



**Office of the Director**

Jim McCuaig Education Centre  
2135 Sills Street Thunder Bay ON P7E 5T2  
Telephone (807) 625-5131 Fax (807) 622-0961

**STANDING COMMITTEE**  
**Tuesday, March 10, 2015**  
**Jim McCuaig Education Centre**

Ian MacRae  
Director of Education

Jack Playford  
Chair

**AGENDA**

**PUBLIC SESSION**  
**7:30 P.M. – in the Board Room**

	<u>Resource Person</u>	<u>Pages</u>
1. Call to Order		
2. Disclosure of Conflict of Interest		
3. Approval of the Agenda		
4. Resolve into Committee of the Whole – Closed Session		
5. <b>COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE - Closed Session – 7:15 p.m. (SEE ATTACHED AGENDA)</b>		
6. Delegations/Presentations		
7. Confirmation of Minutes		
7.1 Standing Committee Meeting - February 10, 2015	J. Playford	1-2
8. Business Arising from the Minutes		
<b><u>MATTERS NOT REQUIRING A DECISION</u></b>		
9. Information Reports		
9.1 Student Achievement Mid-Year Update (033-15)	S. Pharand	3-8
9.2 Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes - January 21, 2015	C. Kappel	9-12

Trustees (Chair and Vice-Chair) and presenters of reports will be available  
for comment after the Board Meeting.

**LAKEHEAD DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD**

		<u>Resource Person</u>	<u>Pages</u>
9.3	Parent Involvement Committee Meeting Minutes – January 19, 2015	I. MacRae	13-15

10. First Reports

**MATTERS FOR DECISION:**

11. Postponed Reports

12. Ad Hoc and Special Committee Reports

13. New Reports

13.1	Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) Request for Approval of Correspondence (029-15)	C. Kappel	16-23
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*It is recommended that Lakehead District School Board approve the request from the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) to send correspondence of support to the Minister of Education, and the President of the Ontario Public School Boards' Association as outlined in Report No. 029-15.*

13.2	Approval of Appointment to the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) (030-15)	C. Kappel	24
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*It is recommended that Lakehead District School Board approve the appointment of Kelly Hicks as member to the Special Education Advisory Committee representing Thunder Bay Indian Friendship Centre for the term ending November 30, 2018.*

Trustees (Chair and Vice-Chair) and presenters of reports will be available  
for comment after the Board Meeting.

**LAKEHEAD DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD**

		<u>Resource Person</u>	<u>Pages</u>
13.3	Policy 1020, Equity and Inclusive Education: Distribution of Faith-Based Literature (028-15)	C. Kappel	25-34

*It is recommended that Lakehead District School Board:*

1. *Apply the use of Policy Development and Review Policy, section six which reads as follows:*

*“Notwithstanding the provisions of this policy, where circumstances arise which, in the opinion of the Board require immediate action in the best interest of the overall management of the school system, the Board may, with the support of the majority of Trustees, alter the details of the policy.”*

2. *Approve the Faith and Creed Accommodation Guideline, Appendix A to 1020 Equity and Inclusive Education Policy and Procedures, Appendix A to Report No. 028-15.*

14. New Business
15. Notices of Motion
16. Information and Inquiries
17. Adjournment

Trustees (Chair and Vice-Chair) and presenters of reports will be available  
for comment after the Board Meeting.

**LAKEHEAD DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD**



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**STANDING COMMITTEE**  
**Tuesday, March 10, 2015**  
**Jim McCuaig Education Centre**

Ian MacRae  
Director of Education

Jack Playford  
Chair

**AGENDA**

**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – Closed Session**  
**7:15 P.M. – in the Sibley Room**

	<u>Resource Person</u>	<u>Pages</u>
5.1 Confirmation of Committee of the Whole - Closed Session Minutes		
5.1.1 Standing Committee Meeting - January 13, 2015	J. Playford	1-2
5.2 Business Arising from the Minutes		
5.3 Consideration of Reports		
5.3.1 Negotiations Update	I. MacRae	Verbal
5.4 Information and Inquiries		
5.5 Rise and Ask Leave to Sit in Public Session		

Trustees (Chair and Vice-Chair) and presenters of reports will be available  
for comment after the Board Meeting.

**LAKEHEAD DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD**

LAKEHEAD DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

**MINUTES OF STANDING COMMITTEE**

Board Room  
Jim McCuaig Education Centre

2015 FEB 10  
7:30 p.m.

**TRUSTEES PRESENT:**

George Saarinen (Chair)  
Marg Arnone  
Ellen Chambers  
Jack Playford

Trudy Tuchenhausen – via teleconference  
Karen Wilson  
Hannah Smith (Student Trustee)

**TRUSTEES ABSENT, WITH REGRET:**

Deborah Massaro  
Ron Oikonen

**SENIOR ADMINISTRATION:**

Ian MacRae, Director of Education  
Colleen Kappel, Superintendent of Education  
Sherri-Lynne Pharand, Superintendent of Education  
David Wright, Superintendent of Business

**FEDERATION/UNION REPRESENTATIVES:**

Dave Covello, Managers

**PUBLIC SESSION:**

1. Approval of Agenda

Moved by Trustee Arnone

Seconded by Trustee Playford

*“THAT the Agenda for Standing Committee Meeting, February 10, 2015 be approved.”*

**CARRIED**

2. Trustee Character Award – Jennifer Tavares – Jim McCuaig Education Centre

Trustee Chambers, on behalf of the Board, presented Jennifer Tavares with the Trustee Character Award. Jennifer was recognized for her commitment and dedication to Lakehead Public Schools.

3. Trustee Recognition Award – Steven Okeese – Sir Winston Churchill Collegiate and Vocational Institute

Trustee Arnone, on behalf of the Board, presented Steven Okeese with the Trustee Award of Recognition. Steven was recognized for his James Bartleman Aboriginal Youth Creative Writing award for his short story regarding same-sex relationships and acceptance from families.

4. Confirmation of Minutes

Moved by Trustee Tuchenhagen

Seconded by Trustee Playford

*"THAT the Standing Committee approve the Minutes of the Standing Committee Meeting, January 13, 2015."*

CARRIED

5. Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes - November 19, 2014

Colleen Kappel, Superintendent of Education, presented the November 19, 2014 minutes for information.

6. Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes - December 10, 2014

Colleen Kappel, Superintendent of Education, presented the December 10, 2014 minutes for information.

MATTERS FOR DECISION:

7. School Year Calendar 2015-2016 (024-15)

Moved by Trustee Playford

Seconded by Trustee Chambers

*"THAT Lakehead District School Board:*

1. *Approve the proposed 2015-2016 Elementary School Year Calendar, including the opening and closing dates and professional activity days, as described in Appendix A of Report No. 024-15.*
2. *Approve the proposed 2015-2016 Secondary School Year Calendar, including the opening and closing dates, professional activity days and examination days, as described in Appendix B of Report No. 024-15."*

CARRIED

8. Information and Inquiries

8.1 Trustee Arnone reported that she and Trustees Chambers, Playford, and Saarinen attended the OPSBA Public Education Symposium held January 28 to 31.

8.2 Trustee Arnone provided information regarding the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual *Healthy Lifestyles Winterfest* that will be held on February 21 at Fort William Historical Park.

9. Adjournment

Moved by Trustee Wilson

Seconded by Trustee Chambers

*"THAT we do now adjourn at 7:54 p.m."*

CARRIED

LAKEHEAD PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

2015 MAR 10  
Report No. 033-15

TO THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF  
LAKEHEAD DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD– Public Session

RE: STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT MID-YEAR UPDATE

1. Background

- 1.1 Lakehead District School Board is committed to improving student learning and achievement. As such, comprehensive Strategic and Operational Plans have been developed to reflect the Board's commitment to student success.
- 1.2 The Ministry of Education has notified all Boards that they will be publishing five year Board graduation rates in March of this school year. The published rate will reflect performance of secondary students who entered grade nine during the 2009-2010 school year and completed their Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) by August 31, 2014.

