

AGENDA – EDUCATION, POLICY AND OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

Wednesday, February 8, 2023
Limestone Education Centre
220 Portsmouth Avenue, Kingston, ON
Link: <https://bit.ly/LDSBEOCFeb8>

Public Meeting – 5:30 PM

Acknowledgement of Territory: “The Limestone District School Board is situated on the traditional territories of the Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee. We acknowledge their enduring presence on this land, as well as the presence of Métis, Inuit, and other First Nations from across Turtle Island. We honour their cultures and celebrate their commitment to this land.”

1. CALL TO ORDER
2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA
3. DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST
4. REPORTS FOR INFORMATION
 - 4.1 Right to Read Follow up – Associate Superintendent Sartor (Pages 2-9)
 - 4.2 School Year Calendar – Associate Superintendent Gollogly (Pages 10-13)
 - 4.3 Special Education Review – Superintendent Gillam (Pages 14-16)
5. REPORTS FOR ACTION - None at this time
6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS - None at this time.
7. NEW BUSINESS
 - 7.1 OPSBA Public Education Symposium
8. CORRESPONDENCE - None at this time.
9. NEXT MEETING – March 8, 2023
10. ADJOURNMENT

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT: LIMESTONE DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD'S RESPONSE TO THE ONTARIO HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION'S RIGHT TO READ REPORT

EDUCATION, POLICY AND OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

February 8, 2023

Purpose

To provide trustees with an overview of the Ontario Human Rights Commission's Right to Read report, and Limestone District School Board's ongoing work that aligns with many of the recommendations in the report.

Background

The Ministry of Education released a revised Grade 1-8 Language curriculum in 2006. Prior to and since the launch of the revised curriculum, there has been abundant research in early literacy learning, particularly in the area of how humans learn to read.

On October 3, 2019, the Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC) announced a public inquiry into human rights issues that affect students with reading disabilities in Ontario's public education system. The Right to Read inquiry, which focused on early reading skills, found that Ontario's public education system was not meeting the needs of students with reading disabilities, such as dyslexia and many others, by not using evidence-based approaches to teach them how to read.

On February 28, 2022, the OHRC Right to Read report was released and highlighted that learning to read is not a privilege but a basic and essential human right. The report included 157 recommendations directed toward the Ministry of Education, Ontario school boards, and Faculties of Education outlining how to address systemic issues that affect the right to learn to read. Just over half of those recommendations directly implicate the work of Ontario school boards.

The information below provides a brief summary of the report and highlights some of the recommendations in each of the five areas that the report covered:

- 1) **Curriculum and Instruction** – The report recommends revising the Kindergarten (FDK) and Grade 1-8 language curriculum to include explicit, systematic, and direct instruction in foundational reading skills which include phonemic awareness, phonics, decoding, and practice with reading words in stories to build word-reading accuracy and speed. Further, it recommends removing all instruction that is based on the 3- cueing system (meaning, structural and visual approach). The Ministry of Education has committed to removing any reference to the 3-cueing system in the revised curriculum by Fall, 2023.
- 2) **Early Screening** – The report recommends that all students from Senior (Year 2) Kindergarten to Grade 2 be screened twice per year, using a standardized, evidence-based screening tool as this is a critical component of universal, tier 1 instruction.
- 3) **Reading Interventions** – The report highlights the need to provide systematic reading interventions when educators uncover that students are struggling to acquire word level reading skills. The report indicates that interventions are most effective when delivered in Kindergarten and Grade 1 and should also be available to all students. The report further supports the idea that more intensive (tier 2 and 3) interventions need to occur daily in focused blocks of time.
- 4) **Accommodations** - The report indicates that students require instructional accommodations that are timely, effective, and supported. The report also underscores that accommodations are not a substitute for teaching students to read. They need to be provided *along with, not in place of*, evidence-based curriculum and interventions.
- 5) **Professional Assessments** - The last area focuses on providing earlier access to professional assessments and establishing clear criteria for access.

