject of PIA opportunities. Work continues on the concepts of an ECNO led PIA as a service concept.
- Significant effort was given to providing vendors with a strong voice in developing the ECNO Vendor Program – support for vendors in understanding the Ontario K-12 EDU marketplace. Several ad hoc meetings throughout the year provided vendors with an opportunity to help ECNO focus on the areas of greatest value for vendors and how ECNO could help.
- This information has set the stage for the development and roll out of a new business sector for ECNO supporting our vendor partners and (aspirational) improving the K-12 EDU marketplace support for all stakeholders. Additional information on this Program will be available in the DBD monthly reports throughout the 2023-24 FY.
- Working through the Executive Director, significantly deepening our Ontario Education partnership relationships not only with the Ministry of Education representatives but with ERDI, CODE, COSBO, and several OASBO subcommittees. Collectively, our efforts have been well received in all areas and at both the ERDI, CODE and COSBO tables as well.
- Additionally, and in concert with the Executive Director, making contact with other Provincial non-profit EDU support organizations as may exist nationally and internationally.
- Generative Artificial Intelligence (Gen AI) continued to be a topic of great interest. Ontario K-12 School Boards have been struggling to understand how best to integrate the new technology into the educational and curricular streams. Working with our Informational Research partners (Gartner and InfoTech), presentations on both the operational and governance spectrums of the topic have been presented and will continue throughout 2024-25 FY. Both of these EDU partners have shown staunch support for Ontario's K-12 school boards who are struggling to control the impact of Gen AI in their school and student populations.
- Late in the FY, the vendor web page and the implementation process for the Vendor support program were developed and implemented. 20 vendors were invited to participate in a beta test run to ensure the process was robust and complete. Work continues on the refinement of the plan with a broader roll out to all Vendors anticipated for mid to late November.

## 2024-25 Objectives:

- Delivery of a functional paid service for ECNO Vendors is top of list for the coming year. Work continues on several fronts including PD organizational structures, Fees and Terms governance, artifact development for the Vendor side of the K-12 EDU marketplace calendar, website development, and a specific communications strategy for product launch. Discussion around expectations for participation need to occur for forecasting purposes.



- Preliminary structural work on the Vendor section of the ECNO website continues with the Letter M. Some of the highlights anticipated within the website are: provision of a member-vendor collaboration workspace to include searchable inventories of vendor resources, offerings, products, and services.
- Updated stakeholder expectations based on the ECNO Vendor Program will be written into the Vendor Relationship Guidelines once member school boards have an opportunity to address and comment on the information available on the ECNO vendor web page.
- Define and implement the IRaaS environment for school board use. Work with Information Research partners to enhance and grow the IR opportunities for all school board members.
- Launch the development and implementation of a defined Records Management process for ECNO as an organization.
- As is our custom, the 2024-25 Operational Plan is underway. The DBD efforts are mutually aligned with those of the entire ECNO staff team and are mostly defined in other reports. Of consequence to the DBD role, the goals for this year include:
  - Participation in the discussion and development of a new ECNJO 3 year strategic plan.
  - Expansion of our website to better service member/vendor relations and PD.
  - Implement a Vendor Fee structure to support ongoing efforts and services.
  - To continue to grow and expand ECNO's untapped opportunities in the Ontario K-12 EDU marketplace and service arenas.
  - To continue to develop and strengthen all partnerships to the benefit of ECNO stakeholders.
  - Investigate any new provincial-wide solution offerings for Ontario DSB and related stakeholders.
  - To review with the Executive Director the results of the Strategic Plan renewal to be undertaken this FY and work to operationalize key elements over time.

## Conclusion

**I would like to thank the ECNO Board of Directors for the opportunity to work on your behalf with our many Ontario Educational and partner stakeholders. Under the Direction of the Executive Director, this team is well constructed and well suited to the roles you have envisioned for us. This strength of leadership provided by you and the Executive Director is visible through the actions reported in each staff report. I look forward to facilitating future opportunities for ECNO as a lead organization in the Ontario K-12 community.**

**John Shanks,  
Director of Business Development**



# Director of Collaborative Services Report 2023-2024

## Director of Collaborative Services Responsibilities

The Director of Collaborative Services, under the authority and supervision of the Executive Director, will liaise with the ECNO Board, the ECNO Advisory Committee, and various other sub committees and will carry out other duties as defined or required that provide a link to our strategic plan.

### Principal Functions:

- Collaborative Services to Members of ECNO as defined in the Strategic Plan and ECNO user communities.
- Direct liaison to the EAC, ETAC, and other committees.
- To ascertain the product and service needs of the member boards and determine the most cost-efficient way to acquire these services.
- Strategic liaison to government, other school board organizations, and the vendor community.
- Working with ECNO staff to support strategic operational plans as needed for projects and initiatives.
- To build and strengthen partnerships, relationships, and collaboration with members, vendors, and other educational partners.

