



## Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting held on December 5, 2023

### Present

- Kerry Desjardins - Superintendent of Education
- Shirley Jean (Chair) - Trustee
- Judy Wawia - Trustee - First Nation Representative
- Lisa Copp - Educational Assistant Representative
- Lindsay Costa - Principal Representative
- Melissa Nystrom - Teacher Representative
- Danielle Bond - Parent (Recorder)
- Brie-Ann Copp - Parent
- Tracy Bryson - Mental Health Lead
- Ebony Netemegetic - Jordan's Principle (guest)
- Melissa Nystrom - Teacher Representative
- Jennifer Moore - DILICO
- Tymara Ruth - Red Rock Indian Band
- Valerie Auger - Plays Plat First Nation
- Renee Monsma - Children's Centre Thunder Bay

### Regrets

- Maureen Parkes - FASD Coordinator, NW Community Health Centre

- Candice Bottle - North of Superior Programs
- Andrea Stach - George Jeffrey Children's Centre, Thunder Bay

### Welcome, and Opening Liturgy:

Shirley Jean began the meeting with a prayer, and K. Desjardins read the Statement of Acknowledgement.

### Agenda/Minutes:

#### Resolution #08/23

Moved By: Judy Wawia

Seconded By: Danielle Bond

**THAT** the agenda of the Special Education Advisory Committee meeting held on December 5, 2023 be accepted.

Carried.

#### Resolution #09/23

Moved By: Judy Wawia

Seconded By: Lindsay Costa

**THAT** the [minutes](#) of the Special Education Advisory Committee meeting held on November 7, 2023, be accepted.

Carried.

### Business Arising Out of Minutes

There was no Business Arising out of Minutes. K. Desjardins welcomed Val Auger and Tymara Ruth who are joining our Special Education Advisory Committee.

### Professional Learning Update

1. Jordan's Principle Presentation - Ebony Netemegecic

Ebony Netemegesic explained her role with Jordan's Principle. In her position, she helps bridge the gap between First Nations children on and off the reserve. Jordan's Principle provides educational assistance (speech therapy, psych. assessments). In her role, she acts as a liaison to parents, schools, and Ministry and helps gather information for documents that can be a barrier for some families. She encourages school members to reach out and not be afraid of the services they offer to utilize this service. Ebony shared how part of her position was to sit with the school and review the application and how the EA would be utilized for the student.

### New Business

#### 1. Mental Health Update - Tracy Bryson

On November 17, 2023, all schools participated in a board-wide Professional Development Day. This day explored a variety of topics on the promotion of Mental Health and Well-Being. PPM 169 was discussed on Student Mental Health, exploring internal and external pathways, as well as having time in the school families to reconnect and spend time together. Hannah Beach was the Keynote speaker and supported staff in further creating environments of emotional safety.

The Mental Health modules from the information session begin this week with training on Thursday. This will begin the rollout but the learning will occur in a staggered approach. Teachers will facilitate the module, then come together following each module and talk about student impact.

#### 2. Regional Special Education Committee (RSEC) - Kerry Desjardins

Kerry attended a Regional meeting in Thunder Bay on November 1 and 2, which consisted of 8 regional Northern Ontario School Boards. RSEC comes together in the Fall, Winter, and Spring to discuss common strengths and challenges among the regional school boards. This was also an opportunity to receive an update from the Ministry and have conversations with updates in Special Education around Autism. Jordan's Principal coordinator with Keewatin Patricia School Board presented a school board protocol currently being utilized in their board.

#### 3. Northern Supports Initiative (NSI) - Kerry Desjardins

Originally, NSI was for five years, which came to Northwestern Ontario for additional opportunity for funding. NSI has now extended the past five years and is called the Northern Adjustment Funding. With the needs in Northern Ontario, this funding will support the same budget as last year. We are waiting for the parameters that come with

the budget for this year.

NSI continues to apply for urgent needs. If schools have a new student who presents with urgent needs, this funding assists an Educational Assistant for 8-10 weeks, which allows the school time to get a transition plan in place and build a student success plan.

#### **4. Early Years Strategy for 2023-2024 - Kerry Desjardins**

Kerry along with other regions, came together in Thunder Bay for an Early Years meeting with Special Education: Transitions being a topic. As our JK's enter our educational systems, kindergarten students present with more needs than ever. To help educators fulfill their needs, the Ministry is diligently working on how they can support the Early Years Strategic Plan. The following topics were all discussed during our conversations: How can we help the following organizations, and what does this plan entail? How can we collaborate to form these strong partnerships? We know Kindergarten students transition smoothly from one location to another where the learning we are doing in Early Years Transitions is applied. In a collaborative setting, how can we support 0-4? Since a large number of students arrive nonverbal; how can we best serve the needs of our families?

#### **5. Communication Received: None**

#### **6. Service Provider Updates (if available):**

##### **North of Superior Programs - Candice Bottle**

Not available for update.

##### **Children's Centre Thunder Bay - Renee Monsma**

Nothing specific to report.

##### **Norwest Community Health Centre (FASD) - Maureen Parkes**

Not available for update.

##### **Dilico Anishinabek Family Care - Jennifer Moore**

Specifically, a new pamphlet was updated in the program. We have switched our program to health, wellness, and addiction. A QR code has been added to the poster and will be forwarded to K. Desjardins. November has been busy with addiction week.

**George Jeffrey Children’s Centre - Andrea Stach**

Not available for update.

**Future Agenda Items**

Please send any Agenda items to K. Desjardins.

- L. Copp asked if there is professional development around Autism, which we could provide with an information session for parents with kids 0-4 years of age. K. Desjardins will reach out to our service organizations. We can look at an offering for families, specifically for the Early Years.

**Other Matters**

1. **Next Meeting Date:** January 9, 2024, at 9:30 a.m. via Zoom

**Adjournment**

**Resolution #10/23**

Moved By: Jennifer Moore

Seconded By: Brie-Ann Cop

THAT we adjourn the Special Education Advisory Committee meeting at 10:12 a.m.

Carried.

Originally signed by

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SEAC Chairperson

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Date

Originally signed by

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SEAC Member

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Date