2. Situation

- 2.1 Assessment data, aligned with Board goals, allows administration and teachers to implement and support the Board Improvement Plan. This information is used to identify student strengths and areas of need early in the year. It assists teachers, schools and the system in planning, implementing and monitoring instructional strategies that support student learning.
- 2.2 The following mid-year data is outlined in this report:
  - February interim report card marks in reading, writing and number sense and numeration for primary, junior and intermediate students;
  - final report card marks in Grade 9 applied and academic mathematics and English credits; and
  - grade 9 and 10 credit accumulation at the end of semester one.

3. Literacy and Mathematics K-12

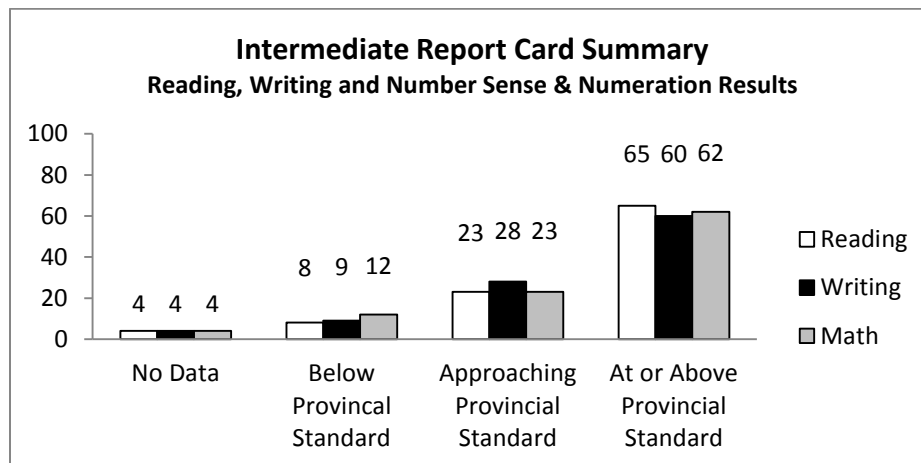
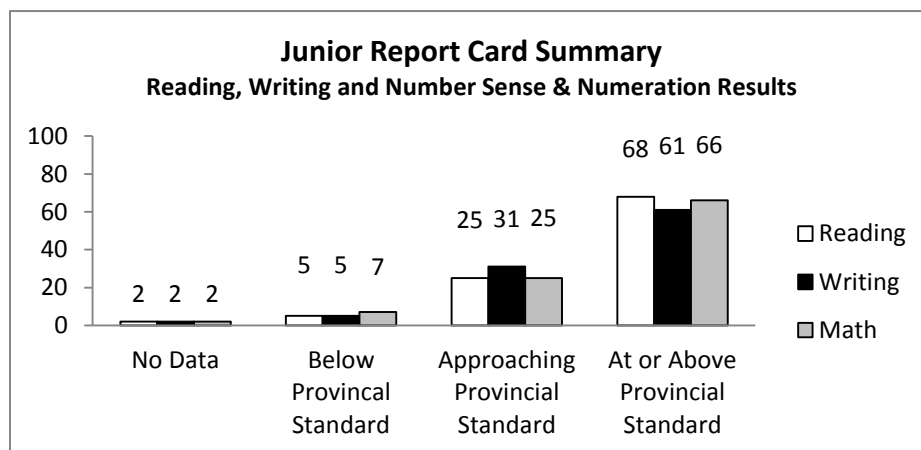
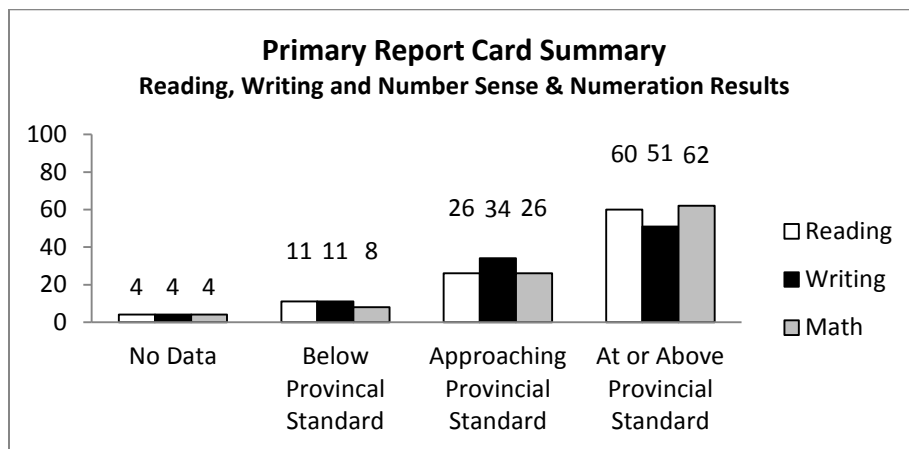
The 2014-2015 Lakehead District School Board Improvement Plan for Student Achievement (BIPSA) aligns with the following Ministry of Education key priorities:

- high levels of student achievement;
- reduced gaps in student achievement;
- increased confidence in public education; and
- promoting well-being.

#### 4. Interim Report Card Data

4.1 The interim report card is given to students after the fall progress report. It is based on assessment information obtained by classroom teachers through a variety of means which may include formal and informal observations, discussions, portfolios and conferences.

4.2 Summary and Analysis – Interim Report Card Data – Reading, Writing and Mathematics February 2015



Interim report card marks in reading, writing and mathematics indicate that more than 60% of all primary, junior and intermediate students are achieving at or above the provincial standard in reading, 51% in writing, and 62% in mathematics. With four months remaining in the school year, this information will drive instructional decisions for the remainder of the school year.

#### 4.3 Next Steps

4.3.1 Significant system based supports are in place to support numeracy development, with a focus on further developing effective assessment strategies to inform teaching and learning through:

- learning labs for Kindergarten to grade two teams and grade five and six teams in all schools; and
- focused professional learning for Administrators' to support their instructional leadership in numeracy.

4.3.2 Schools remain focused on sustaining and continuing to improve on gains made in literacy with targeted supports to identify and respond to gaps. Leveled Literacy Intervention is an example of an early intervention strategy designed to ensure the needs of all students are identified, addressed and monitored early on. Through such strategies, we continue to impact and support student learning at all grade levels.

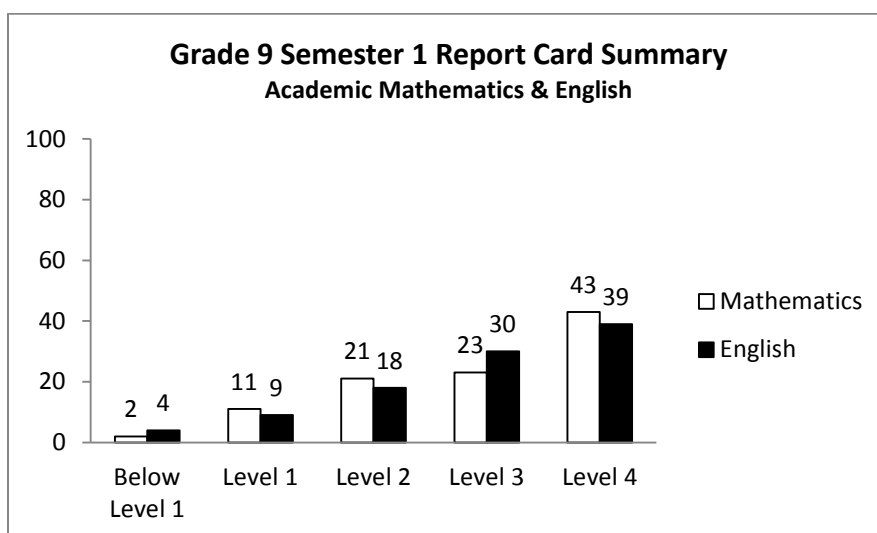
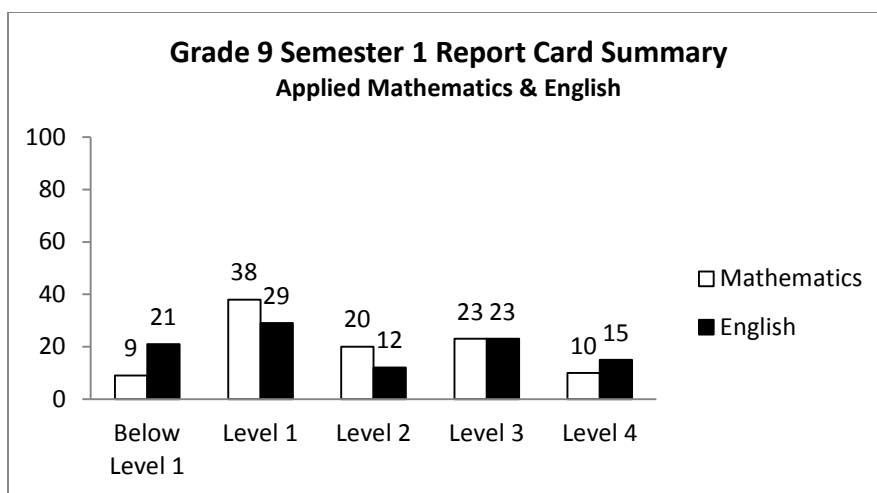
4.3.3 As a lead board for the Learning for All - K-12 Resource Document Project, system based supports and resources continue to focus on the key principles recommended in this Ministry guide. Ongoing training and resources have been dedicated to enhancing staff capacity to better understand individual student strengths and needs, and how to meet those individual needs using tools such as the Individual Education Plan, Transition Plans and the use of Tiered Continuum of Interventions to promote positive student behavior, engagement, and well-being.

