



**Northeastern
Catholic District**
SCHOOL BOARD

A place where we all belong.

Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting - Minutes Wednesday, February 18, 2026

PRESENT: Shannon Costello, The Cochrane District Social Services Administration Board
Paula Crotteau, Cochrane Temiskaming Children's Treatment Centre
Ryley Reis, Canadian Mental Health Association
Stan Skalecki, Vice Chair & NCDSB Trustee
Colleen Landers, Chair & NCDSB Trustee
Jeremy Hall, Timmins Learning Centre
Tricia Stefanic Weltz, Director of Education
Amber Smith-Come, School Principal St. Anne English Catholic School
Catherine Hoven, Special Assignment Teacher
Katie Mundle, Special Assignment Teacher
Kim McEntee, Mental Health Supervisor
Olivia Fregonese, Mental Health Worker
Matthew Cull, School Principal Holy Family School
Lisa Lamarche, Autism & Behavior & Worker
Jean Ethier, Education Services Officer / Recorder

EXCUSED: Ellen Renaud, North Eastern Ontario Family and Children's Services
Ken Ryan, The Lord's Kitchen Society
Lisa Malette-Lilko, Hands Autism Services
Derek Mundle, School Principal Sacred Heart Catholic School
Daphne Brumwell, Superintendent of Education

Summary:

Colleen welcomed everyone and led the group in prayer and Stan in the land acknowledgement.

Approval of the agenda: Moved by Ryley Reis and **SECONDED** by Stan Skalecki
That the agenda be approved as presented. **CARRIED**

Approval of the minutes of January 21, 2026, meeting
Moved by Ryley Reis and **SECONDED** by Stan Skalecki
That the minutes be approved and presented. **CARRIED**

Jump Math & Principal Network

Presented by Matthew Cull

Matthew presented to the committee on how Jump Math is implemented in our K-8 schools and explained how the Principal Network supports both students and teachers in strengthening mathematics achievement. The full presentation is available in the meeting minutes.

The presentation, titled "Presence, Leadership and Success," presented by Matthew Cull, outlines a strategic approach to improving math accessibility and achievement through inclusive, explicit instruction and strong leadership support.

The core of the presentation focuses on using Jump Math and a collaborative Principal Network to close achievement gaps and foster a culture of success.

Core Instructional Philosophy

The presentation frames mathematics as an equity issue. It advocates for:

- **Inclusive & Explicit Instruction:** Ensuring all students, regardless of background, have equitable access to understanding.
- **Reducing Cognitive Load:** Implementing steps to reduce stress on working memory to help students who traditionally struggle.
- **Success-First Mentality:** Prioritizing student confidence and success above all else to drive engagement and a "drive to learn".

Why Jump Math is Utilized

The program is highlighted for its ability to support diverse learners through:

- **Systematic Framework:** A structured approach with clear steps.
- **Micro-Scaffolding:** Lessons build incrementally on previous knowledge to ensure mastery.
- **Differentiation:** Using tools like bonus questions and whiteboards to meet unique student needs.

The Role of Leadership and Collaboration

Success is driven by a Principal Network that supports teachers so they can better support students:

- **Working Alongside Staff:** Principals foster a culture of trust and shared goal setting.
- **Building Capacity:** Professional development and "being present" in the classroom enhance teaching practices.
- **Modeling Culture:** The best results occur when the culture of success and improvement is mirrored between leadership and staff.

Key Outcomes and Impacts

- **Increased Confidence:** Students reported higher confidence levels and felt more capable of being math students.
- **Achievement Gains:** Significant improvements have been noted in EQAO and IXL data.
- **Support for IEP Students:** Tailored instruction in a collaborative environment has led to significant increases in both confidence and achievement for students with IEPs.
- **Long-Term Engagement:** By making math fun and focusing on mastery, the initiative aims to foster lifelong curiosity and resilience.

Virtual Student Mental Health Support Services

Presented by Kim McEntee & Olivia Fregonese

The presentation provided an overview of the Virtual Mental Health Services offered by the Northeastern Catholic District School Board (NCDSB). The services are governed by Policy E-37, Student Mental Health, and aim to enhance coping skills and create positive learning environments.