### Compliance Reporting:

- Daily or as required to the Executive Director and through him to the President and/or ECNO Board of Directors.
- Role Function and specific ECNO priorities through the EAC, ETAC, and the Board and General Meetings of ECNO.
- Reporting monthly to the Board of Directors and the ECNO committees.

### Strategic Liaisons

- To work with individuals and teams in Member School Boards, the Government, the Ministry of Education, Vendors, CODE, and other aligned organizations, to facilitate communications and the sharing of mutual interests. Partnership with the Ministry of Education representatives on the Community Services Cluster and Cyber Security Division. Coordinate User Group meetings, Work with the team at Microsoft on the ECNO Unified Support Service. Work with the ECNO EES Licensing group, Microsoft, and our LSP, on the ECNO EES licensing agreement.

### ECNO Advisory Committee (EAC)

- ECNO liaison to the EAC. Co-supported by the Director of Business Development and the Director of Security Services.
- Facilitate strategic leadership for the ECNO IT community through the CIO/Manager events held annually in the fall and spring.
- Liaise with ECNO Advisory Committee chair and vice chair.
- Participate in the ECNO EAC meetings and strategic planning events.
- Product, services, software and vendor reviews.

## Shared Technology Services (STS)

- Work with the ECNO STS Program Manager on the STS Service.
- Provide support to the Shared Technology Services Program Manager and attend meetings.

## ECNO Technical Advisory Committee (ETAC)

- ECNO liaison to the ETAC.
- Provide support to the ECNO Technical Advisory Committee and attend meetings.
- Liaise with ECNO Technical Advisory Committee chair.

## Microsoft EES Licensing and Microsoft Unified Support

- ECNO liaison with Microsoft – attend meetings and liaise with Microsoft General Manager, Education K12 Ontario.
- Working with the Microsoft Customer Success Account Manager facilitates Unified workshops and meetings for Unified member Boards.
- Manage and review the Unified support service contract annually.
- Product and technology roadmap for Microsoft product suites.
- Facilitate, manage, and review the Microsoft EES Licensing contract.

## 2024 - 2025 Focus

- Continue to develop and promote strategic liaisons with the government, school boards, other organizations, and the vendor community.
- Duties as required by the Executive Director.
- Investigate provincial-wide solution offerings for DSBs.
- Facilitate user group meetings with Boards, organizations, and vendors (i.e SMUG).
- Expand and enhance our communications to our member boards and other educational partners.
- Continued work on the 3-year Microsoft EES Licensing yearly renewals with Microsoft and Softchoice (our LSP). Refine/tweak the system critical path for EES renewal.
- Continue to work with the Unified Support team, coordinate closed workshops, and host “open office” meetings for our Unified support members.
- Continue to work with my fellow ECNO Directors in support of the ECNO Strategic Plan and ECNO user communities

## Conclusion

I would like to thank the ECNO Board of Directors for the opportunity to work on behalf of the co-operative. Under the strong leadership of the ECNO Board and the Executive Director we have a great team in place to operationalize the ECNO Strategic plan. I look forward to facilitating future opportunities for ECNO as a lead organization in K-12 community.

Tim Hall,  
Director of Collaborative Services

# Director of Security Services Report 2023-2024

## Director of Security Services Responsibilities

The Director of Security Services, working through the Executive Director, will liaise with the ECNO Board and other ECNO sub committees to assist school boards incorporate effective security practices in their strategic planning, as well as identify, assess, report, and mitigate internal security risks. Additionally, the DSS provides leadership to ensure board procedures and activities comply with regulatory requirements and internal policies, procedures, guidelines, and standards. The DSS supervises the five-member Regional Information Security Analyst and eight-member Vetting of Applications for Security and Privacy teams.

### Principal Strategic Functions:

- Actively ensure appropriate administrative, physical, and technical safeguards are in place to protect member's information assets from external threats.
- Develop security testing frameworks and methodologies appropriate for the school board context and provide direction and support for RISA's to perform external security audits and penetration testing annually for each member School Board. Report the results of assessments with conclusions, recommendations for improvement, planned management actions, follow-up status to member School Boards.
- Work with member School Boards to ensure the integrity of cloud service providers, particularly Google Workspace and Microsoft 365.
- Work collaboratively with the Senior IT Leader of each member school board to coordinate testing and audits and to coordinate incident response if necessary.
- Provide direct support to any member school board in the event of a cyber security incident and work as part of an inter-disciplinary cyber security incident response team.
- Create and nurture a culture of ongoing awareness of the various cyber security, safety and data privacy threats by participating in provincial working groups and committees that promote best practices.
- Foster opportunities of collaboration and education between ECNO member boards where cyber initiatives are involved.

### Communications and Reporting:

- Reporting weekly to the Executive Director, update staff on project progress and new initiatives.
- Review and align current activities with the Executive Director (monthly) and with Director level colleagues (weekly) to ensure continuity and strategic fit for all activities.
- Reporting monthly to the Board of Directors and various ECNO sub committees, maintain currency of information and progress against the strategic plan initiatives.
- Support the Executive Director as required in monthly meetings/reports/newsletters to ensure open communications with members/vendors/other partners are enriched and expanded.