4.3.4 The Special Education Department continues to focus on efficient alignment and use of staff resources to support success for all students. Additional staff has been dedicated to provide coaching, training and support at the classroom and school level. Special Education Facilitators and Central Support Staff will continue to play a role at the school Professional Learning Community (PLC) in order to assist in planning and monitoring of strategies and interventions to support learning for all students.

### 5. Secondary Numeracy and Literacy

#### 5.1 Summary and Analysis - 2014-2015 Grade 9 Semester 1 Report Card Summary

First semester report card marks in mathematics and English indicate that one-third of students in applied courses are achieving at or above the provincial standard in both mathematics and English and over two-thirds of students in academic mathematics and English are achieving at or above the provincial standard.



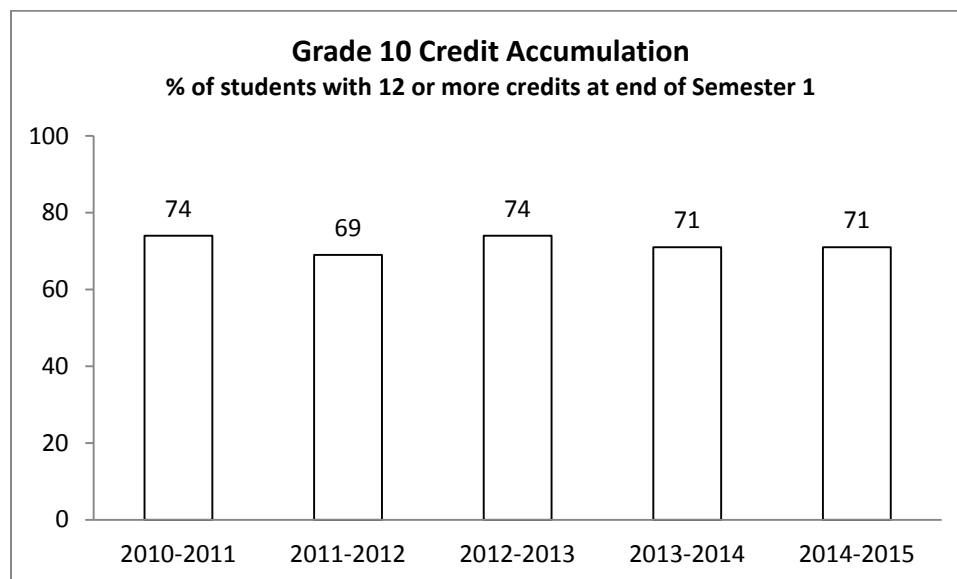
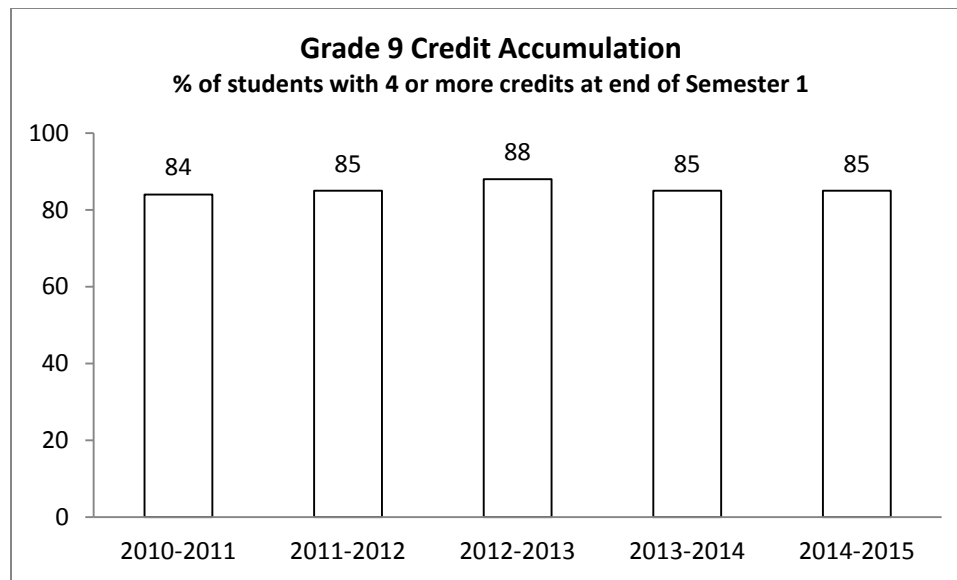
## 5.2 Next Steps

5.2.1 The following steps are in addition to those outlined in Student Achievement Report No. 103-14:

- Professional Learning Groups (PLGs) will continue to meet in families of schools (Grade 7-10), in an effort to improve student achievement as well as support student transition into secondary school.
- Secondary Department Chairs and the Secondary Mathematics Coach will continue to support training and guidance for Grade 9 mathematics teachers, with a specific focus on all Grade 9 students taking applied mathematics for the rest of this school year.

## 6. Secondary Credit Accumulation Data

6.1 Credit accumulation continues to be a leading indicator of student achievement towards graduation.



The Ministry has also provided Lakehead District School Board with five year graduation data for secondary students who started with Lakehead District School Board during the 2009-2010 school year. The Ministry has informed the Board that 642 students received an Ontario Secondary School Diploma within five years from the original 904 students who started in the 2009-2010 cohort. This represents a 71% five year graduation rate for last year.

## 6.2 Summary and Analysis - Credit Accumulation

Credit accumulation reflects similar performance to overall five year trends. Grade 10 credit accumulation mirrors the five year Ministry identified graduation rate for Lakehead District School Board.

### 6.3 Next Steps

The following steps are in addition to those outlined in Student Achievement Report No. 103-14:

- Student Success teams and Student Services staff will continue to identify and offer programming to students in an effort to recover a lost credit.
- School leaders will continue to utilize the School Effectiveness Framework to support student learning and achievement.
- Online pathway planning tools will continue to be enhanced to allow students and parents more information about post-secondary planning and destinations to support graduation.
- Credit recovery and our summer learning pilot from last year will be enhanced to provide our students additional credit earning opportunities this summer.

### 7. Conclusion

Improving student success continues to be the focus at Lakehead District School Board. Through Board and Ministry support, professional learning, at-the-elbow-coaching, evidence informed decisions, enhanced learning opportunities and research based best practices, Lakehead District School Board will continue to take a proactive approach to support the learning of all students.