The Limestone District School Board acknowledges the importance of providing a comprehensive literacy program to all students by offering a structured approach to literacy that includes direct, explicit instruction in oral language, phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, comprehension, and vocabulary development.

As indicated, we anticipate that the Ministry will release new curriculum in Spring, 2023 and implementation will occur in Fall, 2023. However, while working on the revised curriculum, in June 2022, the Ministry did release an interim guide titled [Effective Early Reading Instruction: A Guide for](#)

Teachers.

Using this guide, and our knowledge of research based explicit instruction in literacy, we have committed to deepening our learning and supporting evidence-based instruction across the district. We continue to support LDSB educators and support staff to make important shifts in their instructional practice. As Maya Angelou reminds us, *when we know better, we do better!*

Current Status

It is important to realize that while the OHRC's Right to Read report was released at the end of February 2022, the Limestone District School Board has been engaged in ongoing and important literacy work. Below are examples of literacy work aligned with the OHRC's Right to Read report that Limestone undertook during 2021/2022:

2021/2022 School Year:

Tier 1:

- Let's Talk Literacy Sessions – K-12 staff were invited to attend five different after school sessions that focused on oral language, phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, and vocabulary/morphology. One-hundred and fifty educators participated and received a structured literacy resource.
- Spring Tutors – 35 post-secondary students were trained for 3 days in phonemic awareness and phonics, including diagnostic assessments and follow up activities. All elementary schools received the support of a literacy tutor 30 hours per week for 6 weeks. We collated the pre and post-diagnostic data, along with educator and student voice to share with the system. The growth in student achievement was notable.
- Schools were invited to participate in the LIFT (Learning Innovation Fund for Teachers) process whereby they completed an application to access up to \$1500 per school to engage in learning together. Over 20 schools chose a literacy focus and were supported by members of the program team to engage in learning related to literacy instruction.
- K-12 staff were invited to complete an online structured literacy course over the summer. Four-hundred Limestone educators signed up, and completed the course.

- Summer Writing Team – A group of 30 K-12 educators worked for a week over the summer to develop instructional resources and tools for educators to use in a structured literacy program. These tools are now available to all educators through the Minds Online platform.
- Books are Back, supported by the Limestone Learning Foundation, was organized by the literacy team. This initiative ensured that all schools were provided with culturally relevant materials for educators to use in their literacy program.
- Summer Institute – This is a one-day workshop series that is held in August, by teachers, for teachers. Some of the sessions were focused on structured literacy instruction and they were well attended.

Tier 2:

- A partnership with the Boys and Girls Club of Kingston was developed. The Boys and Girls Club offered one-week Academic Boost camps to over 800 elementary aged students this past summer, with a focus on targeted literacy intervention and the camps were funded by the LDSB.
- The LDSB Read-A-Lot summer program supported over 250 students for three weeks in July that focused on providing structured literacy intervention to students who are currently working below grade level.
- A partnership with KEYS was developed. KEYS provided targeted 1:1 literacy support and intervention to newcomers over the summer.
- Lexia (a tier 2 online literacy intervention program) was piloted in all elementary district special education programs which was led by Educational Services.

Tier 3:

- Empower, a tier 3 Literacy Intervention program, was piloted in 2 high schools and supported in 17 elementary schools.

2022/2023 School Year:

LDSB is committed to reaching all students by ensuring that everyone has access to tiered literacy instruction and intervention supports. While the chart in the appendix that follows indicates how each of the initiatives addresses the recommendations listed in the OHRC Right to Read report, four of the key initiatives we have undertaken this year will be explained in detail below.

