

PIC Meeting Minutes

February 19, 2026, 5pm – 6:30pm
Via Teams

Present

Stephanie Bergman, PIC Chair/SAC Chair
Honourable Minister of Education, Paul Calandra
NNDSB Director of Education, Jay MacJanet
Melanie Gray, Superintendent of Teaching and Learning
Kyle Kadlec, Principal of Alliance and PIC Lead
Stephanie Norrie, Executive Assistant
Chris Walkling, Principal of K-12 Student Achievement and Well-Being
Chris Popovich, Senior Manager, Curriculum, Assessment and Student Success Policy Branch, Ministry of Education
Cariss Chen, Outreach Division, TVO Media Education Group
Sande Guindon, North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit
Stephanie Underwood, Acting Principal of Vincent Massey Public School
Amanda Hinksman, Administrator
Amanda Meighan, Administrator
Marcus Battaglia, Ministry of Education
Chantelle Link, SAC Chair
Connie McKaig, SAC Chair
Deb Bartlett, NNDSB Communications Officer
Elizabeth Simser, Administrator
Emile Ferlisi, Administrator
Gillian Kajganich, Administrator
Graydon Smith, MPP Parry Sound - Muskoka
Heather Keung, SAC Chair
Heather Taylor, Administrator
Joanne Christie, Administrator
Kanika Maheshwari, TVO
Kelly Huston, Teacher
Kim Jenkins, Special Education Coordinator
James King, Constituency Assistant for Parry Sound-Muskoka MPP Graydon Smith
Leslie Hansen, Administrator
Lisa Lamoreaux, Principal of student Well-Being, Equity and Indigenous Education
Margaret Mcdiarmid, Administrator
Elsbeth Schokking, Ministry of Education
Shannon Mahon, Administrator
Stephen Krause, Student Achievement and Well-Being Principal

Trisha Bariball, SAC Chair
Tyson Brear, Teacher
Vanessa Legros, SAC Chair
Andi Dalton

Call to Order- Chair Bergman at 5:00 pm
Land Acknowledgement- SO Gray

Welcome and Introduction of the Minister- Director MacJanet

Director of Education, Jay McJanet opened the meeting by expressing appreciation for the opportunity to speak and introduced himself to the Parent Involvement Committee. He shared that he is originally from Sault Ste. Marie and that joining the Near North District School Board feels like returning home.

The Director emphasized his commitment to the communities served by the board and reaffirmed that student achievement and well-being, both academic and social, will remain the central focus of his leadership. He highlighted the importance of collaboration among staff, students, administration, and families in building strong school communities.

Director McJanet then introduced the Honourable Minister of Education, Paul Calandra. He explained that under Bill 33, and during the current period of supervision, Minister Calandra will assume responsibilities typically held by the Board of Trustees. In this supervisory role, the Minister will ensure governance and oversight continue in alignment with provincial direction and in the best interests of students and families.

The Director reiterated Near North's commitment to transparency, collaboration, and meaningful parent engagement. He closed by noting that actions matter more than words and invited the committee to judge the board's progress accordingly.

Remarks- Honourable Minister of Education Calandra

Minister Calandra thanked the committee, Chairs, and the Director for the opportunity to attend and acknowledged the significant time and commitment shown by members. He noted that the past several months have been challenging for the Near North District School Board but expressed optimism about the future under Director McJanet's leadership. He emphasized that the board has many dedicated educators and staff who remain deeply committed to student achievement.

The Minister spoke about longstanding tensions between different regions of the board, particularly between Parry Sound and North Bay, and expressed a commitment to bringing the board together with a unified focus on student achievement. He recognized the significant disruptions experienced by Parry Sound students and staff due to the new JK-12 building delays. Despite these challenges, he praised educators for their resilience, adaptability, and continued dedication to students.

Minister Calandra explained that his continued supervision of the board under Bill 33 is intended to provide stability and ensure the community receives the support it needs. He stated that supervision will remain in place until the board is firmly back on track, the new JK-12 school is completed, and the system is functioning collaboratively and effectively. He concluded by thanking attendees for their time, patience, and ongoing commitment.

Agenda Approval- Principal Kadlec

Motioned by Connie McKaig, seconded by Gillian Kajganich Carried

Approval of the Minutes of the November 12, 2025, meeting

Motioned by Gillian Kajganich, seconded by Connie McKaig. Carried.

Attendance Poll- Principal Kadlec

At 5:15 pm, 30 out of 38 meeting participants responded as follows:

- Parent/Guardian - 1 (3%)
- SAC Chair/Co-Chair - 4 (13%)
- SAC Teacher Representative - 0
- Teacher / Other School Staff - 2 (6%)
- School Administrator (Principal/Vice-Principal) - 12 (40%)
- Community Partner – 1 (3%)
- NNDSB Central Staff / Other NNDSB Representative – 5 (16%)
- Ministry of Education Representative – 1 (3%)
- Guest Speaker – 4 (13%)

Presentations

Chris Walkling – Principal K-12 Student Achievement and Well-Being

Principal Walkling provided a detailed overview of NNDSB's student achievement data and system priorities.

