



**Northeastern
Catholic District**
SCHOOL BOARD

A place where we all belong.

Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting - Minutes Wednesday, March 25, 2026

PRESENT: Paula Crotteau, Cochrane Temiskaming Children's Treatment Centre
Ellen Renaud, North Eastern Ontario Family and Children's Services
Ken Ryan, The Lord's Kitchen Society
Lisa Malette-Lilko, Hands Autism Services
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
Derek Mundle, School Principal Sacred Heart Catholic School
Catherine Hoven, Special Assignment Teacher
Katie Mundle, Special Assignment Teacher
Lisa Lamarche, Autism & Behavior & Worker
Jean Ethier, Education Services Officer / Recorder

EXCUSED: Ryley Reis, Canadian Mental Health Association
Shannon Costello, The Cochrane District Social Services Administration Board
Daphne Brumwell, Superintendent of Education
Kim McEntee, Mental Health Supervisor

Summary:

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

Approval of the agenda: Moved by Ellen Renaud and **SECONDED** by Lisa Malette-Lilko
That the agenda be approved as presented. **CARRIED**

Approval of the minutes of February 18, 2026, meeting
Moved by Stan Skalecki and **SECONDED** by Ken Ryan
That the minutes be approved and presented. **CARRIED**

Autism & Behaviour Support Team Update

Presented by Brittany Counter, Lisa Lamarche and Jasmine Fox

This presentation outlined the current caseload, operational shifts, and strategic direction for the School-Based ABA Team. While the team has successfully transitioned to a more robust, in-house clinical model, a dramatic surge in referrals is stretching current resources, prompting a necessary pivot in how services will be delivered moving forward.

The school-based ABA team has three members: Brittany Counter a Behaviour Analyst providing board-wide services and two Autism & Behaviour Support Workers Jasmine Fox covering the South, and Lisa Lamarche North/Central regions.

Demand for services has increased significantly, with referrals rising by 55% over four years—about triple the national average. For 2025–2026, there are 226 total referrals: 63 in the North, 67 in the Central, and 96 in the South, with a fairly even split between Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and general behaviour cases.

A major shift has occurred in service delivery: clinical support, previously outsourced, is now provided in-house by qualified professionals, including a BCBA and an Ontario-regulated RBA.

The team supports schools through “Micro Professional Development,” offering small-group, tailored training directly to educators based on specific student and classroom needs.

Looking ahead to September 2026, the team plans to adjust service delivery, reassess school allocations, expand virtual supports, and possibly manage a waitlist due to high demand. They also intend to bring back the “First 20 Days of Kindergarten” initiative.

Speech Language Pilot

Presented by Catherine Hoven & Katie Mundle

For seven years, the board’s contracted SLP team has screened FDK to Year 2 students, but gaps in expressive language and comprehension remained. To address this, the board partnered with Sudbury Catholic DSB to pilot a more targeted approach in three selected schools, Pope Francis Elementary School, Aileen Wright English Catholic School and St. Patrick Catholic School.

Students were assessed using three tools—QUILS (receptive language), EVT-3 (expressive vocabulary), and the Mondo Oral Language Assessment (sentence repetition)—to get a comprehensive view of language skills.

Based on the results, all students will receive 12 weeks of whole-class oral language instruction, while those with greater needs will get targeted support from ECEs.

After the intervention, students will be reassessed, and if successful, the program may be expanded across more schools.

Agency Reports

The Lord’s Kitchen Society

The Lord’s Kitchen’s main annual fundraiser, the Smile Cookie Campaign, will run from April 27 to May 3. Cookies (previously \$2 each) are sold through Tim Hortons, with all proceeds supporting the Lord’s Kitchen, in partnership with the Castello Community Care Centre.

Funds raised help cover essential costs such as food and rent. In addition, the organization had a successful year distributing winter clothing (boots, coats, mitts, scarves, and hats) during a particularly harsh winter. While they received \$5,000 for clothing, generous donations from local churches (Sacred Heart and St. Anthony’s) and the community significantly increased their impact.

Overall, the upcoming fundraiser is crucial for supporting operations and preparing for the year ahead.

Timmins Learning Centre

The Timmins Learning Centre is actively working toward its 2025–2028 strategic plan, focusing on long-term financial sustainability. To achieve this, the organization is exploring partnerships with corporations, school boards, local businesses, and other agencies, as well as seeking grants.

They are strengthening collaboration with local school boards, particularly the Northeastern Catholic District School Board, with a growing number of students (currently six) attending the centre for support in areas like math and literacy.

The centre is also rebuilding and promoting its programs after a period of inactivity, especially its tutoring services. Efforts include marketing programs such as the Get Set program for adults (18+), in partnership with organizations like the PACE Centre and other community agencies.

Additionally, the centre is working to increase enrollment for tutoring services from Grades 1–12 and has recently

expanded to include high school students. Overall, the focus is on growth, community partnerships, and expanding services to better support learners.

North Eastern Ontario Family and Children's Services

The organization's main focus is promoting children's mental health through strong collaboration with school boards, CMHA, Indigenous services, and other community partners. They are organizing events during the first full week of May to raise awareness and community engagement.

Key activities include sessions by Dr. Adele Lafrance (professional and parent-focused), a French-language speaker, free community swims across the region, a media campaign, and local agency-led initiatives. The ongoing theme is the "Five Ways to Well-Being," with a special focus on mindfulness this year.

While staffing challenges persist, the organization has hired a new psychologist in the Kirkland Lake area who will provide clinical support across multiple services. Overall, efforts are centered on improving collaboration and ensuring children receive the right care at the right time.

Hands Autism Services

The organization's main update is the upcoming opening of a new office in Kirkland Lake within the next few weeks. This expansion builds on existing services in the southern area (Kirkland Lake to New Liskeard).

The new location will allow for more stable operations and expanded services, including social skills clinics and a broader range of supports for the community.

Date of the Next Meeting – Wednesday April 22, 2026, at 11:45 a.m.

Other Business – N/A

Adjournment - Moved By: Ellen Renaud that the meeting be adjourned at 12:46 p.m. CARRIED