Respectfully submitted,

NICOLE WALTER ROWAN  
Program Coordinator

PAUL TSEKOURAS  
Student Success Leader

LORI CARSON  
Special Education Officer

DONICA LEBLANC  
Supervising Principal of Early Learning

SHERRI-LYNNE PHARAND  
Superintendent of Education

COLLEEN KAPPEL  
Superintendent of Education

IAN MACRAE  
Director of Education

LAKEHEAD DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD  
**SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Jim McCuaig Education Centre  
Thunder Bay, Ontario

2015 JAN 21

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Laura Sylvestre (Chair)  
Trustee Marg Arnone  
Trustee Ellen Chambers  
David Fulton  
Judy Kay

Mike Lavoie  
Sheila Marcinyshyn  
Mike Otway  
Liz Todd

**ABSENT WITH REGRET:**

Theresa Graham (Vice Chair)  
Jennifer Bean  
Trudy Tuchenhausen

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

Colleen Kappel  
Lori Carson  
Paul Tsekouras  
Nicole Walter Rowan  
Ron Gernat

1. **Call to Order**

Laura Sylvestre, Chair of SEAC, called the meeting to order.

2. **Approval of the Agenda**

Moved by Liz Tod

Seconded by Trustee Ellen Chambers

*"THAT the agenda for the January 21, 2015 SEAC meeting be approved."*

**CARRIED**

3. **Declarations of Conflict of Interest**

There were no declarations of conflict of interest.

4. Presentations

4.1 EQAO Results – L. Carson, P. Tsekouras and N. Walter Rowan

Lori Carson, Special Education Officer, Paul Tsekouras, Student Success Lead, and Nicole Walter Rowan, Program Coordinator, presented the EQAO results from the 2013-2014 school year testing. A PowerPoint presentation highlighted the data. Questions from members were addressed.

4.2 SEAC Orientation – L. Carson, C. Kappel and L. Sylvestre

Colleen Kappel, Superintendent of Education, Lori Carson, Special Education Officer, and Laura Sylvestre, Chair of SEAC provided SEAC orientation for members. The SEAC Binder was reviewed. Superintendent Kappel provided information from the PAAC on SEAC document contained in the binder. Chair Sylvestre provided an overview of the Advocacy Manual and provided some background on when she has acted as an Advocate for parents/guardians. Questions from members were addressed.

5. Approval of the Minutes

Moved by Mike Otway

Seconded by Marg Arnone

*“THAT the minutes of the December 10, 2014 SEAC meeting be approved.”*

CARRIED

6. Business Arising From the Minutes

6.1 Mental Health Information Session, Spring 2015

Colleen Kappel, Superintendent of Education, Lori Carson, Special Education Officer, and Laura Sylvestre, Chair of SEAC, provided suggestions to members on the use of the Parent Involvement Committee funding to engage parents/guardians. As decided at a previous SEAC meeting, a Mental Health Information Session would be organized for the evening of Wednesday, April 15, 2015 in conjunction with the SEAC meeting. The event would also include local Mental Health Agencies setting up booths with their information and a panel discussion with Mental Health service providers. Members agreed to have Dr. David Tranter, Mental Health Lead at Lakehead Public Schools, be the presenter. Potential topics were discussed, including: self-regulation, anxiety and how parents/guardians can assist their children with mental health issues in the home. It was agreed to hold the event at the Oliver Road Community Centre and to incur costs for refreshments, snacks, prizes and the rental of the venue. A plan will be discussed and brought back to the February 18, 2015 SEAC meeting.

6.2 Kindergarten Registration Evening

Laura Sylvestre, Chair of SEAC, provided information on the Kindergarten Registration Evening at the Valhalla Inn on Monday, February 2, 2015. Members were encouraged to volunteer at the SEAC display table. Giveaways will be provided to those that visit the booth. Swag bags will be purchased and can also be used for additional SEAC events as promotional materials.

Moved by Sheila Marcinyshyn

Seconded by Judy Kay

*“THAT SEAC approve using up to \$650.00 of the SEAC budget to purchase 200 canvas bags with the SEAC logo for use at the Kindergarten Registration Evening and other SEAC events.”*

CARRIED

6.3 Posters and Bookmarks Update

Laura Sylvestre, Chair of SEAC, provided an update on the posters and bookmarks. Due to time constraints, the bookmarks will not be ready for this year's Kindergarten Registration evening.

6.4 Learning For All

Trustee Marg Arnone inquired if the Learning For All document had been forwarded to members. Ms. Haven will forward the link to the document to all members.

6.5 Student Concussion Management Policy Feedback

Trustee Marg Arnone inquired if the feedback on the concussion policy was submitted. Ms. Haven confirmed the feedback was provided to Trustee George Saarinen, Chair of Standing Committee.

7. Correspondence

The correspondence folder was circulated to members.

8. Advocacy Tracking

The Advocacy Tracking template was circulated to members for completion.

9. Review 2014-2015 SEAC Work Plan

Members reviewed the 2014-2015 SEAC Work Plan and updates were noted.

10. Information/Inquiries and Association Reports

- 10.1 Sheila Marcinyshyn, Anishnabe Mushkiki member, provided information on Winterfest which will take place at Fort William Historical Park on Saturday, February 21, 2015. Everyone is welcome to attend. A poster will be sent to all SEAC members to share with their agency/organization.
- 10.2 Colleen Kappel, Superintendent of Education, provided information on the Polar Plunge which will take place on March 28, 2015.
- 10.3 Judy Kay, FASIN member, inquired if there could be more opportunities created for specialized funding such as the project that is taking place at Ogden Public School on self-regulation. Superintendent Kappel indicated that she and Lori Carson, Special Education Officer, will meet to discuss and bring information back to a SEAC meeting.
- 10.4 Trustee Marg Arnone requested clarification on the Section 23 programs and funding. Superintendent Kappel provided information on the Section 23 programs at Lakehead District School Board. A list of special education programs will be developed for the SEAC binder. A presentation on Section 23 Programs is scheduled for the February 18, 2015 SEAC meeting.
- 10.5 David Fulton, FASIN Alternate Member, inquired if the correspondence from Thames Valley District School Board could be included as an agenda item at the February 18, 2015 SEAC meeting.

11. Status of SEAC Budget

The status of the SEAC budget was provided to members.

12. Board Update

Trustee Marg Arnone provided an update on the January 13, 2015 Standing Committee Meeting. Reports addressed at this meeting included:

- Health and Safety Semi-Annual Report;
- Information Technology Plan Update Report;
- Approve of the Student Concussion Management Policy;
- Appointment of Pat Johansen to the Thunder Bay Public Library Board; and
- Returning the Access to System Programs policy to Administration to be brought back at a future date.

13. Adjournment

Moved by Sheila Marcinyshyn

Seconded by Judy Kay

*"THAT we do now adjourn at 7:30 p.m."*

CARRIED

LAKEHEAD DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

**MINUTES OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE**

Board Room  
Jim McCuaig Education Centre

2015 JAN 19  
6:30 p.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Susie Splett (Chair)  
Marg Arnone  
Jennifer Davis  
Hillary Freeburn  
Julie Hall  
Donica LeBlanc

Ian MacRae  
Laura Prodanyk  
Jesse Roberts  
Suzanne Tardif  
Nicole Walter Rowan  
Karen Wilson

**RESOURCE:**

Kathryn Hantjis, Executive Assistant  
Judy Hill, Executive Assistant  
Bruce Nugent, Communications Officer

**GUESTS:**

Pasquale Coccimiglio  
Debbie Dick  
Colleen Kappel

David Tranter  
Ruth Vanneiuwenhuizen

**MEMBERS ABSENT, WITH REGRET**

Jennifer DeFranceschi  
Danica Gernat  
Dave Isherwood

Harbinder Singh Hayer  
Varinder Singh Hayer  
Laura Sylvestre

1. **Call to Order, Welcome and Introductions**

Susie Splett, Chair, called the meeting to order and welcomed those in attendance. Introductions were made around the table.

2. **Disclosure of Conflict of Interest**

There were no disclosures of conflict of interest.

3. **Approval of Agenda**

The agenda was approved by consensus.

4. Election of Parent Involvement Committee Vice Chair

This item was deferred to the March 2, 2015 meeting.

5. Director's Report

Ian MacRae, Director of Education, highlighted the following three reports that were presented at the January 17, 2015 Standing Committee meeting: Health and Safety Semi-Annual Report, Information Technology Plan Update, and Policy Development 8074 Student Concussion Management.

