

## Special Education Advisory Meeting (SEAC)

Thursday, Sept 19, 2024 | 1:00pm  
Zoom Online Meeting & North Bay Board Office

### **Present:**

Krista Holmes, Executive Assistant  
Alison Clarke, Acting Principal of Special Education  
Tim Graves, Superintendent of Education  
Chantal Phillips, Trustee and Chair  
Candy St. Onge, Almaguin Highlands Community Living  
Louise Sargent, Trustee  
Laura Hansman, OPVIC  
Lisa Paradis, Spec Ed Coordinator – East & West Regions  
Kimberly Gignac, Special Ed Coordinator – North Region  
Jeanie Fuscaldo, Trustee

Guest – Chris Walkling, K-12 Student Achievement and Well-being Principal, North Region

### **Regrets:**

Ashley St. Pierre, Board Chair  
Caroline Labrecque, Nipissing First Nation  
Carol Couillard, Nipissing Secondary  
Chris Guillemette (Vice Chair), CLNB

### **Land Acknowledgement** (Alison Clarke)

Meeting called to Order at 1:00pm by Chair Philips.

Attendance noted

Agenda Approval --> asked to add Land Acknowledgement as a topic for later this meeting.

Motioned by Trustee Sargent, Seconded by Candy St. Onge. Carried.

Approval of the Minutes of the June 20, 2024 meeting.

Motioned Trustee Sargent, Seconded by Candy St. Onge. Carried

### **Business Arising from the Minutes**

- EQAO Presentation by Principal Chris Walkling. Presentation attached.
- Trustee Fuscaldo inquired about how many students are using assistive technology to complete EQAO within NNDSB and Principal Walkling indicated that it would be interesting to find out more about reading decoding within EQAO assessments and the central program team has provided EQAO with feedback around this for consideration,

noting that currently there isn't a metric on how many students are using accommodations at present. Further, Trustee Fuscaldo noted that students like to use assistive technology.

- Candy St. Onge noted that she appreciated learning about EQAO and expressed that it's a positive that EQAO can measure mental health data through questions and indicators. Further, Principal Walkling noted that survey questions are connected to our Student Achievement Plan and that, as a board, we can develop actions and a response to these results.
- Trustee Sargent noted that comparing back to other EQAO years would be challenging, since the tests are administered differently now and asked if we can look back at individual results. Principal Walkling was able to confirm that every student receives an individual report and each board also receives a skills and strand analysis.
- Trustee Sargent noted that EQAO has been well debated and asked if initiatives can be funded that are informed by EQAO results. Principal Walkling was able to confirm that NNDSB uses EQAO data to receive funding and often staffing and Ministry priorities align with EQAO data gathered from school boards.
- Trustee Fuscaldo commented that dyslexic students struggle with reading and writing and queried how EQAO measures such language tasks. Principal Walkling was able to note that we use other diagnostic tools, like Acadience and Core Phonics to inform literacy interventions for students that may be struggling.
- Principal Walkling noted that the NNDSB Literacy Team would be best positioned to address specific questions related to literacy intervention and tools in use.

#### Standing Items

##### Community Partner updates

- No updates at this time.

#### **Correspondence received:** The Conseil Scolaire Nouvelon Catholique Re: Specialized Transportation for Students with Special Needs

- Trustee Sargent noted that it might be appropriate to inquire with our own transportation consortium about this issue. SO Graves additionally noted that it would be prudent to consult with our central special education team to determine if NNDSB is experiencing similar issues as are being expressed in this letter and take any appropriate next steps. Further, Trustee Sargent mentioned that not every letter received requires a response as sometimes these types of correspondence are information items.

#### **Reports**

##### Board Report – (Board Trustee)

From Trustee Sargent

- We now have 2 new student trustees. They were sworn in at a recent board meeting.

##### Special Education Report- Alison Clarke

- NNDSB was able to provide summer learning supports through Ministry funds for summer learning programming offered in coordination with the board's program team, Virtual Summer learning camps (7 camps - AT, Social Coding, Robotics, Highschool

Transitions) for students with spec ed needs and in-person August transition supports to support successful transitions for students with special education needs.

