



BRANT HALDIMAND NORFOLK Catholic District School Board

Minutes

Catholic Education Centre
322 Fairview Drive
Brantford, ON N3R 2X6

SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, February 18, 2025 – 1:00pm

Microsoft Teams

- Members:** Dennis Blake (Trustee), Mischa Dinsmore (Lansdowne Children's Centre), Simon Jennions (Community Living Brant), Shannon Korber (Child and Family Services of Grand Erie), Patti Mitchell (Parent, County of Brant), Lauren Moulton (Woodview Mental Health and Autism Services), Nil Woodcroft (Haldimand Norfolk REACH)
- Regrets:** Brandi Bertling (Child and Family Services of Grand Erie), Michelle Drake (Crossing All Bridges), Lauren Freeborn (Contact Brant), Marilyn Noi (Autism Ontario), Janelle Sandy (Indigenous Child and Youth Team at Child and Family Services of Grand Erie)
- Resources:** Sandra DeDominicis (Student Achievement Lead: Special Education), Kerri Lomax (Principal, Elementary), Shannon Mason (Principal, Elementary), Jennifer Rudyk (Principal, Elementary), Phil Wilson (Superintendent of Education)

1. Welcome and Opening Remarks

Mischa Dinsmore welcomed the committee.

2. Land Acknowledgement

Superintendent Wilson read the board's land acknowledgement.

3. Opening Prayer

Sandra De Dominicis shared an opening prayer.

4. Approval of Agenda

Moved by: Nil Woodcroft

Seconded by: Dennis Blake

THAT the Special Education Advisory Committee approves the agenda of the February 18, 2025, meeting.

Carried

5. Approval of the Minutes

Moved by: Lauren Moulton

Seconded by: Nil Woodcroft

THAT the Special Education Advisory Committee approves the minutes of the January 21, 2025, meeting.

Carried

6. Correspondence

Nil

7. Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) and Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISIE)

Superintendent Wilson and Sandra DeDominicis discussed that EQAO and the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISIE) reached out to BHNCDSB as students identified with a learning disability in the board achieved higher outcomes in Grade 6 reading in EQAO compared to the provincial average

over the past two years. OISIE inquired as to what has contributed to these results. The BHNCD SB expressed that numerous actions, initiatives, and programs have contributed to these increases.

Board data also shows improvement in student questionnaire items about student confidence in reading.

Empower Reading

BHNCD SB measured 81 students from the beginning to the end of the program with three checkpoints (prior, mid-way, and post completion). There is evidence of growth and a steady incline on all ten measures in both Empower and the Woodcock – Johnson IV during all three checkpoints. The gains were continuous regardless of identification.

8. Community Agency Updates

Shannon Korber

Child and Family Services of Grand Erie has organized student tours to two different post-secondary institutions to allow students to investigate future options. Stability funding is still available for each school board for the 2024 - 2025 school year.

Nil Woodcroft

Haldimand Norfolk REACH Autism and Behaviour Services is holding two Entry to School Program events, one in Caledonia and the other in Simcoe. March Break and Easter events are taking place for students on March 10, 2025, and April 17, 2025. Please see the Haldimand Norfolk REACH website for more information.

Patti Mitchell

The Special Olympics will be held from July 10-13, 2025. Three police services will be involved. The opening ceremonies will be held July 10, 2025, at the Wayne Gretzky Centre. There are many ways to support the Special Olympics including drafting an athlete, participating in the Polar Plunge held on March 6, 2025, or being a fan. Information on volunteering for the games can be found at www.provincialgames.com/volunteer.

Jennifer Rudyk

The BHNCD SB elementary schools have finished mid-year screenings for Junior Kindergarten to Grade 2. Team meetings are underway for term two Individual Education Plans (IEPs). Grade 8 and high school students are in the process of 2025 - 2026 course selection. The Kickstart to Kindergarten program has begun in the schools for new JK students.

Simon Jennions

Community Living Brant has reduced the backlog in the employment program to provide meaningful employment support for new families and connect with the school boards.

Mischa Dinsmore

Lansdowne Children's Centre is holding a Caregivers and Coffee Chat on February 25, 2025. A camp will be held for 14–18-year-olds who are interested in post-secondary education. On March 22, 2025, a camp fair will be held at Crossing All Bridges for parents/guardians to discover what camp options are available.

9. Student Achievement Lead and Superintendent of Education

The Empower reading program was presented to the Secondary Administrators to discuss the implementation of the program.

Sick Kids Hospital continues to train BHNCD SB teachers around Empower Reading.

The Special Education consultants are examining all Internal IEPs and reviewing the transition plans for students to improve practices, understand the purpose of the plan, clarity for new staff, and to improve practices and standards across the district

In January, a Non-Violent Crisis Intervention session was held for all Special Education Resource

Teachers and some Administrators.

An Educational Assistant Professional Development Day was held in January. The Technology Access Clinic held a full day presentation around complex communication with the theme Building Language Together. Speech and Language Pathologists presented the Complex Communicator Guidebook to the high schools.

The BHNCDSEB Educational Assistant complement has increased.

BHNCDSEB developed a resource to assist with students with complex behaviours.

A Community of Practice meeting was held in January.

Sandra De Dominicis has been chairing the System Special class Identification, Placement, and Review Committee meetings at Holy Trinity, St. John's College and Assumption College School.

10. Closing Remarks/Adjournment

Mischa Dinsmore thanked everyone. The meeting adjourned at 2:21pm. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 18, 2025.
