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## SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Thursday, November 17, 2022  
Large Boardroom, Catholic Education Centre  
6:30 P.M. – 8:00 P.M.

**Acting Chairperson: Shawna Belcourt**

**Vice-Chairperson: Clare Paterson**

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**Members:** Shawna Belcourt, Clare Paterson, Kathleen Tanguay

**Guests:** Dr. Cynthia Chan Reynolds, Jeff Hockett

**Administration:** Jeannie Armstrong

**Recorder:** Vicki Blakely

**Absent:** Laura Di Ianni

**A. Call to Order:**

1. Land Acknowledgment: Jeannie Armstrong

As we continue to learn together in these exceptional circumstances, I (we) would like to acknowledge, as we do at school, that this land on which we live and learn daily, is the traditional territory of the Michi Saagig (Mississauga) Anishnaabe. All of the PVNC Catholic District School Board lies within the Williams Treaty territory and we are all Treaty people. We offer our gratitude to the First Peoples of this land who continue to care for, and share their teachings about, our earth and our relations. May we honour those teachings.

2. Opening Prayer: Clare Paterson

3. Additions to the Agenda

None.

4. Motion to approve the agenda as presented:

Moved by: Clare Paterson

Seconded by: Shawna Belcourt

That the agenda be approved as presented.

Carried

5. Declarations of Conflicts of Interest

None

6. Motion for Approval of the Minutes of the October 20, 2022 Meeting.

Moved by: Clare Paterson

Seconded by: Shawna Belcourt

That the Minutes of the Special Education Committee meeting held on October 20, 2022 be approved as presented.

Carried

7. Business arising from the Minutes:

None noted.

**B. Recommended Actions/Presentations:**

1. Remarks: Chairperson, Shawna Belcourt

Shawna Belcourt welcomed everyone to the meeting. Reminded the Committee there will be no meeting in December, with meetings reconvening in January. Thinking of everyone in the school system and hoping for a fair agreement for both parties in the CUPE negotiations, thinking of the staff and families.

2. Remarks: Superintendent of Learning/Special Education Services, Jeannie Armstrong

Welcomed the new Trustee, Kathleen Tanguay, who will be sitting on the Special Education advisory Committee.

Regional Special Education Resource Teacher meetings have been occurring this fall, which has given central staff the opportunity to deliver professional development in the areas of Universal Design for Learning, Equity, wise practices for literacy, and updates on the Right to Read inquiry. These sessions have included lots of positive feedback from staff.

The Special Education team trip to Ottawa has been delayed until December due to the anticipated labour disruptions. The team will be traveling to Ottawa Catholic District School Board to tour with central teams Kindergarten Assessment classrooms. These are similar to PVNCCDSB's CASA classrooms which support students with Autism.

PA days have provided opportunities for learning. October 24 was a system wide PA Day. November 25 was a Secondary PA Day, with Secondary CASA engaging together in conversation and learning. Educational Assistants engaged in personal learning modules,

and guest speaker Hannah Beach, speaking in regards to Understanding Adolescents Inside and Out - A Relational Approach.

The Ministry of Education notified school boards to have a contingency plan in place in case of labour disruptions. We are hopeful an agreement can be reached, but are preparing in the event that it cannot be.

In regards to Equity, the Staff Census was launched on October 24, closing November 1. Similar to the Student Census that was administered last year, it will identify systemic barriers that our staff face in order to develop a plan to eliminate these barriers. Response rate was approximately 70%, with 1350 responses.

3. Remarks: Trustee Kathleen Tanguay

Excited to join the Board of Trustees and represent them on the Special Education Advisory Committee. Recently retired after 31 years of teaching, taught all 3, special ed, both children had special education needs and have a big place in her heart for this. adopted 2 children through children's aid.

**C. Presentations/Discussion Items:**

1. Right to Read Inquiry Update - Dr. Cynthia Chan Reynolds, Board Psychologist/Manager of Student Services and Jeff Hockett, Learning Consultant - Special Education Services

In October 2019 a Public Inquiry was launched by the Ontario Human Rights Commission. The report from the inquiry was released February 2022 - finding foundational word-reading skills have been overlooked in Ontario's education system in favour of almost exclusive focus on contextual word-reading strategies and on socio-cultural perspectives on literacy.

Key findings & recommendations include the removal of the use of cueing systems for word reading and instead require mandatory explicit, systematic and direct instruction in foundational word reading skills. The report included a better understanding of structured literacy and the strategies that should be used, including Scarborough's Reading Rope (2001). This merges language comprehension while increasing the word recognition (phonological awareness, decoding, sight recognition). The report also called for Improving data collection, analysis, and reporting evidence-based screening on foundation skills focusing on word-reading accuracy and fluency.

Early screening is to be used to identify students at risk of failing to learn to read words adequately, and ensure immediate, effective evidence based interventions are being implemented.