Service Delivery Framework

The NCDSB utilizes a three-tier model to categorize mental health support:

- Tier 1 (Mental Health Promotion): School-wide initiatives and daily positive interactions for all students.
- Tier 2 (Targeted Prevention): The primary focus of virtual services, offering short-term individual or small group sessions for students aged 12+.
- Tier 3 (Intensive Intervention): Individualized, short-term support for immediate concerns, including suicide risk assessments and safety planning.

Key Interventions and Methodology

The program emphasizes Structured Psychotherapy and Measurement-Based Care to ensure effective treatment:

Intervention Types

- Modalities: Supported by School Mental Health Ontario research, including BCI, BRISC, and Identity Affirming practices.
- 2025-26 Focus Areas: Activities such as journaling, emotion-coaching, and solution-focused conversations.
- Journal Club Pilot: A 4-session program designed to help students explore thoughts and feelings through guided journaling and reflection.

Measurement-Based Care

- Monitoring Tools: Progress is tracked using referral data, session notes, and validated scales like the PHQ-9 (depression) and GAD-7 (anxiety).
- Student Feedback: The board is currently integrating student perceptions of their own progress directly into session notes.

Accessing Services

Virtual counseling is available during school hours (8:30 AM – 4:00 PM, Mon-Fri) for elementary students aged 12 and older experiencing mild to moderate concerns.

- Referral Process: Services are referral-based and require student consent.
- Parent Involvement: Parents are engaged to the extent that it is appropriate and necessary.
- Contact: Referrals can be directed to the Mental Health Lead, Kim McEntee, or Mental Health Worker, Olivia Fregonese.

Agency Reports

Canadian Mental Health Association

If you are under 16 in the North, it is currently very hard to find mental health support because there are not enough resources. The Canadian Mental Health Association plans to fix this by introducing new programs specifically for younger teens. They recognize the lack of services for children under 16 and want to bring more support to the community.

Ryley is becoming a Care Coordinator and plans to use the role to advocate for more services and launch new projects.

The Cochrane District Social Services Administration Board

Shannon shared a new plan focused on helping children early and making sure they have strong support at home before starting school.

1. New Five-Year Plan

A new five-year plan launches next month. It focuses on helping parents support their children's development and making sure kids reach important milestones early.

2. Helping Kids Be Ready for School

Several new programs are already underway:

- Families receive a "School Here I Come" kit with simple learning tools to practice reading and math at home.
- Parents are learning about physical health, such as safe backpack use and books that support infant vision.
- Workshops will help young children build independence with skills like using the toilet, zipping coats, and opening lunch containers.

3. Support at EarlyON Child and Family Centres

EarlyON centres are expanding support by:

- Helping parents complete developmental screening questionnaires to identify concerns early.
- Sharing a locally written baby book for Treaty 9 families that connects them to community programs.
- Traveling across the district to reach families who are not yet connected to childcare services.

4. Technology and Community Partnerships

- A new provincial website is being developed so families can eventually find programs and track attendance in one place.
- On May 22, they are hosting a symposium with Doctor Jean Clinton to discuss infant mental health and adverse childhood experiences. The goal is to bring educators and community agencies together to better support families. The event will take place at the Porcupine Dante Club in Timmins.

Inspire Centre

Inspire is changing how it delivers services. Instead of long one-on-one waitlists, it is using a tiered approach, bringing support directly into schools and the community so more children can get help sooner.

1. Speech and Language Pilot

After starting occupational therapy services, Inspire is now testing tiered speech and language support.

- They began with one classroom in a school that had the longest waitlist.
- Speech-language pathologists are ready to expand and are in talks with another local school, hoping to fully launch by September.

2. Free Recreation Therapy

Recreation therapy used to be only for children registered with the center who had specific needs. Now, free spots are open to any school-aged child up to age 18.

