

Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting

Wednesday, October 19, 2022

11:45 p.m.

Northeastern Catholic District School Board

MINUTES

PRESENT: Sabrina Gravel, Cochrane Temiskaming Resource Centre
Karla Gagnon, Autism Ontario
Ellen Renaud, North Eastern Ontario Family and Children's Services
Billie Richer, VOICE for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children
Mackenzie Carrier, YMCA
Heather Demers, The Lord's Kitchen
Colleen Landers, NCDSB Trustee
Stan Skalecki, NCDSB Trustee
Daphne Brumwell, Superintendent of Education
Catherine Hoven, Special Assignment Teacher
Katie Mundle, Special Assignment Teacher
Kim McEntee, Mental Health Supervisor
Jean Ethier, Education Services Officer / Recorder

EXCUSED:

1. Welcome, Prayer and Land Acknowledgment

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

2. Approval of Agenda/Minutes

Since the committee did not have quorum the agenda and previous meeting minutes were not approved.

3. Elections – Chair and Vice Chair

Since the committee did not have quorum the election will take place at the November meeting.

4. Schedule of Meetings and School Year Calendars

The 2022-2023 meeting schedule and school year calendars were shared with the committee members.

5. Transition to a Structured Literacy Approach

With the Right to Read Report released at the end of February, we have worked very hard to review the recommendations and to begin to make a shift to more evidence-based reading practices. We are focusing our efforts at the early primary level on supporting word recognition strategies which include phonological awareness, decoding (alphabetic principle and letter-sound correspondence), and sight recognition of familiar words. This involves some very specific programming related to building phonemic awareness and phonics skills. We are currently in the process of using a variety of assessment tools to determine what baseline skills students have in these areas so that we can better target instruction and intervention as needed. This is happening at all levels from FDK to grade 8.

In the later primary grades and in the junior grades, we are closing existing gaps in phonological awareness and phonics. Where this is not necessary, instruction will not look much different than it has in the past. However, we have instituted a 30-minute block each morning called the Morning Routine. This will provide teachers with the time to front-load facts and vocabulary related to areas of the curriculum like science, social studies, health and the arts. The morning routine includes learning in four areas – calendar/time, talking for learning, sentence of the day and 100 days of school. Students are kept engaged using white boards and through differentiated seating and tasks.

Daphne shared a couple of documents that have been provided to staff to support implementation.

6. Update on the Summer Transition Program

The Summer Transition Program took place in nearly all NCDSB schools in August. Only OICS, BBS and St. Patrick School in Cobalt did not run a program. This was due to the inability to find staff, or lack of student enrolment (OICS). Programs were funded either through the Ministry of Education's summer learning funds for students with special needs, or through the After School Skills Development Program for students with Autism. Six schools had programs for students with autism, while three have programs for students with other special needs.

The program took place the week of August 22nd. The staff planned and prepared on Monday, and the students came from Tuesday to Friday between 9:30 and 11:30 am. Transportation was provided as needed. Once again, the positive feedback regarding this opportunity was significant. Both staff and parents felt it contributed to the successful transition of children to the new school year. This funding is specialized funding that may or may not be renewed next year.

In addition to this program, we did run a Summer Learning Program at Aileen Wright and Pope Francis for students from Kindergarten to grade 3. We also ran one virtual class for students across the district in Grade 4-6. Student enrolment by mid-June has a significant impact on determining where a program will operate. Special thanks goes out to the principals of these schools for their effort to recruit students who would benefit from the program. Daphne will share a presentation about the Summer Learning Program next month.

7. Speech & Language Services

John Stark, owner of Therapy Path, continues to provide services to all NCDSB through either Northern Adjustment Category or regular board special education funds. We continue to work in partnership with DSBONE on the Northern Adjustment Category project.

He and his staff begin the year by doing a language screen on all year 2 kindergarten students. This helps us to identify students who would benefit from therapy, as well as provide us with important longitudinal data. Results of the screen will be shared in November or December.

Therapy Path is also working directly with BBS through Jordan's Principle funding to support the very large number of students with oral language deficits. An additional therapy assistant has recently been hired so that more frequent visits to the school can be made.