Supporting Job-Embedded Literacy Learning in Classrooms

Nine Learning Coaches were hired to support all 50 elementary schools. The learning coaches received two weeks of intense training alongside various members of the program team as the 2022/2023 school year began. At the beginning of the school year, each school was allocated between five and nine weeks of ‘coaching time’ (dependent upon school population and student need). In the area of literacy, the role of the coach is to work alongside educators as they implement direct and explicit literacy instruction based on student data. The learning coach supports educators by planning together, modelling lessons, providing feedback, and gathering data to inform instruction. This support has been instrumental as educators have shifted their learning toward more explicit, direct, and research-based literacy instruction.

Professional Learning for Administrators:

A prominent Canadian educational researcher, Ken Leithwood, determined that principals are second only to educators as the most important school factor affecting student achievement. Knowing that educators would receive job-embedded professional learning as they worked alongside the learning coaches, we developed a six-session learning series for all principals. During each session, administrators participate in a half-day of professional learning that includes research review, practical instructional strategies, sample lessons, and important resources to share with their educational team. By the end of the school year, LDSB will have invested over \$200,000 in literacy materials that include instructional resources and decodable books, in all 50 elementary schools.

Acadience Pilot – Universal Screening for K-2:

As noted above, one of the five areas of the OHRC Right to Read report focused on universal screening. The Ministry of Education has publicly shared that they expect all school boards to implement universal literacy screening for all Senior Kindergarten-Grade 2 students during the 2023/2024 school year. Over the past year, the LDSB literacy team undertook extensive research, and engaged in dialogue with Boards across Ontario in the area of universal screening. Commencing

February 2023, the literacy program team will lead a series of four professional learning sessions with eight elementary schools. The goal will be to support a team of five individuals from each school (Administrator, Student Support Teacher (SST), and three K-2 educators) to learn how to implement a universal screener called Acadience, and how to interpret the data in order to inform classroom instruction. This pilot will inform the systemwide implementation strategy that will be undertaken during the Fall of the 2023/2024 school year.

Expansion of Empower

This year, the Empower program has been expanded to 42 elementary schools and 7 secondary sites. The Empower program is a research based, intensive, explicit literacy program. At the elementary level, students receive instruction for 50-60 minutes per day, in a group of 6-8 students. The instructor receives four days of training throughout the school year. At the highschool level, a small group of students attend an Empower class as a credit-based literacy course, for one semester. Specific student data is gathered before the program commences and upon its completion. The goal of the program is to build student skills in the area of decoding and spelling (elementary) and decoding, spelling, fluency and comprehension (secondary).

Appendix: 2022/2023 Literacy Initiatives and their Relationship to the Recommendations in the OHRC Right to Read Report

As stated above, this chart represents the literacy initiatives that the Literacy Team has undertaken this school year, and how each initiative addresses one or more recommendations from the OHRC Right to Read report.

Tier 1:

What	OHRC Recommendation
Nine Instructional coaches are working in all elementary schools to deepen educator understanding in direct and explicit literacy instruction, grounded in the science of reading and using a culturally responsive approach.	27, 28, 29, 30 40
Program Team members are continuing to share the work and resources created by the Summer Writing team, and will support implementation through ongoing, system professional learning opportunities.	30, 40, 46
Administrators will be invited to engage in professional learning focused on leading literacy learning in elementary and secondary schools.	40, 41
The literacy team has vetted structured literacy resources and instructional materials. This information was shared with the system in September, 2022 and will continue to evolve.	33, 37

The Literacy Team will work alongside Educational Services staff and teams to share best practices in systematic and direct literacy instruction, and implementation of classroom-based accommodations.	46
Educator teams will be invited to continue to engage in accredited courses related to structured literacy.	58
A pilot project on potential literacy screeners will include job-embedded training and ongoing support to implement and build responsive literacy instruction.	66, 77, 84
Schools will receive a recommended resource purchase list to support early literacy instruction. Budget will be allocated to support the equitable purchase of Resources.	74

Tier 2:

What	OHRC Recommendation
Lexia program licenses will be equitably distributed to all schools to support small group instruction and intervention. Professional learning and collaboration opportunities will be offered.	76, 84
Educational Services will review processes and criteria for accessing professional assessments and share best practices for a multi-disciplinary team approach to student support and intervention.	111-130
Educational Services will support professional learning for SST/LPS staff focused on systematic literacy instruction/intervention, understanding student profiles, and implementation of classroom-based accommodations within a UDL framework.	27-30 86-110

Tier 3:

What	OHRC Recommendation
Empower, a tier 3 literacy program, is being expanded to almost every elementary school (increased from 17 during 21/22) and 6 secondary schools.	72, 73, 76, 84
District LD programs will continue to provide intensive intervention and support for students with a diagnosed Learning Disability in addition to targeted classroom-based support for educators.	73, 76

Across all 3 Tiers:

LDSB is developing a data tool to gather diagnostic assessment information that will inform instructional planning (# 139, 141)

The LDSB Special Education Plan will be reviewed during this school year (#137)

LDSB will continue to review and share information from School Climate and Student Census surveys

to inform planning and instruction (#146, #147)

*It is important to note that while there are 175 recommendations, many of these recommendations are specific to the work of Faculties of Education and the Ministry of Education.

Next Steps

The Limestone District School Board has committed to a five-year goal of ensuring that 95% of all students will become proficient readers by the end of Grade 2. In order to do this, we must ensure that all educators possess the knowledge to deliver targeted and explicit literacy instruction, and are supported in its execution.

While our goal has been to begin to implement the recommendations of the OHRC's Right to Read report, and to follow the Ministry of Education's Guide to Effective Early Reading Instruction, we will collectively work toward implementing the revised Grade 1-8 Language curriculum during the 2023/2024 school year.

As we work toward implementing the revised curriculum, our goal is to engage with caregivers and the community to continue to share best practices and to support learning at home and at school.

The Literacy team, alongside the Indigenous Education team, Equity team, Educational Services team, and the Human Rights and Equity Advisor will continue to collaborate to support instructional approaches and share materials that allow all students to see themselves in the curriculum, and to support a sense of belonging and pride.

Finally, we will continue to work alongside the Educational Services team to ensure explicit and effective literacy instruction at all tiers of support. Alignment in instructional delivery will continue to be critical for students and staff.

Recommendations

That this report be received for information purposes.

Prepared by: Stephanie Sartor, Associate Superintendent

Reviewed by: Krishna Burra, Director of Education

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT: SCHOOL YEAR CALENDAR PROCESS

EDUCATION, POLICY AND OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

February 8, 2023

Purpose

To review the 2023/2024 School Year Calendar process.

Background

Provincial Regulation 304 School Year Calendar, Professional Activity Days requires that the school year shall start on or after September 1 and end on or before June 30. Every school year shall include a minimum of 194 school days.

In Limestone District School Board, the 194 school days are made up of seven PA Days and 187 instructional days. Examination days for secondary schools fall under instructional days.

Regulation 304 requires the following school holidays:

- Every Saturday and Sunday
- Labour Day – September 4, 2023
- Thanksgiving Day – October 9, 2023
- Ten (10) consecutive days for Winter Break - December 25, 2023 – January 5, 2024
- Family Day – the third Monday of February – February 19, 2024
- Five (5) consecutive days for March Break – March 11, 2024 – March 15, 2024
- Good Friday and Easter Monday – March 29, 2024 – April 1, 2024
- Victoria Day – May 20, 2024

The Board shall submit an approved school year calendar to the Ministry of Education by March 1, 2023. A school year calendar that deviates from Regulation 304 must be approved by the Ministry of Education.

The three school boards in the Triboard Consortium (LDSB, HPEDSB, and ALCDSB) have traditionally agreed upon a common calendar to share transportation costs. The Consortium agreement and practice is that should a board decide not to conform to the common calendar that board must continue to pay for the transportation as arranged in the common calendar and is also required to assume 100% of the transportation costs for any additional days of transport. In Limestone District School Board, each day of independent transportation would cost more than \$65, 000.