- In Timmins, they partnered with Timmins Fitness Alternatives so families can sign up for funded activities online.
- In Kapuskasing, a new teen pool program called "Movement Waves" or "Hydro Hit" is being launched to help teens stay active and social.

3. Early Language Groups

Inspire is working with EarlyON Child and Family Centres and Cochrane District Social Services Administration Board to offer language groups for families. The goal is to identify speech and language concerns early so children are ready when they start school.

Timmins Learning Centre

The Timmins Learning Centre is growing and tutoring has returned, and they are building new community partnerships.

1. Tutoring Program (Grades 1–8)

The elementary tutoring program has returned after a one-year pause.

- It started in January with one student and now has eight, with a goal of reaching 70.
- Most students need help with math, and some need help with reading.
- Each student completes an assessment at the beginning and end to measure progress, and families give feedback to ensure the program is meeting their needs.

2. Adult Learning Program (Get Set 18+)

The adult program is doing well. It focuses on literacy, math, and digital skills.

- There are currently 22 students, with a goal of reaching 28.

3. Plans (2025–2028)

The Centre is creating a new strategic plan focused on strengthening community connections.

- They are working closely with local school boards
- Their goal is to connect community services so no child or adult misses out on support.

The Centre is open and ready to support students in Grades 1–8, especially those who need help with math.

Date of the Next Meeting – Wednesday March 25, 2026, at 11:45 a.m.

Other Business

Accessibility Plan Review

Andrew Marks, Community Relations Officer for the Northeastern Catholic District School Board, is inviting community members to share feedback on the Board's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (2025–2029).

If you notice any gaps or areas that could use more attention, please share your feedback directly with Andrew.

If your organization has its own accessibility plan, you are also encouraged to share it to help inform the Board's work.

Jean will be sending committee members a copy of the plan for review.

Budget Consultation

The board is working on the budget and wants input from committee partners. The board is looking for feedback on what should be the top priorities for the upcoming budget.

Jean will be sending committee members a copy of the memo, which includes a link to the Google survey.


Completing the survey will help make sure our priorities and actions reflect the community's needs and expectations.

Adjournment - Moved By: Stan Skalecki that the meeting be adjourned at 1:01 p.m. CARRIED

Presence, leadership and Success

PRESENTED BY MATTHEW CULL






Math as an Equity Issue

IMPORTANCE OF INCLUSIVE/EXPLICIT INSTRUCTION

Inclusive and explicit instruction ensures that every student, regardless of background or ability, has equitable access to mathematical understanding and success.

ADDRESSING ACHIEVEMENT GAPS

By focusing on diverse needs, we can effectively address achievement gaps, supporting all learners to thrive in their mathematical journey. JumpMath is very well situated to close gaps and move all students forward



Why Jump Math Supports Diverse Learners

STRUCTURED APPROACH

Jump Math utilizes a **systematic framework**, providing clear steps that help all students grasp mathematical concepts effectively and confidently.

SCAFFOLDED LESSONS

Each lesson is designed to build on previous knowledge, ensuring students can progress at their own pace while gaining essential skills and understanding.

- Micro scaffolding
- Mastery

DIFFERENTIATION

Jump Math personalizes learning by offering varied resources and strategies, allowing educators to meet the unique needs of diverse learners in their classrooms.

- Bonus questions
- whiteboards

Creating a Supportive Learning Environment

INCLUSIVE CLASSROOM STRATEGIES

An inclusive classroom fosters **collaboration and respect**, enabling all students to thrive, especially those who traditionally struggle with math concepts.

- Success and confidence come first
- A culture of success, improvement, and collaboration
- Reduction of cognitive load
- Steps taken to reduce the stress on working memory
- Best results are demonstrated when this is mirrored with staff



Grade 3: Our Students Love Math—and Believe They Can Do It

EQAO interest and confidence results show that Holy Family Grade 3 students consistently rate their attitudes toward math **higher than both the province and the board:**

- **“I like Math”**
 - Province: 67%
 - Board: 62%
 - **Holy Family: 76%**
- **“Being good at math is important to me”**
 - Province: 72%
 - Board: 71%
 - **Holy Family: 76%**
- **“I am good at Math”**
 - Province: 64%
 - Board: 60%
 - **Holy Family: 67%**
- **“I can answer difficult math questions”**
 - Province: 45%
 - Board: 45%
 - **Holy Family: 71%**



CONFIDENCE BOOST

Students using Jump Math reported an increase in their confidence levels in mathematics. This significant improvement demonstrates the program's effectiveness in creating an inclusive/success first/mastery/collaborative learning environment where all students feel capable of being Math students.