- The vacant Behaviour Counsellor position has been filled. This successful candidate comes to us with over 24 years of experience supporting children and youth in the social services field. She will inevitably be a positive addition to our central behaviour team. She is expected to begin early October.
- A specialist teacher of the blind/low-vision for the north region has also been hired. This individual started promptly in September, and she is already demonstrating enthusiasm and openness to collaboration as she works with our blind/low-vision teacher in the east/west.
- Over the summer, the special education secretary for the north region became vacant, but we have been able to secure a dedicated, knowledgeable and eager replacement. This individual is settling in and supporting both our special education team as well as Lana St. Louis's mental health team.
- We still have a 1.0 SLP mat leave position that we are trying to fill. This position has been vacant since the spring and it's been difficult to fill, we suspect, due to the specialized qualifications required as well as the temporary nature of the positing posting. It continues to be posted.
- New SEA Directives – The claims-based funding model is no longer. Now boards are provided with a base amount in addition to a per pupil amount. Claims are now only for single items costing more than \$5000. This change in funding policy has great implications for how we are to budget for specialized equipment and technology, so we are still working through this with the Finance Dept. and our hope is to have clarity soon so that we can begin processing claims as they come to us.
- Professional Assessment funding has moved to core education fund and there is new funding for Special Education Transition Navigators, which is funding to support students with spec ed needs and/or disabilities transition into, within and out of school through post-secondary pathways, work collaboratively with boards, community agencies and employers.
- Members of our department have been meeting with us and RISE by LearnStyle team members to configure the online platform for us alongside our IT team. This summer, data transfers and other key activities will be taking place. We are in the process of working with all of our special education teams, such as speech language, psych and behaviour to get all referral forms and referral processes into RISE. Our plan is still to have IEPs be created within RISE for term 2 of this school year.
- Our central Behaviour Team will be undergoing a few changes in the upcoming weeks as The College of Psychologist and Behaviour Analysts of Ontario, effective July 1, 2024, announced changes that have impacted some of our work. The college has mandated that Behaviour Analysts working within Ontario have to be registered and in compliance with standards of practice, which includes public transparency (clarity in role titles) and parental/guardian informed consent. The college has also identified that only certain roles, with certain qualifications, have the ability to clinically supervise others.
- We look forward to offering EA PD during the upcoming PD Day on September 27<sup>th</sup>. EAs will engage in regional sessions, including BMS re-certification training, Emotion Coaching offered by the Mental Health Lead, an equity presentation by EGALE, and a workshop on mental health presented by OSSTF.

## **SEAC Chair Report**

- Sept is FASD month. Chair Phillips reminded everyone that it is the most common developmental disability that there is. Chair Phillips appreciates all the work that people have done in the past on that.
- Chair Phillips noted that in June OSSTF released another report with quite alarming stats about the amount of violence and aggression in the classroom. One report in the media framed it that it's not that students are violent, but they are unable to express themselves and it results in violence. Hope that we can hear more about the action plan and recommendations to support this issue.

## **New Business**

### **Sharing of PD Day Plans and review SEAC Schedule, Annual Agenda and Goals 2024-25**

- Principal Clarke shared the EA Professional development Plan for 2024-2025 school year on the screen. We survey all of the EAs for their feedback to help share our plans for the year, etc.
- Principal Clarke shared the Annual Agenda, and we've made a few minor updates.
- Trustee Sargent and Chair Phillips wondered if there was a tour or demonstration that we should be thinking about, given that we used to have something similar on the agenda. It was noted that this discussion should be added to an upcoming meeting's agenda. Trustee Sargent also loved the idea of the kids/students and loved that video that was put together.
- Chair Phillips noted that it would be interesting, as well, to hear about expulsions for students with exceptionalities.

### **Land Acknowledgement ~ Added this item to agenda**

- Chair Phillips noted that we are hoping to create a list of committee members that would be willing to open our meetings with a Land Acknowledgement. As such, Chair Phillips will be requesting that each member of the committee try to take one meeting to create their own Land Acknowledgement to start the meeting.

Next meeting: October 17, 2024.

Adjournment Motioned by Candy St. Onge and Seconded by Trustee Sargent. *Carried*