Current Status & Next Steps

The Ministry template for the 2023-24 calendar has not yet been received. Once received school calendar leads from the three boards, after consulting with their Senior Teams, will meet several times to create options to share with their independent School Year Calendar Committees.

Associate Superintendent Gollogly will represent Limestone and facilitate internal discussions and consultation. This consultation group (LDSB School Year Calendar Committee) will have representation from Trustees, parents (Parent Involvement Committee), unions, federations, non-union employees, Human Resources, and school-based administrators. They will meet to provide input on potential options for the calendar within the parameters of Regulation 304. For those stakeholders unable to attend the meeting, they will be encouraged to submit their information directly to Associate Superintendent Gollogly. As a result of discussions, typically 2-3 options are settled upon for broader input from students, families, and staff through our annual School Year Calendar survey. This will allow trustees and staff to have a greater sense of stakeholder preferences for the calendar.

One potential option we are exploring for next year, similar to what local French school boards have done for several years, is to have an early start to the school year. For example, starting the 2023-24 school year on August 28, 2023. This would enable LDSB to have a new five-day break at the end of October and/or in early November. It should be noted that usually the local French school boards end a week earlier than Tri-Board boards in June, as opposed to having a break in the fall. We are exploring the fall break option because of the increase in absences that typically occur in November for Limestone students and staff. Mental health data also suggests that breaking up the period from Labour Day to the December/January break may be beneficial for student and staff well-being. Given this potential model would deviate from the provincial template and Regulation 304, Ministry approval would be required. There will be more information that will come forward as we engage all stakeholders on potential models, and more broadly gather survey information.

Recommendations

That this report be received for information purposes.

Prepared by: Patty Gollogly, Associate Superintendent

Reviewed by: Krishna Burra, Director of Education

Appendix A: Ministry of Education School Year Calendar 2023- 2024



Ministry of Education

School Year Calendar 2023 - 2024

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- Legend** ▶ **H** - Statutory Holiday **E** - Scheduled Examination Day **P** - Professional Activity Day **B** - Board Designated Holiday Half Day

Month	Number of Instructional Days	Number of Professional Activity Days	Number of Scheduled Examination Days	1st Week			2nd Week			3rd Week			4th Week			5th Week												
				M	T	W	T	F	M	T	W	T	F	M	T	W	T	F	M	T	W	T	F					
August 2023					1	2	3	4	7	8	9	10	11	14	15	16	17	18	21	22	23	24	25	28	29	30	31	
September 2023								1	4	5	6	7	8	11	12	13	14	15	18	19	20	21	22	25	26	27	28	29
October 2023				2	3	4	5	6	9	10	11	12	13	16	17	18	19	20	23	24	25	26	27	30	31			
November 2023						1	2	3	6	7	8	9	10	13	14	15	16	17	20	21	22	23	24	27	28	29	30	
December 2023								1	4	5	6	7	8	11	12	13	14	15	18	19	20	21	22	25	26	27	28	29
January 2024				1	2	3	4	5	8	9	10	11	12	15	16	17	18	19	22	23	24	25	26	29	30	31		
February 2024								1	2	5	6	7	8	11	12	13	14	15	18	19	20	21	22	25	26	27	28	29
March 2024								1	4	5	6	7	8	11	12	13	14	15	18	19	20	21	22	25	26	27	28	29
April 2024				1	2	3	4	5	8	9	10	11	12	15	16	17	18	19	22	23	24	25	26	29	30			
May 2024						1	2	3	6	7	8	9	10	13	14	15	16	17	20	21	22	23	24	27	28	29	30	31
June 2024				3	4	5	6	7	10	11	12	13	14	17	18	19	20	21	24	25	26	27	28					
July 2024				1	2	3	4	5	8	9	10	11	12	15	16	17	18	19	22	23	24	25	26	29	30	31		
TOTAL																												

Note: The 2023-2024 calendar provides for 195 possible school days between September 1, 2023 and June 30, 2024. The school year shall include a minimum of 194 school days of which three days must be designated as professional activity days with respect to specific provincial education priorities as outlined in the Policy/Program Memoranda 151 and up to four extra days may be designated by the board as professional activity days. The remaining school days shall be instructional days. The boards may designate up to ten instructional days as examination days.



ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT: SPECIAL EDUCATION REVIEW

EDUCATION, POLICY, AND OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING

February 8, 2023

Purpose

To provide Trustees with an update related to the Special Education Review that will be taking place during the Winter and Spring of 2023.

Background

In February 2016, the Limestone District School Board invited a variety of diverse stakeholders, including elementary and secondary students, parents/caregivers, community partners, staff, trustees, labour partners, and neighbouring school boards to provide input and feedback in order to develop a comprehensive vision and road map for special education over the next five years. This work was led by the Board's Educational Services Leadership Team.

The purpose of the review was to ensure:

- Our special education programs, services, supports, and resources were continuing to meet the changing needs of all Limestone students;
- We were making the best use of all of our resources; and
- We continue to serve students with special education needs within a creative, supportive, and inclusive environment.

Between February and May 2016, the Educational Services Leadership Team embarked upon a consultation process using a personalized approach of focus group interviews in an effort to collect a wide variety of qualitative data. The two questions that framed this consultation were as follows:

- Within the area of special education, what does our school/board do well?
- What innovative ideas would you suggest for special education within our school/system to enhance student well-being, learning and inclusion?

From this consultation, Four Big Ideas were identified as the categories that Educational Services initiatives/goals would be categorized within. The Big Ideas were as follows:

- Reallocation of Resources – to provide consistent and increased in-school support and to respond to the demographic/specialized needs within an inclusive environment
- Professional Learning – for ALL staff that focuses on programming for ALL students within an inclusive environment
- Strengthen partnerships – strengthen positive partnerships with our families and community partners
- Leverage supports – to maximize student learning, well-being and inclusion

The Big Ideas form the basis for an annual Special Education Plan, which allows Educational Services leadership to initiate actions, complete with regular monitoring reports, and a year-end report to the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC). This Special Education Plan, known as *Building Our Vision for the Future: Enhancing Special Education Services in our District* was extended beyond the 2021 school year and is still being used to report on Special Education goals and objectives on a yearly basis.

Current Status

Limestone District School Board's Educational Services Leadership Team is embarking on a Special Education Review between February 2023 and April 2023. The purpose of this review is to:

- Examine our current special education supports and services, and identify areas for refinement and enhancement to meet the needs of learners within an inclusive learning environment.
- To gather student, family, staff, and community partner voices to identify priorities and key areas which may impact the success of students with special education needs.

As the needs of our students change, it is necessary to review and sometimes revise resources, supports, and services that are provided to students. As with previous Special Education Reviews, a goal of this review is to examine resource allocation, strengthen partnerships, leverage supports, and identify professional learning opportunities for staff.

Limestone students, staff, families, community members, and community stakeholders will be consulted through an online survey platform, *ThoughtExchange*, in an effort to collect a wide variety of qualitative data on the question, "What key supports and services are important for students with special education needs to experience success at school and reach their full potential?"

The *ThoughtExchange* will be available for students with special education needs and their families



between February 27 and March 3, 2023, and then it will be available to Limestone staff, community members and partners starting April 24 to April 28, 2023. The information gathered through the *ThoughtExchange* will be reviewed and analyzed by the Educational Services Team, allowing key ideas and input to inform the future planning, priorities, services, and supports available in Limestone. Final results and findings will be shared publicly in the Fall of 2023.

Recommendations

That this report be received for information purposes.

Prepared by: Scot Gillam, Superintendent

Reviewed by: Krishna Burra, Director of Education