Holy Family students are significantly more likely than their peers across Ontario to believe they can handle challenging mathematics—one of Jump Math's most important hallmarks.

Grade 6: Confidence Surges Through Mastery and Structure

In Grade 6, the board averages drop sharply below the province—yet Holy Family continues to perform at or above both comparison groups in several key measures:

- **“I am good at Math”**
 - Province: 50%
 - Board: 43%
 - **Holy Family: 67%**
- **“I can answer difficult math questions”**
 - Province: 39%
 - Board: 37%
 - **Holy Family: 58%**
- **“Being good at math is important to me”**
 - Province: 61%
 - Board: 58%
 - **Holy Family: 75%**

CONFIDENCE BOOST

Levels have gone up significantly as well..
Take a look at our EQAO data and IXL data



EQAO over the years

year		reading	writing	Math		reading	writing	math
24/25	Board	61.9	46.2	48.6		79.1	76.4	31.1
24-25	Grade 3	76.2	42.9	85.7	Grade 6	66.7	75	41.7
23-24	Grade 3	88	12	75	Grade 6	55	18	9
22-23	Grade 3	53.8	7.7	30.8	Grade 6	44.4	55.6	22.2
21-22	Grade 3	27	18	9	Grade 6	25	50	0
	Grade 3				Grade 6			
	Grade 3				Grade 6			
	<u>10 year average</u>				Grade 6			

Role of the Principal Network

LEADERSHIP SUPPORT

Principals play a crucial role in fostering inclusive and explicit math instruction, ensuring that all students receive the support they need to succeed.

- This is done by working alongside teachers
- Creating a culture of trust and building relationships with staff
- Autonomy relevant to the buildings need

COLLABORATION

Collaboration among teachers, principals, and support staff is essential to create effective professional development opportunities that enhance inclusive teaching practices.

- we do this by being present
- setting goals as a team (SET)
- Working alongside teachers

Impact on IEP Students in a Collaborative Environment

Students with IEPs experience significant increases in confidence and achievement through tailored instruction, enabling them to thrive in mathematics.

- The network strives to create a culture where staff feel confident
- Prioritize confidence and success ahead of all else
- All achievements (by staff and students) are celebrated
- Everyone enjoys school (teachers and staff)
- The network of principals looks to support teachers who can then support students**



Long-Term Impacts

Equity/Explicit Teaching

Closing **achievement gaps** is vital for ensuring all students have equal opportunities to succeed in mathematics and beyond.

- Mastery
- Quick
- Focused

SUCCESS

Focusing on success and mastery allows us to close gaps, creates a culture of pride and success and a drive to learn

- micro scaffolding
- Mastery
- Essential skills
- Teacher Capacity

ENGAGEMENT

Fostering a love of **learning math** encourages lifelong curiosity, helping students to embrace challenges and develop resilience in their educational journeys.

- Math is fun
- Success comes first

Virtual Mental Health Services

SEAC
February 18, 2026



NCDSB Mental Health Services

Policy E-37, Student Mental Health

View the policy via the NCDSB Website: [Policy E-37](#)

Definitions

Tier 1

School-wide mental health promotion delivered through daily positive interactions, classroom learning, and inclusive initiatives that support all students.

Tier 2

Short-term small group or individual sessions with CYWs or Mental Health Workers focused on goal-setting, building strengths, and developing skills to address social-emotional or mental health barriers.

Tier 3

Individualized, short-term interventions addressing immediate mental health concerns, often involving collaboration with the student's circle of support and community service providers.

