

Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting

Wednesday, April 19, 2023

11:45 p.m.

Northeastern Catholic District School Board

MINUTES

PRESENT: Colleen Landers, NCDSB Trustee / Chair
Sabrina Gravel, Cochrane Temiskaming Resource Centre
Ellen Renaud, North Eastern Ontario Family and Children's Services
Ryley Reis, Canadian Mental Health Association
Heather Demers, The Lord's Kitchen
Stan Skalecki, NCDSB Trustee
Daphne Brumwell, Superintendent of Education
Katie Mundle, Special Assignment Teacher
Lisa Lamarche, Behavior & Autism Specialist
Amber Smith-Come, Principal St. Anne School
Jean Ethier, Education Services Officer / Recorder

EXCUSED: Sean Robertson, Principal St. Joseph School
Deborah Chornobey, YMCA
Karla Gagnon, Autism Ontario
Joeann Gervais, The Lord's Kitchen
Billie Richer, VOICE for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children
Catherine Hoven, Special Assignment Teacher
Kim McEntee, Mental Health Supervisor

1. Welcome, Prayer and Land Acknowledgment

Colleen welcomed everyone and led the group in prayer and land acknowledgement.

2. Approval of Agenda

MOVED BY: R. Reis

BY: H. Demers SECONDED

THAT the agenda be approved as presented.

CARRIED.

3. Approval of Minutes

MOVED BY: S. Skalecki

BY: E. Renaud SECONDED

THAT the agenda be approved as presented.

CARRIED.

4. Special Education Plan 2023-2024

Daphne took the committee through the action items from last year's plan to help with decisions regarding this year's plan. Feedback from the Committee members was requested for suggestions. A list of the action items can be found on pages 3-6 of the minutes.

5. Agency Reports

Canadian Mental Health Association

Ryley spoke to the committee about the increase of drug use at a much younger age than previous years. He also stressed the importance of having conversations with children earlier in life and children who may be at risk. Children at risk can include those who have experienced childhood trauma, a mental health diagnosis, anxiety or depression. It is important to be proactive in having a discussion early to mitigate the long-term consequences.

The Lords Kitchen

The organization recently took part in a fundraising campaign with a local community partner to raise funds to assist in feeding those who may be experiencing food insecurity. The Lords Kitchen received 100% of the profits raised during the campaign.

Cochrane Temiskaming Resource Centre

The agency is working on reorganizing referrals as the waitlist is long. The internal processes are being reviewed to determine if there is a more effective approach to referrals. An internal document has been created to assist in the triage process to shorten the wait time throughout the different departments. The CRTC has also completed their new strategic plan for 2023-2026 and can be found at [CRTC Strategic Plan 2023-2026](#)

North Eastern Ontario Family and Children's Services

The agency currently has a sufficient waitlist in all regions but more so in the north due to staff shortages. The south region has less of a wait time due to vacancies being filled and the return of staff from different leaves.

Youth Engagement – There are currently 4 youth groups within the agency. Three of the groups worked on room decorations to make the space more relaxed and approachable. The groups choose the colors and the themes for the rooms. The funding was provided by the Bell Let's Talk program. The agency is working on sourcing funding to complete the remaining spaces in the same theme the youth groups choose.

6. Date of Next Meeting – June 14, 2023 at 11:45 a.m.

7. Other Business – Karla Gagnon has decided to step down as SEAC Chair and will remain on the committee as a community partner. Colleen Landers will be taking over as Chair for the remaining 2022-2023 meetings.

8. Adjournment

MOVED BY: S.Skalecki

THAT the meeting be adjourned at 12:57 p.m.

CARRIED

Spec Ed Plan Actions 2022-2023 Summary of Implementation

ACTION 1 FOR 2022-2023

Continue to work on the creation of the documents that outline the various internal processes found in the special education department.

This has been a challenge as there have been so many other things going on. We will continue to keep this as an action item in the hopes that we can tackle even a few each year. ELL, IPRC, CYW, Intervention Progress Notes completed (need to be reviewed and finalized)

ACTION 2 FOR 2022-2023

Continue to explore the opportunity to use the new Powerschool Student Information System to generate a variety of special education forms such as referrals. Our implementation of Powerschool has been a challenging process requiring more time than expected.

We have not yet circled back to this. As more boards in Ontario adopt Powerschool, this may be an opportunity to see how other board are using the Special Programs module. For now, I would suggest we put this on the back burner. Some of our recommendations/requests for changes were completed - some have and others not.