Director MacRae reported that there is a current balance of \$7,713 in the PIC budget.

6. Confirmation of Minutes – November 17, 2014

The minutes were confirmed by consensus.

7. People for Education's 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Making Connections Conference

Chair Susie Splett provided a brief overview of the conference she attended this past November in Toronto and encouraged members to visit the website [www.peopleforeducation.ca](http://www.peopleforeducation.ca) to keep abreast of the education news.

8. PIC Communications Ad Hoc Committee

Bruce Nugent reported that the Board's new website will be launched the week of January 26, 2015 and is seeking feedback from parents. The link to the website will be emailed to PIC members. Bruce asked that members provide feedback to him by Friday, January 23, 2015. The next meeting of the Communications Ad Hoc Committee will be held prior to the PIC meeting on March 2, 2015.

9. Correspondence

A brief discussion took place regarding an e-mail that was received inquiring about the Board's policy on scent free environments. Chair Susie Splett reported that situations are dealt with on a school-by-school basis.

10. Mental Health

Colleen Kappel, Superintendent, introduced David Tranter, Mental Health Lead. David provided a handout on the current Mental Health and Well-Being Programs and Initiatives for 2014-2015 and highlighted a few of the initiatives. It was suggested the Board could partner with the Thunder Bay Public Library in regards to mental health.

David also reported that he is in the process of developing an in-house School Climate survey for students and staff. Comprehensive research will be done on climate surveys to find ways to track student success. A draft of the survey will be available within the next month and PIC will have an opportunity to provide feedback. Questions from the group were addressed.

11. Kindergarten Night

Bruce Nugent reported that February 2, 2015 is Kindergarten Information night at the Valhalla Inn. There will be an open house from 6:30 - 8:00 p.m. and three volunteers are required to staff the PIC booth. Judy Hill will e-mail PIC members asking for volunteers for this evening.

12. PIC Event Ad Hoc Committee

Chair Susie Splett asked for volunteers to sit on an ad hoc committee to plan a PIC event for April. Judy Hill will e-mail PIC members seeking volunteers and a meeting will be scheduled.

13. Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee (AEAC) Report

Suzanne Tardif, AEAC Representative, provided an update from the December 18, 2014 AEAC meeting. Dolores Wawia was elected as Co-Chair, a position she has held since the inception of AEAC in 2004, a presentation from Biwaase'aa on a research study conducted to date, and PIC funding project. Suzanne advised that the date for the Aboriginal Youth Achievement & Recognition Awards will be April 8, 2015 at the Victoria Inn.

14. Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) Report

Due to the absence of Laura Sylvestre, this report will be deferred to the March 2, 2015 meeting.

15. School Year Calendar

On behalf of Jennifer DeFranceschi, Chair Susie Splett asked for feedback from members on school start up for September 2015. The calendar committee has proposed that school start up commence August 31, 2015 for staff, September 1 as the first day of school, and the last day of school June 24, 2016 as opposed to school starting after Labour Day, September 8. Consensus from the group was for a September 1, 2015 start up.

16. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Monday, March 2, 2015 at 6:30 p.m.

17. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

LAKEHEAD PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

2015 MAR 10  
Report No. 029-15

TO THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF  
THE STANDING COMMITTEE – Public Session

RE: SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SEAC) REQUEST FOR APPROVAL  
OF CORRESPONDENCE

1. Background

- 1.1 Correspondence from Thames Valley District School Board regarding raising awareness of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) was received on January 5, 2015 by the Chair of the Board and forwarded to Colleen Kappel, Superintendent of Education responsible for Special Education.
- 1.2 The correspondence from Thames Valley District School Board was included in the correspondence folder at the January 21, 2015 Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) Meeting and is included as Appendix A.
- 1.3 At the February 18, 2015 SEAC meeting, the item was addressed under new business.

2. Situation

- 2.1 Judy Kay, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Information Network (FASIN) representative, and David Fulton, FASIN alternate representative on SEAC, provided draft correspondence in response to the letter from Thames Valley District School Board for review and input from the committee. Two letters were presented, one to the Minister of Education and the other to the President of the Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA). The following motion was adopted:

*“THAT SEAC approve correspondence, with changes discussed, to OPSBA and the Minister of Education regarding Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder in support of correspondence received from Thames Valley District School Board.”*

- 2.2 Attached as Appendix B is the letter to the Minister of Education. Appendix C is the letter to the President of OPSBA.

3. Conclusion

The Special Education Advisory Committee respectfully requests that the Board approve the request to send correspondence of support addressing the items presented.

## RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Lakehead District School Board approve the request from the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) to send correspondence of support to the Minister of Education, and the President of the Ontario Public School Boards' Association as outlined in Report No. 029-15.

Respectfully submitted,

COLLEEN KAPPEL  
Superintendent of Education

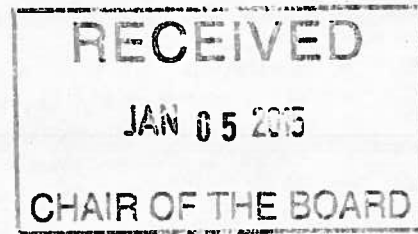
IAN MACRAE  
Director of Education



Laura Elliott, Director of Education and Secretary

2014 November 25

Michael Barrett  
President, OPSBA  
Ontario Public School Boards' Association  
439 University Avenue, Suite 1850  
Toronto, Ontario M5G 1Y8



Dear Michael Barrett:

I have been directed by the Trustees of the Thames Valley District School Board to write to you to request that the Ontario Public School Boards' Association assist the Thames Valley District School Board in our efforts to raise awareness of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder and the lack of service supports and assessment mechanisms for students with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder.

The Thames Valley District School Board received a presentation from the Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, Oxford, London, Middlesex, Oxford Network (FASD E.L.M.O. Network) in June 2014. Their priority statement, which was developed at the request of the Honourable Deb Matthews, is attached for information.

At a subsequent meeting the Board unanimously supported two motions related to this issue:

**That the Thames Valley District School Board requests the Ontario Public School Boards' Association to lobby the Provincial Government and raise awareness of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder and the difficulties it is causing to School Boards due to a lack of service supports and assessment mechanisms.**

**That the Thames Valley District School Board directs the Chair of the Board to write to the Minister of Education expressing our Board's concerns with the lack of service supports and assessment mechanisms for our students with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder.**

Conservative estimates, as there is no provincial diagnostic plan or registry, suggest that 1 in 100 individuals are affected by FASD.

Primary and Secondary disabilities related to the neurodevelopmental deficits of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder have been studied and documented extensively since the 1970s.

*Primary Characteristics: The following neurodevelopmental characteristics are commonly associated with FASD. No one or two is necessarily diagnostically significant; many overlap characteristics of other diagnoses, e.g. ADD/ADHD, learning disabilities, and others. Typical primary characteristics in children, adolescents, and adults include:*

- Memory problems
  - Difficulty storing and retrieving information
  - Inconsistent performance ("on" and "off") days
  - Impulsivity, distractibility, disorganization
  - Ability to repeat instructions, but inability to put them into action ("talk the talk but don't walk the walk")
  - Difficulty with abstractions, such as math, money management, time concepts
  - Cognitive processing deficits (may think more slowly)
  - Slow auditory pace (may only understand every third word of normally paced conversation)
  - Developmental lags (may act younger than chronological age)
  - Inability to predict outcomes or understand consequences
- <http://www.fascets.org/info.html>

The manifestation of these primary characteristics clearly places students with FASD at a huge disadvantage in our education system as they are unable to meet social and academic expectations.

*Preventable Secondary Characteristics: In the absence of identification, people with FASD often experience chronic frustration. Over time, patterns of defensive behaviors commonly develop. These characteristics are believed to be preventable with appropriate supports.*

- Fatigue, tantrums
  - Irritability, frustration, anger, aggression
  - Fear, anxiety, avoidance, withdrawal
  - Shut down, lying, running away
  - Trouble at home, school, and community
  - Legal trouble
  - Drug / Alcohol abuse
  - Mental health problems (depression, self injury, suicidal tendencies)
- <http://www.fascets.org/info.html>

A failure to recognize and accommodate the primary disabilities related to Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder leads to increasingly maladaptive behaviour and secondary disabilities. Over 90% of individuals who have been identified with FASD develop mental health conditions, and studies show a gross over-representation of individuals with FASD in the prison system.