Measurement-based Care: The routine, systematic use of validated measures, such as student-reported symptom-rating scales, before or during each clinical encounter to inform decision-making about treatment.

Structured Psychotherapy: An approach to mental health intervention that utilizes systematic, short-term, and evidence-based methods delivered by mental health professionals regulated by a professional college.

Service Overview

The service exists primarily within Tier 2 services: Virtual mental health service with a Social Worker, at elementary for students 12+

The staff will also meet with students with more complex mental health concerns or diagnoses as a complimentary service to support school-specific goals, and complete suicide risk assessments and co-create safety plans with students, situation-specific.

External partnerships with the Board contact/Mental Health & Addiction nurse and other child/youth mental health services for services.

Virtual services at tier 1 work involve collaborating with the school Child & Youth Worker on initiatives aligned to the board Mental Health Strategy supporting promotion in the schools

THIRD TIER

Specialized consultation and assessment, family caregiver support, and therapy services

SECOND TIER

Targeted prevention and brief services

FIRST TIER

Mental health promotion

School Based Mental Health



Types of Interventions

Under Structured Psychotherapy:

Modalities are supported by [School Mental Health Ontario](#) research and direction for school mental health services (i.e. BCI, BRISC, Identity Affirming) and with the Mental Health Strategy under the supervision of NCDSB's Supervisor of Mental Health & Wellness.

Sample focus areas for 2025-26 school year: ACHWM, journaling, emotion-coaching, solution-focused/one-at-a-time conversations).

Measurement Based Care

Measurement & monitoring includes referral data, Session notes, PHQ-9 & GAD-7.

We are in process of reflecting the student's perception of their progress within the session notes.

Accessing Services

To make a referral

- Email, call, or set a meeting time with Olivia through the link in email signature

Who can make a referral?

- School staff member
 - Principal
 - School Child and Youth Worker
 - Resource Teacher
- Student can request services

Meetings are scheduled through Microsoft Teams

Student Meetings

Work with the schools across the board

Students over the age of 12 are eligible for services

Students are able to take their meetings in a confidential space at the school set up by the school team

Purposes for meetings can vary, though some examples of skills we can work on would include

- Problem solving
- Goal setting
- Emotional regulation
- Healthy relationship skills
- Strength based resiliency

Other aspects of the role



Supporting the school team with resources



Work collaboratively with the student support service team



Support promotion activities

Mental health fair
Student led Initiative



School representation

Visiting with schools
ex/ Virtual call with Cobalt grade 7 and 8 students

School Based Mental Health Services

Parent Information Sheet



SCHOOL BASED SERVICES

NCDSB Mental Health Services promote well-being by providing early intervention and prevention in the school setting. Our service aims to enhance coping skill development and create positive learning environments.

Virtual Counselling Services:

Individual Counseling:

- o Brief, one-on-one virtual sessions with a trained mental health professional
- o Available for elementary students aged 12 and older, experiencing mild to moderate mental health concerns

Service Details:

- o Short-term support
- o Goals and service plan will be developed in collaboration with the student to meet each student's specific needs and personal objectives
- o Connecting students and families with external mental health services, therapists, or healthcare providers as needed

Possible Signs that May Indicate a Mental Health Concern for your Child May Include:

- o Withdrawal from friends and family
- o Ongoing sadness and lack of interest in things they normally enjoy
- o Frequently changing mood/ emotions
- o Little motivation or interest in schoolwork, activities

NCDSB school mental health services and resources are designed to complement existing supports, helping students thrive and reach their full potential

CONNECT WITH YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL PRINCIPAL FOR MORE INFORMATION

School Based Mental Health Services

School Administrator Info Sheet



What are School Based Mental Health Services?

- o School based mental health services refer to a range of services to help youth experiencing mild to moderate mental health concerns
- o Offered primarily virtually
- o Currently offered to NCDSB elementary students aged 12+
- o Services are offered during school hours (8:30-4:00, Mon-Fri)

What we Prioritize?

- o Focus is on prevention or early intervention
- o Referral-based, with student consent
- o The service can work with community and health partners to support students who require more intensive services.