ACTION 3 FOR 2022-2023

In the event that a child's identification changes due to an updated assessment, we need to ensure that the new documentation is forwarded to the board office for filing in the student's Special Education file. An internal procedure will be created to ensure this happens.

A section in our IPRC internal process has been added that includes this information.

ACTION 4 FOR 2022-2023

Ensure that the placement option on the IPRC Statement of Decision is reflective of the actual placement. We have tended to use "Resource Assistance" as a catch-all when we should be more specific. This also means that when a placement changes mid-year, parents need to be contacted and provided with the opportunity to participate in a formal IPRC meeting or to have the documentation forwarded for signature after a conversation. An internal procedure will be created to capture what will need to happen in these circumstances.

A section in our IPRC internal process has been added that includes this information.

ACTION 5 FOR 2022-2023

It is our desire to include students in the IPRC and IEP process where appropriate (Grade 7 & up). We would like to continue to have schools work towards this expectation and have them support students in developing a one page document highlighting their strengths, needs, key accommodations and unique learning profile. This document will be shared with those staff currently supporting the student, as well as those who will be supporting the student the following year.

We have created a Learning Profile that RTs could use with Grade 7 and up students. It could be completed in June to share with the new teacher in September. We will try it out in a couple of schools this year and see how it goes.

ACTION 6 FOR 2022-2023

Continue to build capacity and competency of principals, teachers and support staff in the development, implementation and monitoring of effective IEPs for students requiring modifications to individual programs. Each school worked through an IEP audit process in the winter of 2022. We would like to engage school teams in a follow-up process in the fall of 2022 to continue to build comfort with this in each school.

Ensure all new teachers hired who have not previously done the NCDSB IEP e-Hub course, complete this by the end of September 2022.

We need to make this a priority for next year. We need to spend more time on the development, implementation and effective monitoring of IEPs. We may have to go back to another round of audits. We believe that all the RTs know what is expected but may be struggling to support classroom teachers. We are also needing to ensure that principals are carefully reviewing IEPs each term. A reminder was placed in September 2022 RT to do List to contact Katie/Catherine should any new hires require access to eHUB IEP course. We will do the same in September 2023.

ACTION 7 FOR 2022-2023

Literacy/Numeracy Leads have been added to the staffing complement of 9 of our 10 elementary schools that have children in FDK to Grade 3. These new staff members will serve as a champion of the Science of Reading and Structured Literacy, will support the implementation of the new math curriculum and will work directly with students who require extra support in these areas to lessen the likelihood that gaps in learning will occur. The Special Education department will work closely with this team of teachers to provide professional learning opportunities and to monitor student achievement. Intervention materials and screening tools will be explored this year.

Much has been done with the action item. Leads were available in 7 of 10 schools this year. Where a lead was not available, Resource Teachers took on significant responsibility for supporting the implementation of some of the new resources we are using. Heggerty Phonemic Awareness program (K-Gr. $\frac{5}{6}$), Foundations (K-Gr. $\frac{2}{3}$) and Synthetic Phonics Toolkit (Gr. 3-6) have been implemented in all schools. Intervention has used the same programs to support additional instruction as needed.

We also purchased Aimsweb+ as a screening tool for English students. We are using the Early Literacy Screen for K-Grade 3, as well as the digital reading assessment for Grade 2-8. We are extremely happy with the data we are receiving from these tools. We expect to move forward with this again next year. The Ministry of Education will provide funds to school boards to purchase and train staff to use screening tools for K-Gr. 2. We continue to explore options for French Immersion.

ACTION 8 FOR 2022-2023

Ensure parents are aware of our SEAC membership and dates for our monthly meetings through posting of information on the board website by September 30th, 2022. Minutes of SEAC meetings will also be posted on a monthly basis. We will continue to explore additional community representatives on SEAC. In particular we are looking for representatives with connections to the ASD and LD communities.

We have noticed a decline in the number of SEAC members who attend monthly meetings in the past couple of years. As such, we will conduct a SEAC membership drive in the summer of 2022 to try to secure a few extra community members.

We conducted a successful membership drive and were able to secure a number of new members from the community. The minutes continue to be uploaded to the [Board site](#).

ACTION 9 FOR 2022-2023

Continue to monitor and support the use of the Brigance Screen III for Year 2 Kindergarten and Grade 1 students. Screening will take place in December 2022 with a follow up for students at risk in June 2023. Complete a data analysis of the Brigance to ensure it is providing us with the necessary information to better support our youngest learners.

We have chosen to use the Aimsweb+ screen instead of Brigance. Maybe the Brigance still has a place to play with those students that we are thinking may have a developmental disability as it was intended rather than a full screen.

ACTION 10 FOR 2022-2023

Through the Board's Early Literacy Committee, we will review the recommendations from the Right to Read Inquiry and develop an implementation plan. This plan will determine the focus for instruction and staff learning as it relates to the Science of Reading over a 5 year period. Our focus for 2022-2023 is Phonological Awareness.

In the end we decided to focus on both Phonological Awareness and Phonics in 2022-2023. We continue to plan for a 5-year implementation of the recommendations in the Right to Read Inquiry Report.

ACTION 11 FOR 2022-2023

Implement Empower Decoding Gr. 2-5 program at 3 more schools: St. Joseph, St. Patrick School in Cobalt and St. Anne School. Resource teachers will receive materials and training in the fall of 2022. At least one group of Grade ¾ students will work through the program this school year in all schools with Empower.

A review of the Empower Decoding program is required now that we have re-established formalized phonics instruction in all schools. We are seeing Empower as being a Tier 3 support that would be used only once all other interventions have been explored. We will need to work with schools to understand this.

ACTION 12 FOR 2022-2023

Continue to monitor the modifications being made to math programs for students with learning disabilities. Provide greater support to RTs and Classroom Teachers to identify gaps in student learning and opportunities for intervention. Support the use of the York Region suggested accommodations by psychological process and the York Waterfall to help teachers meet the needs of LD students in math.

Build capacity around math content knowledge and math pedagogy with resource teachers and principals to support their work in math intervention. This will be particularly important given the potential gaps created during the COVID 19 Pandemic. Explore the purchase of an intervention program that could be used by both intervention teachers and resource teachers.

We have focused our work this year in math on the implementation of IXL in Grade 3-8. This tool has built-in diagnostic assessment that provides for a personalized learning plan for each student. This plan is designed to close gaps in math. If students are provided with time (at least one hour per week is recommended) to work on their learning plan, they will close gaps in the learning.

ACTION 13 FOR 2022-2023

Continue to support schools in implementing the School-Based Team model. The purpose of these meetings is to provide an opportunity for school staff to discuss the needs of students by sharing ideas about how to better support the student, and collaborate to create an action plan to support the student moving forward. A follow up is required to ensure that actions have been taken and to discuss their effectiveness.

This continues to be an area of significant challenge. We need to make this a priority in all schools in September and have already begun a discussion with principals to ensure this is a priority for them as well.

ACTION 14 FOR 2022-2023

Continue to work with our contracted SLP provider to ensure the provision of additional and more consistent therapy for students required language support, including at Bishop Belleau in Moosonee. This funding will come from the Northern Support Initiative and is done in collaboration with our co-terminus English school board.

Explore the possibility of completing hearing and vision screens on all FDK students.

Services continue to be provided in all schools. Our contracted SLP has 3 therapy assistants working with him, allowing for a more consistent service. We need to explore the hearing and vision screens. Emilie Bouchard Moore (SLP) joined John's practice to help him better service the southern part of the board. The Timiskaming Health Unit completes SK Vision screens on all SK students in their area. Vision screens were completed in Timmins and Iroquois Falls as well this year.

ACTION 15 FOR 2022-2023

Explore a variety of screening tools that could be used in early primary to support the recommendations of the Right to Read Inquiry Report. Ideally we would find something that provides norm-referenced results and allows for easy collection of data at a board level.

Explore an alternative to BAS for Grades 3-8. We have implemented Oral Reading Fluency assessments for all students from Grade 1 to 8 (done 3 times a year). We have also implemented a digital reading assessment that covers vocabulary, comprehension and silent reading fluency fro Grade 3-8.

We also purchased Aimsweb+ as a screening tool for English students. We are using the Early Literacy Screen for K-Grade 3. We are extremely happy with the data we are receiving from these tools. We expect to move forward with this again next year. The Ministry of Education will provide funds to school boards to purchase and train staff to use screening tools for K-Gr. 2. We continue to explore options for French Immersion.

ACTION 16 FOR 2022-2023

1. Implement the use of the professional learning series at staff meetings or during other professional learning opportunities to help all teachers better understand the psychological processes and their impact on learning.
2. Continue to implement the LD Class Profiles that have been created. Build capacity with classroom teachers to better understand how to support students with an LD in the regular classroom.

Given a number of barriers to the successful implementation of these action items, we are going to table it for a bit.