

York Catholic District School Board
MINUTES
STUDENT SUCCESS & PATHWAYS COMMITTEE
Monday Feb 24, 2025

Attending:

Trustee Committee Members: M. Iafrate, A. Saggese, (In Person)
F. Alexander, M. Barbieri (Virtual)

Other Trustees: E. Crowe

Absent with Notice: T. McNicol

Administration: A. Arcadi, J. De Faveri, A. Iafrate, J. Powers, J. Sarna

Recording: L. Coquim

Presiding: A.Saggese, Committee Chair

1. OPENING PRAYER: (The Land Acknowledgement was recited after the Prayer)

2. ROLL CALL: All Present

3. ELECTION OF OFFICERS FOR 2025-26:

Chair: A. Saggese

Vice Chair: M. Iafrate

PRESIDING: Angela Saggese, Committee Chair called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

4. REVIEW OF THE 2025 TERMS OF REFERENCE:

THAT the 2025 Terms of Reference for the Student Success & Pathways Committee be revised and presented at next Student Success & Pathways meeting on May 12, 2025

MOTION:

CARRIED:

5. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

THAT the Student Success & Pathways Committee Agenda be approved as presented.

MOTION: Iafrate/ Alexander

CARRIED:

6. APPROVAL OF THE PREVIOUS MINUTES

THAT the Minutes of the Student Success & Pathways Committee Minutes held on November 13, 2024 be approved as presented.

MOTION: Iafrate/ Alexander

CARRIED

7. BUSINESS ARISING FROM the MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING: NIL

8. PRESENTATION(S):

Curriculum Updates Presentations

a. Early Reading Screening (ERS) Website Update
Presented by Maxine Highet, Chris Reda & Marlene Perry, Curriculum & Assessment Consultants

Consultants Highet, Reda, and Perry presented on the Early Reading Screener (ERS) rollout, highlighting its role in literacy as a foundation for student achievement. They discussed the recent focus on the 2023 Grade 1-8 language document and the 2016 Kindergarten program, with an exciting new Kindergarten program launching in 2025.

This year, YCDSB screened 7,500 students in Kindergarten (Year 2), Grade 1, and Grade 2 using the Ministry-approved Acadience screener, offering both English and French options. Over 600 teachers received in-person training, and a dedicated website was created to support educators. The live virtual website launch party provided a guided tour and reassurance to teachers, emphasizing the website's ongoing updates.

The website offers resources, tutorials, and system memos, and will continue to be updated as new information is received. French immersion teachers are currently using a paper screener, with a digital version available in September.

The ERS project involved a large team, with key contributions from consultants and Chris, who managed data and roster updates. The main goal is to use data to guide instructional decisions and improve student outcomes. This data-driven approach, based on reliable, evidence-based practices, marks a shift from past reading instruction methods. Data helps identify individual needs and system-wide gaps, allowing for targeted interventions. Plans are in place to pilot the Acadience screener up to grade eight, expanding beyond the current grade two mandate.

Trustee Alexander asked for examples of data gathering, and Consultant Perry explained that teachers use a digital tool to assess students at different grade levels, with results indicating whether a student is below, at, or above the benchmark. This data helps inform instruction but doesn't affect report card grades. The data can be analyzed at various levels, from individual students to the board-wide level, supporting school improvement planning. Perry highlighted that YCDSB is a leader in implementing the Ministry mandate and that the system is already benefiting from the data, with future goals for progress monitoring.

Chair Saggese praised the team for their hard work and collaboration on the project, noting that they are providing reassurance to families by implementing data-driven strategies and preventative measures to support student success.

b. Religious Education Update
Presented by David Pimentel, Principal of Religious Education

The Religious Education Advisory Committee (REAC) is an advisory body to the Religious Education Team, focusing on project-based initiatives. It is overseen by the Principal of Religion and requires approval from the Superintendent of Curriculum and Assessment.