Currently, there is no comprehensive plan for preventing, diagnosing or serving individuals who are impacted by prenatal alcohol exposure. The Thames Valley District School Board recently wrote to Minister Sandals to urge the Ministry to act quickly to provide training for all school board staff, and explicit accommodations to allow students with neurodevelopmental challenges to reach their full potential in a supportive, welcoming environment.

The Thames Valley District School Board would appreciate the support of the Ontario Public School Boards' Association and its member boards in our efforts to raise awareness of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder and its impact on student achievement and well-being.

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Ruth Tisdale". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Ruth" and last name "Tisdale" clearly distinguishable.

Ruth Tisdale  
Thames Valley District School Board Chairperson

Cc: Thames Valley District School Board Trustees  
L. Elliott, Director of Education, TVDSB  
OPSBA Member Boards  
Honourable Liz Sandals, Ontario Minister of Education



Lakehead District School Board  
2135 Sills Street  
Thunder Bay, ON  
P7E 5T2  
Voice: 807.625.5126  
Fax: 807.623.7848

March 10, 2015

The Honourable Liz Sandals  
Minister of Education  
Mowat Block  
22<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
900 Bay Street  
Toronto, ON  
M7A 1L2

Dear Madam Minister:

Correspondence addressed to Michael Barrett, President of the Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA) and copied to OPSBA member Boards from Thames Valley District School Board regarding the lack of service supports and assessment mechanisms for students with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD) was forwarded to the Superintendent responsible for the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) and included in the correspondence folder at the January 21, 2015 SEAC meeting.

In consultation with Lakehead District School Board SEAC member agency Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Information Network (FASIN), at its February 18, 2015 meeting, the Special Education Advisory Committee of the Lakehead District School Board agreed to send a letter in support of the correspondence received from Thames Valley District School Board. A copy of the Thames Valley District School Board letter is attached and shows the extensive primary and secondary disabilities commonly associated with FASD and the problems those students with FASD face.

The letter provides a very conservative estimate that one in every 100 individuals is affected by FASD, which is the figure cited by the Public Health Agency of Canada in the 2012 publication *Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD): A Framework for Action*, which also states "FASD is the leading cause of developmental disability among Canadian children". A recent study *Incidence and Prevalence of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder by Sex and Age Group in Alberta, Canada*, published October 29, 2014, in the *Journal of Population Therapeutics and Clinical Pharmacology* looked at births in Alberta from 2003 to 2012 and found that "Annually, 739 to 1884 people were born with FASD in Alberta establishing an incidence of 14.2 to 43.8 per 1000 births". The *Roadmap for Change, Towards a Safe and Healthy Community, Thunder Bay Drug Strategy, Revised March 2011*, indicates that Thunder Bay has higher rates of FASD.

Most students with FASD also have other disabilities such as Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD), Learning Disabilities (LD), etc., and many are identified as exceptional under these categories. However, FASD is permanent brain damage and strategies used for serving students with these other exceptionalities often do not meet the unique needs of students with FASD. As stated in the Thames Valley letter: "Currently, there is no comprehensive plan for preventing, diagnosing or serving individuals who are impacted by prenatal alcohol exposure." Students with FASD much too often do not receive the educational supports they need to thrive in school and to reach their full potential.

We urge you to prepare a comprehensive strategy for identifying and supporting all students in Ontario with FASD. We believe that one critical aspect of this strategy should be to recognize FASD as an

exceptionality for special education purposes in its own right, as is currently done in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Yukon, New Brunswick and Newfoundland and Labrador. The Northwest Territories does not use specific exceptionalities in determining whether students require special education services and supports, but does recognize FASD as an issue. We have representatives on our SEAC who would be pleased to be involved in the preparation of an FASD strategy, if you would like SEAC involvement.

Thank you very much for your consideration of this request.

Yours truly,

Laura Sylvestre  
Chair  
Lakehead District School Board Special Education Advisory Committee

cc: Ruth Tisdale  
Chairperson  
Thames Valley District School Board

Laura Elliott  
Director of Education  
Thames Valley District School Board

SEAC Chairs  
Ontario District School Boards

Michael Barrett  
President  
Ontario Public School Trustees Association

OPSBA Member Boards



Lakehead District School Board  
2135 Sills Street  
Thunder Bay, ON  
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March 10, 2015

Mr. Michael Barrett  
President  
Ontario Public School Boards' Association  
Suite 1850  
439 University Avenue  
Toronto, ON M5G 1Y8

Dear Mr. Barrett:

At its meeting of February 18, 2015 the Special Education Advisory Committee of the Lakehead District School Board agreed to send a letter in support of a letter to you that was received from the Thames Valley District School Board regarding the lack of service supports and assessment mechanisms for students with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD). A copy of their letter is attached, as well as a copy of a support letter we have sent to the Minister of Education on this matter.

We agree with the Thames Valley DSB in their concerns about students with FASD and that more needs to be done to support these students. We endorse the Thames Valley DSB request for the support of OPSBA and its member boards in this effort.

Thank you very much.

Yours truly,

Laura Sylvestre  
Chair  
Lakehead District School Board Special Education Advisory Committee

cc: Ruth Tisdale  
Chairperson  
Thames Valley District School Board

Laura Elliott  
Director of Education  
Thames Valley District School Board

SEAC Chairs  
Ontario District School Boards

OPSBA Member Boards

LAKEHEAD PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

2015 MAR 10  
Report No. 030-15

TO THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF  
THE STANDING COMMITTEE - Public Session

RE: APPROVAL OF APPOINTMENT TO THE SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY  
COMMITTEE (SEAC)

1. Background

- 1.1 According to Reg. 464/97 of the Education Act, the Board must establish a Special Education Advisory Committee.
- 1.2 At the Inaugural Board Meeting on December 2, 2014, Lakehead District School Board approved nine local associations/organizations for membership and six alternates to the Special Education Advisory Committee for the next four year term.

2. Situation

- 2.1 Kathy Guimond, the member appointed from Thunder Bay Indian Friendship Centre, has left the organization.
- 2.2 Thunder Bay Indian Friendship Centre has submitted a nomination for Kelly Hicks, who was previously appointed as the alternate representative, to be appointed as the representative to the Special Education Advisory Committee.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Lakehead District School Board approve the appointment of Kelly Hicks as member to the Special Education Advisory Committee representing Thunder Bay Indian Friendship Centre for the term ending November 30, 2018.

Respectfully submitted,

COLLEEN KAPPEL  
Superintendent of Education

IAN MACRAE  
Director of Education

LAKEHEAD PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

2015 MAR 10  
Report No. 028-15

TO THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE  
STANDING COMMITTEE – Public Session

RE: POLICY 1020, EQUITY AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION: DISTRIBUTION OF FAITH-BASED LITERATURE

1. Background

- 1.1 *“Equity and Inclusive Education in Ontario Schools: Guidelines for Policy Development and Implementation has been revised and updated to reflect the progress made since the 2009 release of *Realizing the Promise of Diversity: Ontario’s Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy*, including amendments to the Education Act made through the Accepting Schools Act, which was passed on September 1, 2012.” (Equity and Inclusive Education in Ontario Schools: Guidelines for Policy Development and Implementation, Ministry of Education, 2014, p. 5).*
- 1.2 Lakehead District School Board’s Equity and Inclusive Education Policy was originally revised in accordance with the Ministry of Education’s Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy in September 2010 and revised in May 2013.
- 1.3 Equity and Inclusive Education Policy 1020, Appendix A, Faith and Creed Accommodation Guidelines section six, Distribution of Faith Literature and Resources states *“Faith literature, e.g., Bibles, Torahs, Qur’ans, may not be distributed during instructional time. A permission note must be sent home and teachers must neither encourage nor discourage the return of the permission form. Schools should contact the Education Officer for specific assistance, if they are asked to distribute faith literature or resources unrelated to curriculum expectations.”*

2. Situation

- 2.1 During the fall of 2014, Lakehead District School Board received concerns regarding the dissemination of faith-based literature in Lakehead Public Schools. The Equity and Inclusive Education Working Group was asked to review the concerns expressed and provide a recommendation to the Equity and Inclusive Education Lead.