How the Service Aims to Help?

- o Provide school-appropriate structured psychotherapy and interventions
- o Screening tool to understand student's needs: eg. PHQ9, GAD7, BD
- o Help in transitions between school and community services.
- o Consult with school team related to student mental health strategies
- o Engage with parents/caregivers to the extent that it is appropriate (Consent, needs, etc.)

To refer a student please reach out to Mental Health Lead, Kim McEntee via phone at extension 3201 or by email: kmcentee@ncdsb.on.ca or Mental Health Worker Olivia Fregonese phone at extension 3505 or email: ofregonese@ncdsb.on.ca for more information.

SESSION BREAKDOWN – JOURNAL CLUB PILOT

Resource: Journals, stickers/ markers, journal prompts

Introduce the topic: The Journal Club is a 4-session club designed to help students explore their thoughts, feelings, and ideas through guided journaling. Each session should take about 20 minutes, and the students will use a journal to answer prompts. Moving step-by-step through activities that make journaling fun, meaningful, and reflective. The hopes are for students to engage in a personal and group creative outlet and reflect in meaningful ways.

Journal prompts are provided for student reflection. Students can choose to journal through drawing, doodles, telling a story, or any other way they feel is helpful for them. The main intent is that they are provided with this reflection before concluding each session.

SESSION BREAKDOWN:

1. **Learning Component**
 - o A short lesson or discussion to introduce the session's theme.
2. **Warm-Up Activity**
 - o A quick, creative exercise to get everyone thinking and ready to write.
3. **Reflection & Journaling – Follow prompts below. Use the same reflection each time.**
 - o Time to respond to prompts in your booklet.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Prior to concluding each session: Ensure students have time to independently reflect and write or draw in their journal book using the reflection prompts below. Then, encourage students to share with a partner. If time permits, they can voluntarily share with the whole group.

- What was the most useful thing I learned today?
- What is one thing that I liked about the journaling activity today?

At the end of the four sessions: Think. Pair. Share. Ask students to reflect on their journaling experience using the prompts below. Then, in pairs, students can ask each other and share as a group what they heard from their partner.

- Did you like the journaling group?
- Would you do it again? Would you recommend the group to a friend?

JOURNAL TOPIC AND PROMPT EXAMPLES

SELF CONFIDENCE

- Share a story about a time you felt very proud of yourself. What happened?
- What are 3 things you're good at? Explore examples!
- Who are people in your life that help you feel confident?
- Imagine you're a superhero with the power of confidence. Describe or draw your superhero! What do they look like, and how do they show their confidence in action?
- Create a "confidence" playlist- what songs would be on it and why?

SELF- CARE

- Why do you think self care is so important for students your age and why?
- How do you usually recharge when you've had a long or busy day?
- What does a "good" day look like for you? What makes it feel that way?
- What are some ways you take care of your body, your emotions, and your mind?
- What helps you feel comfortable and confident?

GRATITUDE

- What's one good thing that happened today, no matter how small?
- Write a thank you note (real or imaginary) to someone who has helped you recently.
- Who makes you laugh when you need it most?
- What's one thing about your daily routine that makes your life easier or better?
- How can you show gratitude even when things aren't perfect?

CREATIVITY

- What kind of activities make you feel most creative? How do you know?
- If your imagination were a place, what would it look like?
- Create an invention that would make school more fun. Describe and draw it!
- Create a short story, where you are the main character.
- What makes creative you've done that you're proud of?

COMMUNICATION

- How do you think communication is important in friendship, school, and life?
- When someone is upset, what is the best way to show conflict?
- How do you handle disagreements or arguments?
- How do you show someone that you're listening and that you care?
- What helps you feel confident when sharing ideas?



THERMOMETER

Where are you right now on the thermometer	How will I know I am in this colour?	What are some strategies I can use to help bring me closer to great?
	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

SELF REFLECTIONS

THINGS I DO TO PROCESS MY FEELINGS

THINGS THAT KEEP ME BUSY

THINGS THAT MAKE ME FEEL CONFIDENT