Key resources supporting these initiatives include the updated YCDSB Monthly Virtues Resource List of Catholic Definitions, which is distributed to elementary teachers to enhance the Religious and Family Life Education curriculum.

Upcoming initiatives include the launch of the Grade 9 Growing in Faith, Growing in Christ program in October 2025, the full implementation of the Grade 1 Blessed and Beloved program, and the development of new programs for Grades 2 and 3 by Fall 2025.

Other notable events on the horizon include the Ordinandi Youth Event, the Board-wide Lenten Mass, the When Faith Meets Pedagogy Conference, the Luke 4:18 Symposium, and ongoing support from Faith Ambassadors. Additionally, resources related to the Pilgrims of Hope Holy Jubilee Theme and the ShareLife Toolkit will be distributed across the system to further enrich the faith experience.

Trustee Crowe asked if the Director and Superintendent Arcadi could find funds in their budgets to cover the cost of t-shirts for students attending the Luke 4:18 Symposium, so they wouldn't have to pay or rely on their schools or counselors.

Principal Pimentel responded that he would collaborate with Superintendent Arcadi and Director De Faveri to ensure the t-shirts for Luke 4:18 are provided at no cost.

Chair Saggese asked how the faith ambassadors are chosen and if every school has one.

Principal Pimentel confirmed that each year, the Curriculum Department invites staff to volunteer for leadership roles, including faith ambassador. Principals encourage staff to step forward at the first meeting in August, and faith ambassadors meet throughout the year to share information and serve as liaisons for religious education and family life matters.

c. Indigenous Education Updates

Presented by Nicholas Galitianos, Principal of Student Success & Indigenous Education, Ashley Gatto, Consultant of Indigenous Education, Robert Cannone, Consultant K-8

Principal Galitianos introduced consultants, Ashley Gatto and Robert Cannone, highlighting their roles in indigenous education and curricular support.

Consultants Gatto & Cannone presented updates on various initiatives, such as the January professional learning session for grade four teachers, which focused on connecting indigenous expectations with subjects like language, math, and religious education. They also discussed the grade five literature circles initiative, where teachers were trained to use indigenous-authored texts, and the Frost and Fire Games event for grades six and seven, which celebrated indigenous culture. They also shared upcoming plans to expand indigenous curriculum resources and training, including virtual author presentations and trauma-informed teaching strategies, all aimed at creating more inclusive and culturally responsive learning environments aligned with Catholic values and graduate expectations.

Vice Chair lafrate expressed pride in the team's efforts, particularly in the Indigenous education and curriculum departments, highlighting their progressive and proactive approach, including with the early reading screener website. She thanked everyone for their commitment to this important work. She also emphasized how impressive the team's initiatives are, noting that many stakeholders may not be aware of all they do. She asked if the virtual author session would be interactive, specifically if students could submit questions. Consultant Gatto confirmed that students could submit questions in advance via a Google form, which would be asked during the session.

Chair Saggese asked how the Catholic school board could help teachers in subjects like biology or geography integrate Catholic values (Catholic graduate expectations) while also incorporating Indigenous perspectives in their teaching. Specifically, they wanted to know what support and resources would be provided to ensure teachers could effectively connect these two areas in their lessons.

Consultant Gatto responded that the key is providing teachers with resources to connect subjects to Catholic values, especially in areas like ecology and land-based learning. Teachers can focus on environmental stewardship, which aligns with both Indigenous knowledge and Catholic teachings. The Indigenous education department supports this through an online platform and by training Indigenous education representatives in each school to guide teachers. Schools are encouraged to allocate time for discussions on Indigenous education, with the goal of gradually helping teachers make these connections.

9. ACTION ITEMS: NIL

10. DISCUSSION / INFORMATION ITEMS: NIL

11. NOTICE OF MOTION: NIL

12. FUTURE AGENDA ITEM(S): NIL

13. NEXT MEETING DATE: Monday, May 12, 2025

14. ADJOURNMENT: 3:19PM

ON MOTION: lafrate/ Barbieri
CARRIED: