



CDSBEO Education and Community Partnership Programs

The Education and Community Partnership Programs (ECPPs) are programs to support students whose primary need is not education. It is through working in partnership with community agencies, parents, and specialized teams that the Board can help each learner meet with the success they are capable of. CDSBEO currently offers three ECPPs to support our most vulnerable students whose primary need is mental health support as they can struggle with social/emotional regulation. The goal is to facilitate the development of skills and strategies that will help students meet with success in their home school and regular classroom setting.

Heather Bovey, Special Education Coordinator and Julia Jesmer, Principal of Pope John Paul II Catholic School, presented information to the Board on ECPP and the innovative ways the CDSBEO multidisciplinary team works to support these students.

"The community partners in each region are involved with the students and families in each program. Our partners provide counselling for students both in and outside of school hours. They also support families and suggest strategies that are helpful to the school team. They attend Treatment Team meetings which occur every six weeks. These meetings include, the school team, families, board staff, and the home school," explained Bovey.

All ECPP students in the CDSBEO are supported with an understanding that each learner has a unique profile and various strengths and needs. Educators base their supports on the child's development and learning readiness.

"A lot of work is being done on trauma and many of our students who struggle may have several risk factors that affect their responses to others, and to their environment," noted Bovey. "Through Board resiliency surveys, schools have been able to plan for the students who are most at risk of academic failure, substance abuse, social alienation and mental health concerns."

The Board multi-disciplinary team has been instrumental in supporting staff to understand the impacts of trauma. They have supported school teams with strategies that focus on regulation, applied behavioural analysis (ABA), speech language supports and learning strategies.

Some strategies that are used to support students are based on the work of Dr. Ross Green, which focuses on student voice and helping kids to learn the skills they need to be successful in school and in life. ALSUP (assessment of lagging skills and unsolved problems) begins with educators assessing the list of lagging skills and identifying the unsolved struggles that relate to the day-to-day impact on the child's learning. If lagging skills are not addressed and supported, they translate into unsolved problems.



“Through discussion, students often surprise adults by identifying exactly why they are having difficulty and what might help to make it better. One example includes a situation where staff were trying to encourage a student to take a break from the classroom when they became dysregulated. The student refused to leave. After a short conversation, the student explained that he did not want his peers to hear him asking to leave. As a solution, the student placed an object on his desk and quietly left the room. Staff knew he had left, why, and where he was going without drawing any attention to him.”

Students who are referred to ECPP often have significant lags in self-regulation, which is the skill that allows them to manage emotions, behaviour, and body movement. Self-Regulation also allows students to stay focused.

“When a child is dysregulated, they typically experience emotions that are overly intense or disproportionate to the situation. Children who are dysregulated do not have the tools to know what to do to find emotional balance. Our ECPP provides them with a framework to learn this and increases their self-awareness,” noted Jesmer.

Some of the tools which are used and taught to facilitate a successful transition back to the regular classroom environment include: a shortened day, regular body breaks, consistent and predictable routines, targeted goals, clear expectations, visual schedules and timers, and recess activities to support prosocial peer interaction.

“On behalf of the Board of Trustees, thank you so much for joining us today to present details of this remarkable program,” concluded Chair Lalonde.

Family Literacy Week

Celebrating Family Literacy Day (January 27th) in CDSBEO schools, raises literacy awareness and highlights the important benefits of reading and literacy-based activities. This year, in conjunction with the Religious and Family Life Education Department, the Curriculum Department created interactive and diversified lessons and activities for Family Literacy Week, while also observing the International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust (also held on January 27). The initiative enables a culture of positivity and celebration of literacy, with focused efforts on increasing student reading time, resulting in increased reading competence and confidence, and an overall increase in student achievement.

Nancy McIntyre, Principal of Curriculum, and Melissa Bingley, Curriculum Consultant, presented information on the initiatives for Family Literacy Week to the Board of Trustees.

“Every year Life Literacy Canada creates a new theme and aligns the suggested activities to the theme. This year’s Family Literacy theme was “Travel the World Together.” Life Literacy Canada



suggested several activities for students, including researching a country of interest, postcard writing, exploring a map of the world, and learning to say “hello” in new languages,” explained Bingley.

Since the fall, the Curriculum Department has created and shared diverse social-emotional learning lessons which directly support the new Mathematics and Physical Education Curriculum. During Family Literacy Week, these lessons were designed to make literacy connections.

“For example, teachers led students in a read aloud with the book “Even Superheroes Have Bad Days” and students were invited to make text-to-text, text-to-self, and text-to-world connections,” noted Bingley.

The CDSBEO Religious and Family Life Education Department created daily morning prayers for schools with a focus on Family Literacy Week. Additionally, the Curriculum Department offered school-wide activity suggestions and lesson extensions which could be adapted to any book. From an individualized scavenger hunt, to creating a new game of memory, students enjoyed applying these versatile activities to their favourite books.

The Curriculum Department also hosted a Book Cover Contest, and students were encouraged to design and submit a book cover which included the author and title. Three winners were chosen, and each received a book of their choice.

Other initiatives included dress as your favourite book character days, virtual mystery readers, pajama days, and reading at home with their families.

“Thank you so much for joining us tonight. We are all aware of the great work you do across our system, and once again you have helped to share some great ways to engage our students in literacy activities,” concluded Chair Lalonde.