- 2.2 The Equity and Inclusive Education Working Group considered the following in developing the recommendation:
- Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario;
  - legal counsel;
  - consultation with the Director and Senior Policy Advisor of the Inclusive Education Branch, Ministry of Education;
  - Religious Accommodation Guidelines from other Ontario school boards;
  - consultation with Equity and Inclusive Education Implementation Network representatives; and
  - school resources required to disseminate religious materials from community faith groups.
- 2.3 The Equity and Inclusive Education Sub-Committee continues to develop a multi-year action plan to guide future training with respect to religious accommodation and culturally sensitive schools.
- 2.4 The Equity and Inclusive Education Working Group recommends that Lakehead District School Board amend Appendix A, Faith and Creed Accommodation Guideline of 1020 Equity and Inclusive Education Policy and Procedures to state that Lakehead District School Board facilities will not distribute faith-based literature to students. The only exception to this statement is if the materials support curriculum expectations in a program of study. School libraries may include faith texts in their collections as sources of information for students and staff.
- 2.5 As the revisions to Appendix A, Faith and Creed Accommodation Guideline are the only changes to 1020 Equity and Inclusive Education Policy, Administration requests the Board apply the *Extenuating Circumstances Clause* in 2010 Policy Development and Review Policy:

*“Notwithstanding the provisions of this policy, where circumstances arise which, in the opinion of the Board require immediate action in the best interest of the overall management of the school system, the Board may, with the support of the majority of Trustees, alter the details of the policy.”*

## RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Lakehead District School Board:

1. Apply the use of Policy Development and Review Policy, section six which reads as follows:

*“Notwithstanding the provisions of this policy, where circumstances arise which, in the opinion of the Board require immediate action in the best interest of the overall management of the school system, the Board may, with the support of the majority of Trustees, alter the details of the policy.”*

2. Approve the Faith and Creed Accommodation Guideline, Appendix A to 1020 Equity and Inclusive Education Policy and Procedures, Appendix A to Report No. 028-15.

Respectfully submitted,

TODD MILLER  
Chair, Equity and Inclusive Education Working Group

LESLIE HYNNES  
Education Officer

COLLEEN KAPPEL  
Superintendent of Education

IAN MACRAE  
Director of Education

## **Faith and Creed Accommodation Guideline**

### **1. Legislative Context**

Lakehead District School Board recognizes and values the freedom of religion and freedom from discriminatory or harassing behaviour based on the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Ontario Human Rights Code. *“Religious pluralism poses a challenge in any multicultural society, especially in one as diverse as ours. Although law is developing rapidly in this area, an informed spirit of tolerance and compromise is indispensable to any civil society, as well as to its capacity to make opportunities available to everyone, on equal terms, regardless of creed”* (Ontario Human Rights: Policy Guidelines on Creed and the Accommodation of Religious Observances).

In addition to and consistent with this legislation, the *Education Act*, and its regulations and policies, govern Equity and Inclusion in Schools:

PPM No 108, “Opening or Closing Exercises in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools”

R.R.O. 1990, Regulation 298, “Operation of School-General” s 27-29, under the heading “Religion in Schools”

PPM No 119, “Developing and Implementing Equity and Inclusive Education Policies in Ontario Schools”

Creed means a religion or faith. It includes the practices, beliefs, and observances that are part of a religion. It does not include personal moral, ethical or political views.

*“Creed does not necessarily mean a belief in a God, or gods or a supreme being. It includes Aboriginal spirituality and newer religions (assessed by Ontario Human Rights Commission on a case-by-case basis)”*. (Policy on Creed and the Accommodation of Religious Observances, Ontario Human Rights Commission, Oct. 20, 1996. p.2)

*“Religions that promote violence or hatred towards others, or that violate criminal law, are not protected by the Code.”* (Protecting Religious Rights, Ontario Human Rights Commission, 1999. p.2)

Although faith observances are based on generally accepted practices as defined by a faith group, the Board recognizes that members of faith groups are not homogeneous in their understanding, interpretation and practice of their faith. It is not the role of schools to monitor students’ compliance with a particular observance. What is important is that schools work together with students and their families to build trust and understanding about various faith accommodations.

### **2. Requests for Accommodation Based on Faith and Creed**

Lakehead District School Board will take reasonable steps to provide accommodation to students or staff who believe that the Board’s operations or requirements interfere with their ability to exercise their faith or creed beliefs and practices to the point of undue hardship. A determination of undue hardship will be based on an assessment of costs of the accommodation, outside sources of funding, and health and safety risks to the

individual and others. The Board will limit practices and conduct in its schools which may put public safety, health, or the human rights and freedoms of others at risk.

It is expected that students and their families, as well as staff, will help the Board to understand their faith/creed needs and will work with the Board and its schools to determine appropriate and reasonable accommodations.

Lakehead District School Board defines accommodation as a duty to meet the special needs of individuals and groups protected by the Ontario Human Rights Code up to the point of undue hardship.

*“The Code provides the right to be free from discrimination and there is a general corresponding duty to protect the right: the duty to accommodate. The duty arises when a person’s religious beliefs conflict with a requirement, qualification or practice. The code imposes a duty to accommodate based on the needs of the group of which the person is making the request is a member. Accommodation may modify the rule or make an exception to all or part of it for the person requesting accommodation.”* (Policy on Creed and the Accommodation of Religious Observances, Ontario Human Rights Commission, Oct. 20, 1996. p.5)

Students or staff may request an accommodation in one or more of the following areas:

- school opening and closing exercises;
- prayer;
- dietary requirements;
- fasting;
- attire;
- modesty requirements in Physical Education;
- participation in daily activities, curriculum and program;
- observance of faith-based (creed) days of significance; and/or
- leave of absence for faith-based (creed) days of significance and celebrations.

No person will be penalized for making an accommodation request.

### 3. Suggested Responses to Requests for Accommodation

#### **School Opening and Closing Exercises:**

A student or employee who objects to all or part of opening or closing exercises for faith-based reasons will be exempted and given the option not to participate and to remain in the class or in an agreed-upon location.

#### **Prayer:**

Schools should make every reasonable effort to accommodate the requirements for daily prayer by providing an appropriate location within the building for prayer when requested by students or staff. Some accommodation for late school arrival and/or early school leaving may be necessary. Prayer times change in some faiths according to the seasons.

**Dietary Requirements:**

Schools should be aware of dietary restrictions of various faith groups. This awareness includes breakfast and lunch programs, snacks, overnight outdoor education activities and field trips that cover a meal time period, and catering for special occasions and community events. Availability of vegetarian options is recommended.

**Fasting:**

Schools should accommodate students and staff with respect to fasting observances. Appropriate space other than the cafeteria or lunchroom should be designated during lunch period for fasting students. Field trip plans should also consider the needs of fasting students. Students might need exemptions or alteration of activities in some classes, e.g., Physical Education.

**Faith-based Attire:**

Student/staff wearing of certain hairstyles and attire, such as, but not limited to: yarmulkes, turbans, hijab (headscarves), crucifixes, stars of David, should be respected. Some communities require specific items of ceremonial dress or which may be perceived as contravening Board policies, for example, the wearing of kirpans by students. In 2006, the Supreme Court of Canada upheld the right of students to wear ceremonial kirpans (see the Ontario Human Rights Commission website [www.ohrc.on.ca](http://www.ohrc.on.ca) for details). It is worth noting that harassment based on attire is one the most common forms of discrimination. Staff attitudes are crucial to establishing a positive climate of understanding and respect for differences regarding faith-based attire.

**Modesty Requirements for Physical Education:**

When a student requests an accommodation for dress code for participation in physical education, the school and family are encouraged to find a mutually agreeable accommodation within the context of Ministry, Board, and school dress code expectations. Safety must be considered in the accommodation of dress. For example, a head scarf can be tucked into clothing, track pants may be worn instead of shorts in some situations but not where bare knees are required (for example, on the climbers for gymnastics). The curriculum requirements should be explained to the family, so the family has sufficient information to understand the physical education curriculum and to select available curriculum alternatives.

**Participation in Daily Activities, Curriculum and Program:**

When an accommodation is requested related to the content of curriculum and/or program, it is important to have an open discussion between the parents/guardians and the school. The accommodation applies to the individual who requests it, not the whole class or classroom practices in general.

**Observing Faith-based (Creed) Days of Significance:**

As a minimum, it is recommended that schools recognize days of significance, pertinent to their school community, along with the days that reflect Canada's diverse population. Recognition may include but is not limited to: announcements, displays, bulletin boards, posters, student work, assemblies, or other events. Schools will endeavour to be aware of the faith-based observances of their school community when planning activities.

Schools are encouraged to recognize the days of significance on the Board's Diversity calendar through announcements, bulletin board displays, assemblies, and other events

befitting the school setting and student demographics. The Diversity calendar is published weekly by the Board's Communications Office.

**Leave of Absence for Faith-based (Creed) Days of Significance and Celebrations:**

All staff and students who observe faith-based (creed) days of significance in accordance with Sec. 21 (2) (g) of the *Education Act* may be excused from attendance.

4. General Procedures for Faith and Creed Accommodation Requests

**Staff:**

The person requesting accommodation should advise the administration at the beginning of the school year, to the extent possible. If September notice is not feasible, the person should make the request as early as possible.

The absence of employees due to faith/creed observances should be granted as determined by this policy and the appropriate collective agreement. The Human Resources Department may verify the day(s) requested on the Board's Diversity calendar.

**Students:**

Parents/guardians/adult students must present verbal or written notice for the student to school administration, specifying their accommodation needs relating to faith/creed observances, including holy days on which they will be absent from school. This notice should be made enough in advance (preferably at the beginning of each school year) to ensure that scheduling of major evaluations, such as tests, assignments or examinations, takes the faith/creed observances into consideration.

Student handbooks and parent newsletters should include information about the procedure to follow to request an accommodation for faith/creeds observances and/or faith or creed-based days of significance. Such procedures should be easy for staff, students, and parents to understand.

**Unresolved Requests:**

When a determination is made that an accommodation would create undue hardship, the person requesting the accommodation will be given written notice, including the reasons for the decision and the objective evidence relied upon.

In the event an accommodation request is not granted, the matter will be referred to the appropriate Superintendent.

5. Recognizing Days of Faith (Creed) and Cultural Significance in Schools

The Ministry of Education in Policy/Program Memorandum No. 112, dated January 1, 1991, is clear about the place of faith in public elementary and secondary schools in this province: *"In its decision of January 30, 1990, the Ontario Court of Appeal made it very clear that subsection 28(4) of Regulation 262 was invalid because it permitted the teaching of a single religious tradition as if it were the exclusive means through which to develop moral thinking and behaviour. The Court also ruled that education designed to teach about religion and to foster moral values without indoctrination in a particular religious faith would not contravene the charter."*

The intent of recognizing faith-based or cultural holidays or events is to educate, not indoctrinate. Days of significance as identified in the Board's Diversity calendar should be recognized to the degree it is appropriate in each school setting. Recognition means the inclusion of events in a school curricular and co-curricular program, and may occur through festivals, concerts and other activities. It is not appropriate to use such language as "celebrate" for one holiday while "acknowledging" other events. "Celebrations" of religious events, by Ministry direction, are not to be included in the school program.

In distinguishing between education about religion and religious indoctrination, the Court made the following statement: *"While this is an easy test to state, the line between indoctrination and education, in some instances, can be difficult to draw."* The law allows for teaching about different faiths and creeds; however, Board practices must be implemented in a manner which is equitable to all groups. The following provides further clarification in this regard:

Schools:

- may support the study of various beliefs, but not the practice of any one belief;
- may expose students to all views, but not impose any particular view;
- approach the study of various beliefs for the purpose of instruction, not indoctrination;
- educate students about all beliefs, not convert them to any one belief;
- approach the study of various beliefs for academic, not devotional purpose;
- study what all people believe, but do not teach students what to believe; and/or
- strive for student awareness of all beliefs, but do not press for student acceptance of any one belief.

#### 6. Distribution of Faith Literature and Resources

~~Faith literature, e.g., Bibles, Torahs, Qur'ans, may not be distributed during instructional time. A permission note must be sent home and teachers must neither encourage nor discourage the return of the permission form. Schools should contact the Education Officer for specific assistance, if they are asked to distribute faith literature or resources unrelated to curriculum expectations.~~

***Lakehead District School Board facilities will not distribute faith-based literature to students. The only exception to this statement is if the materials support curriculum expectations in a program of study. School libraries may include faith texts in their collections as sources of information for students and staff.***

#### 7. Common Concerns

##### **Can schools display a Santa Claus?**

Yes. Santa Claus is a symbol of the Christmas season, but it is not the only symbol of celebrations in that season. Symbols associated with the special days of other faiths should be displayed at that time of the year when they are recognized.

##### **Can schools display a Nativity scene?**

Yes. A display for any faith can be exhibited. Such a display would constitute part of the educational component as described in this guideline. A display for any faith, e.g., a Nativity scene, a menorah or Shiva figure, should be accompanied with an appropriate explanation of the meaning of the day or event, i.e., why it is being recognized. However, a display of only one faith during the school year would be inconsistent with Ministry and Board expectations.

**What is the recommended general approach to the December holiday season?**

When planning an inclusive recognition of multifaith or multicultural traditions, it is important to include both the faith and secular traditions, for example, Christmas. This provides a balance so that other faith traditions having no secular version may be presented equitably, for example, Rosh Hashana (Judaism), Diwali (Hinduism), Ramadan (Islam).

It is recommended that many faith and cultural days of significance be recognized during their season and with authenticity throughout the school year to build a sense of respect for differences, global awareness and equity in the school's culture. It is important to demonstrate the common bonds and principles among the various traditions while respecting and valuing their differences. It is inappropriate to avoid recognizing traditions for fear that schools are unable to recognize everything to the same degree. The intent of inclusion is as important as the "fairness factor". While some faith traditions in Canada are highly developed with many resources to represent them, others are still growing.

**Are all students expected to attend and/or participate in events or activities related to the recognition of faith days?**

Students who conscientiously object to what they consider to be a "controversial issue" may be exempt. Students may not exempt themselves from a human rights, respect for differences, or anti-discrimination approach to any tradition. For example, a Muslim student may be exempt from decorating the Christmas tree in the front hall, but is still expected to learn about the Christian celebration of Christmas as a way of instilling in students a respect for religious differences.

**I am a Board employee who does not work in a school. Am I expected to recognize each day as defined on the Board's Diversity calendar?**

It is expected that all Board staff be aware of the day and respect its significance.

**What should be done about other events, e.g., a Christmas dance for students?**

If a school event recognizes several faith or cultural traditions, it is recommended that the name of the event focus on the collective theme, for example, Winter Traditions, All About Us, or Festivus. If Christmas is the only tradition being recognized at the event, it is acceptable to call it a "Christmas" event. Nonetheless, a variety of diverse traditions should be represented throughout the school year. It is also important to be accurate and authentic when describing faith activities or symbols: just as "holiday bush" inaccurately describes a Christmas tree, a "holiday rug" would be an inappropriate description of a prayer rug used as a symbol for Eid-ul-Fitr.

**Is Hallowe'en an event which falls under these guidelines?**

Yes. While Hallowe'en may be a secular event for some, it is a religious event for others. Occurring on October 31, the event precedes All Saints' Day during which it was once believed that the spirits of the past appeared. Some members of the Wicca and other faith communities still attribute those meanings to the day. For some, it is an occasion when children dress up in costumes and have fun with their peers. Students, who for faith reasons are opposed to participating in Hallowe'en activities, may be provided with an alternative program. Some Christian or Muslim children may request this as a faith accommodation.

8. More Information about Various Faiths

More detailed information about various faiths as well as explanations about the significance of the Board's Diversity calendar dates can be found at [www.lakeheadschoools.ca](http://www.lakeheadschoools.ca) under "About Us"/Equity and Inclusion Working Committee.