8. Specialized Classrooms – Update for 2022-2023

We continue to have full-time special education classrooms at St. Joseph and St. Jerome, and half time programs at St. Patrick School in Cobalt and Kapuskasing. Students in these classrooms have a variety of identifications, but we continue to keep numbers in these classrooms small.

9. IPRCs and IEPs Fall 2022

IPRC meetings continued to take place over the phone or through video conferencing with parents this year unless a parent requested an in person meeting.

The IPRC – (Identification, Placement and Review Committee) is a group consisting of at least 3 individuals – typically the School Principal, Resource Teacher and Classroom Teacher. In some cases, the student also attends. This committee meets with parents and determines if a student meets the criteria of being an exceptional pupil based on Ministry of Education standards as well as determines the exceptional student’s educational placement. To date we have received paperwork that supports newly identifying 49 students. 26 in the Central/Northern region and 23 in the Southern portion of the board. There were 43 initial IPRCs last year in the same timeframe. Of these 49:

- 7 students are identified with Autism (10 last year)
- 23 students are identified with a Learning Disability (18 last year)
- 4 students are identified with a Developmental Disability (2 last year)
- 2 students are identified with a Language Impairment (2 last year)
- 2 students are identified under the Behaviour category (2 last year)
- 2 student is identified as having a Physical Disability (1 last year)
- 1 student with a Mild Intellectual Disability (0 last year)
- 8 students are identified as being Multiple – Multiple meaning they fit more than one category of exceptionality (5 last year). Most of the Multiple identifications include a learning disability as part of the exceptionality.
- No students have been identified as being Blind/Low Vision or Deaf/Hard of Hearing to date this year (2 last year for Blind/low vision and 1 for Deaf/Hard of Hearing)

Central/North

26 students identified this year. There were 30 during the same period last year. Of these:

- 8 were students assessed by our Board
- 4 students had documentation through a doctor’s/pediatrician assessment
- 12 through a private assessment
- 2 had an assessment from another school board

South/BBS

23 students identified this year. There were 13 during the same period last year. Of these:

- 2 of these students were assessed privately
- 14 students were assessed by our Board
- 1 student was assessed through an SLP
- 1 student was assessed through CTRC
- 6 students had documentation through a doctor’s assessment or a pediatrician

IEP were sent home to Bishop Belleau families on September 30 and to all other families on October 17. In total, our school board has 599 IEPs - including both identified and non-identified students. Total enrolment for NCDSB is approximately 2200.

This year we anticipate additional IEP revisions (more than what is required by the Ministry) due to the introduction of new assessment tools, and the delayed start to intervention. IEPs are working documents and the RTs will send home IEPs as often as needed to reflect the individualized instruction and support that students require. We are anticipating that the school IEP audit will be completed in December so that adjustments can be made to the term 2 IEP. As in the last 2 years, this audit will be done internally at the school level. Term 2 IEPs will be sent home on March 2 for all schools.

10. Agency Reports

The Lords Kitchen

The society completed a fundraiser recently with the support for community members. All proceeds raised in the fundraiser was reinvested back into feeding community members. The Anti Hunger Coalition October schedule was shared with the committee. The schedule is a list of locations in the Timmins area providing meals for those who may be experiencing food insecurity.

The schedule was shared with the schools within the Timmins area to share with their school community.

Cochrane Temiskaming Children's Treatment Centre

The Centre is implementing new initiatives at the agency. The strategic committee and the equity diversity and inclusion committee and is in the process of being developing. This includes a review and internal policies and improving efficiencies.

A trip to Fort Albany was recently completed where the agency was able to meet with 22 clients over the course of a week.

Autism Ontario

As a volunteer for Austim Ontario and as a parent Karla would like to be a support system for other parents who may have children with exceptionalities. She created an Austim support package to assist families with navigating an Austim diagnosis. The package includes several resources that can be accessed and support both schools and families. The package will be shared with our school community.

11. Date of Next Meeting – November 16, 2022 at 11:45

12. Other Business – N/A

13. Adjournment – meeting was adjourned at 1:10pm