- 2024-2025 EQAO Results were reviewed at the Grade 3, 6, 9, and OSSLT levels, noting:
 - Grade 3 Reading: ~60% at provincial standard, with slight improvement year-over-year.
 - Grade 3 Writing: Decline of 3.8%.
 - Grade 3 Math: 7.8% improvement.
 - Grade 6 Reading: 79% at standard (6.3% increase).
 - Grade 6 Math: 30% at standard, continuing to be a significant area of need.
 - Grade 9 Math: 35% at standard, with a 7% improvement.
 - OSSLT: Slight decline among first-time eligible writers.
 - Principal Walkling also highlighted insights from the student questionnaire, such as discrepancies between students' interest in subjects and their confidence in tackling challenging tasks.
- System Literacy and Math Initiatives
 - Principal Walkling outlined several district-wide initiatives:
 - 100% K–2 reading screening using evidence-based tools
 - Literacy facilitators supporting classroom instruction rooted in the science of reading
 - Tiered interventions and ongoing progress monitoring
 - Math facilitators providing embedded professional learning
 - Deployment of digital math tools across K–10
- PIRLS (Progress in International Reading Literacy Study)
 - Three NNDSB schools were randomly selected to participate in the 2026 cycle. Participation involves Grade 4 students completing an international reading assessment administered every five years
- EQAO Parent Webinars
 - Upcoming sessions hosted by the Ministry of Education will be delivered on the topics of math, reading, and writing were shared with PIC.
- Questions- Stephanie Bergman asked if French Immersion students are assessed within the English category. Principal Walkling clarified that French Immersion students write the math assessment in English and that EQAO results can be filtered by program

Chris Popovich – Senior Manager -Curriculum, Assessment and Student Success
Policy Branch – Ministry of Education

- **Chris Popovich** demonstrated the Ministry’s curriculum website, www.dcp.edu.gov.on.ca/en, highlighting
 - Parent-friendly grade overviews
 - Transferable skills
 - Course descriptions and prerequisites
 - Downloadable curriculum documents
 - Resources designed to help families understand expectations and support learning at home

He emphasized that the site is intended to strengthen clarity and connection between home and school.

Carissa Chen – Manager, Partnerships and Community Engagement Digital Learning
Division – TVO Media Education Group

Carissa showcased TVO’s free educational tools, including:

- **TVO Learn** (K–12 activities, videos, games which can be filtered by grade, theme and subject)
 - <https://tvolearn.com/>
- **Mathify** (free tutoring by Ontario-certified teachers)
 - <https://mathify.tvolearn.com/>
 - Mathify is safe, secure, and accessible to all Ontario students.
- **TVO Kids** programming
 - <https://www.tvokids.com/school-age>
- **TVO ILC** high school courses
 - <https://www.ilc.org/>

Sandee Guindon -North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit

- Website and Resources
 - School Based Vaccination Programs
 - Options to confirm which vaccinations you have had and which you might require
 - Dental Clinic
 - Dental Screening (visual assessments only)
 - Planet Youth Nipissing

- Aims to decrease risk factors and increase protective factors
- Northern Fruit and Vegetable Program
- Head Lice Information
- Health Professionals and Partners
- Healthy Schools Program
 - Attendance matters and learning library are popular pages within this section of the website
 - Classroom and Teacher Supports
 - School and Administrator Support
 - Mental Health and Well Being

Stephanie Underwood (Acting Principal of Vincent Massey Public School)
NNDSB

- Stephanie introduced the new Edsby group for School Advisory Council Chairs, designed to:
 - Centralize meeting links and resources
 - Support communication
 - Encourage collaboration and idea-sharing among SACs
 - She emphasized that parent voice is essential and that the forum aims to strengthen school-community relationships.

Pro-Grant Update- Principal Kadlec

- Application Updates and subcommittee approvals
- Funding awarded to
 - MT Davidson- Childhood Unplugged
 - Phelps- Math Night
 - West Ferris- Fostering Caregiver Engagement through a Community Craft Evening and A School Community Wellness Mindframe Fair
 - McDougall- Family Math Night
 - Land of Lakes- Unlock Superpowers/ Literacy Night
 - Nobel- Brain Boost/ Healthy Habits Family Engagement Night
 - Ferris Glen- Embrace the Chill
- Round 2 Deadline – Feb 20, 2026

Pro-Grant initiatives (SAC Chairs)

- West Ferris – Gillian Kajganich and student senate representatives shared their Mind Frame Fair, a student-led wellness event that has grown significantly, now involving more than 25 community partners.

- Ferris Glen – Heather Keung presented “Embrace the Chill,” a winter-themed family engagement series in partnership with the Canadian Ecology Centre, featuring snowshoeing, stargazing, and storytelling. Ferris Glenn is proud to see the event bring families together while fostering the students learning and connection to the outdoors
- Nobel – Nicole Chaput outlined Nobel’s “Brain Boost & Healthy Habits” initiative which is student wellbeing focused to encourage student success. Currently a Thriving Thursdays program is underway wherein students make stress balls, practice yoga, gratitude jars, etc which leads up to the PRO Grant Initiative.

Discussion- Chair Bergman

Reflection: Considering the priorities, discussions, and decisions reflected in our meetings, what emerging needs or opportunities should the PIC focus on next to strengthen parent engagement, equity, and communication across the system?

- Themes included:
 - Support for SACs in navigating fundraising and equipment needs
 - Interest in learning more about differentiated instruction and IEP supports
 - Desire for more SAC-to-SAC networking opportunities
 - Continued focus on communication tools and parent-friendly resources
- This question was posted in the Edsby forum to encourage continued discussion and contributions

Upcoming Events (Principal Kadlec)

- Pro Grant Subcommittee Round 2- Application Review- February 24, 2026
- PIC Meeting # 4- April 29, 2026 (tentative)
- PIC Meeting # 5- June 3, 2026 (tentative)

Agenda Items are due to Principal Kadlec/Chair Stephanie Bergman by April 2, 2026

Adjournment at 6:29 pm.