PVNCCDSB is using a tiered approach to support students. Tier 1 - for all students, includes structured literacy and assessment to see who needs the tier 2 & 3 strategies. Reading Coaches are introducing Acadiance Reading Assessments as a

K-2 screening tool. They are also working to develop understanding of structured literacy including explicit, systematic and direct instruction in foundational word reading skills. The expectation is to decrease the need for reading interventions through the Tier 1 strategies. Tier 2 interventions will include support from both the classroom teacher and Special Education Resource Teacher in offering smaller, more frequent and intensive reading support, including a diagnostic assessment. Tier 3 strategies will involve the Special Education Resource Teachers leading small groups with explicit instructions using structured literacy courses, Empower Reading groups.

PVNCCDSB has offered professional development in this area to support Special Education Resource Teachers, including Unpacking the Science of Reading to Inform Literacy Intervention voluntary held in August, as well professional development offered in May and October.

From the Presentation:

The committee discussed the presentation and were happy to see that all students will be screened to ensure no one slips through the cracks. The group inquired if word recognition had not been included. Language comprehension has always been included, but word recognition wasn't consistent across all school boards across the province - the Inquiry wants to ensure that it is consistent and intentional. In order to strengthen the rope (Scarborough's Reading Rope), multiple strategies need to be taught so they intertwine and strengthen the student's ability to read. Comprehensive base for strategies standardizing the platform, from there they will differentiate based on the needs of the children from there.

The Right to Read Executive Summary can be viewed through the link below:

[https://www.ohrc.on.ca/sites/default/files/Right%20to%20Read%20Executive%20Summary\\_OHRC%20English\\_0.pdf](https://www.ohrc.on.ca/sites/default/files/Right%20to%20Read%20Executive%20Summary_OHRC%20English_0.pdf)

2. Staff Census - Jeannie Armstrong, Superintendent of Learning/Faith & Equity/Special Education Services

Superintendent Armstrong gave a brief overview and background of the PVNCCDSB staff census. Last fall PVNCCDSB started with a student census; by 2023 mandatory student census will be required by the ministry annually. A brief review of the results of the student survey from last fall highlighting the diversity of our students was given. Last year PVNCCDSB was supported by a part-time Equity Advisor, since then a full-time permanent staff member has been added in the role of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Advisor, Tenesia Benjamin. The role will support Human Resources in developing policy in regards to recruitment, which has led to the staff census being developed. By collecting data, the hope is to identify barriers and put actions in place to eliminate barriers to staff. This will help support the strategic plans and its goals.

Annually PVNCCDSB will continue to review growth in diversity to provide opportunities to influence the system. Groups are being created including the Black

Alliance group and Black Ally group, along with our Black Student Congress lead by Asante Haughton.

Diversity is something that is happening throughout the board. We know the percentage of new immigrants joining our area and schools. This information will help PVNCCDSB plan and be responsive to break down barriers and be an inclusion environment. The Staff Census once completed will be reported to the Board of Trustees.

From the Presentation:

The committee discussed the presentation and thanked Superintendent Armstrong. They look forward to the report that will come from the Staff Census.

**D. Correspondence Items:**

Reminder to submit reports.

**E. Information Items:**

Information Items/updates were received as follows:

1. PVNCCDSB Board of Trustee Minutes and Agendas  
<https://www.pvnccdsb.on.ca/our-board/board-meetings/>

**F. Old Business:**

1. Motion Tracking:

| <b>Motion Date</b> | <b>Subject/Status</b>  |
|--------------------|--|
| February 17, 2022  | PPM 172 FASD motion to draft letter  |
| April 21, 2022     | PPM 172 FASD draft letter approved as presented  |
| April 21, 2022     | PPM 81 Proposed Update Downloading medical procedures onto special education support staff - letter drafted ready for review by SEAC |
| May 19, 2022       | PPM81 draft letter approved as presented.  |

**G. New Business:**

1. None

**H. Next Meeting:**

1. Selection of Members for Territorial Recognition, Opening and Closing Prayers

- a. Territorial Recognition: Jeannie Armstrong
- b. Opening Prayer: Shawna Belcourt
- c. Closing Prayer: Clare Paterson

**2. 2022-2023 Meeting Dates:**

| Date (6:30-8:30 p.m.) | Topic                      |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| December              | No meeting/10th Meeting    |
| January 19, 2023      | UDL/Deep Learning          |
| February 16, 2023     | Destreaming of Grade 9     |
| March 23, 2023        | Self-regulation            |
| April 27, 2023        | Demographic Student Census |
| May 18, 2023          | Budget                     |
| June 15, 2023         | Special Education Plan     |

**I. Conclusion:**

- 1. Closing Prayer: Shawna Belcourt
- 2. Adjournment

Moved by: Shawna Belcourt

Seconded by: Clare Paterson

That the meeting held on November 17, 2022 be adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Carried