## Strategic Liaisons

- To work with individuals and teams in Member School Boards, the Government, the Ministry of Education, Vendors, CODE, and other aligned organizations, to facilitate communications and the sharing of mutual interests. Partnerships with the Ministry of Education representatives on the Community Services Cluster and Cyber Security Division, Ontario School Board Insurance Exchange (OSBIE), Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario (IPC), and other aligned organizations, to facilitate and advance mutual interests.

## ECNO Advisory Committee (EAC)

- Along with the Director of Business Development co-support the Director of Customer Solutions liaison with EAC.
- Facilitate strategic leadership for the ECNO IT community through the CIO/Manager events held annually in the fall and spring.
- Participate in the ECNO EAC meetings and summer strategic planning event.
- Product, services, software, and vendor reviews.

## Vetting of Applications for Security and Privacy Steering Committee (VASPSC)

- ECNO liaison to the VAPSC.
- Provide support to the Vetting of Applications for Security and Privacy Steering Committee and attend meetings.
- Liaise with Vetting of Applications for Security and Privacy Steering Committee chair.

## 2023-24

### Security Solutions (SS):

ECNO's Security Solutions (ESS) service was established in 2019 to provide a shared "Information Security Professional" resource to groups of ECNO K-12 School Boards in the province of Ontario. This resource is meant to complement current IT teams and provide Cyber Security knowledge, expertise, and leadership to those teams. The services continue to mature and evolve continuing to become an integral and integrated asset at each of the participating boards.

In September, the ESS Team, expanded to 7 Information Security Officers, serving 66 member Boards (61 Full Participants and 5 Resource Only Participants). The service transitioned from a regional support model, that was made of 5 regions, to a new model, more focused on the needs of our participating Boards. Boards were distributed into 7 groups (1 per team member) that aligns more closely the technology and infrastructure in use at each of the Boards. We are also transitioning the team members into more specialized roles (Auditor, Purple Team (2), Technical Writing (2) and Community Support, Product Expert, and Expert on Demand).

The ESS Team continues to support the Ministry of Education, Cyber Protection Strategy Team and our member boards, joining and participating in the Cyber Wellness and Cyber Rails Collaborative meetings and workshops. Not only does this allow the team to ensure that we are able assist our CPS Boards through their CPS journey, but we can also share the knowledge and learnings with our non-CPS Boards.

## Vetting of Applications for Security and Privacy (VASP):

ECNO in collaboration with the [Ontario Association of School Board Officials](#) and the Ontario Ministry of Education, established the VASP service. Grounded in our [Student Digital Privacy Standard](#), VASP provides a professional privacy and security risk assessment of educational digital tools and applications at the request of one or more school boards. The outcome of each review includes an assessment identified security and privacy risks and potential mitigation strategies for Boards to consider as part of their own review processes, as they consider the use of an application for their students and schools.

The VASP service continues to evolve and mature, as the needs of our members change. An example of this evolution was the expansion of the service this year, to include the review of mobile applications (Android, iOS, and iPadOS).

Investigation, research, and stakeholder outreach continues on the potential to expand the VASP offering to include Privacy Impact Assessments (PIA) for business applications and digital tools.

## 2024 Cyber Champion Challenge

The 2024 Cyber Champion Challenge Digital Awareness Student Media Contest was a momentous success with nearly three-times the number of entries from 2023. A special thanks to our judges and sponsors who donated time and prizes to help make the contest an immense success. [Check out the winners.](#)

## 2024 K-12 Cyber Awareness Month:

The Executive Director and I worked with Ministry of Education and Letter M on the planning, coordination, and execution of this years K-12 CAM. This year's campaign featured two themes, with directed messaging for Grades K-8 (with a focus on "Cyber Heroes Unite") and Grades 9-12 (with a focus on "Digital Me"). Also new this year was a series of webinars for educators and board communications professionals to learn more about the campaign.

Surveys of Teachers/Staff, Board Communicators, IT Leaders, and Students were also conducted at the conclusion of the CAM. Feedback from the surveys will be used to help improve next years campaign.

## 2024 - 2025 Focus

- Continue to develop and promote strategic liaisons with the government, school boards, other organizations, and the vendor community.
- Investigate provincial-wide solution offerings for DSBs.
- Expand and enhance our communications to our member boards and other educational partners.
- Expand and deepen the VASP and Security Solutions Communities of Excellence.
- Complete the investigation and research around PIAs for business applications and digitals, and if feasible launch a service offering to address this need for member Boards.
- Continue to support, enhance, and encourage the expansion of intelligence and information sharing in the K-12 Sector Information Security, not only province wide, but Canada Wide.
- Duties as required by the Executive Director.

## Conclusion

I am continually grateful for the ongoing opportunity serve ECNO's Member Boards, the Ontario K-12 sector, and collaborate with our diverse Ontario Educational and partner stakeholders, in service of Ontario's students.

Chris Dale  
Director of Security Services.