



Special Education for Administrators – Building Capacity

To build leadership capacity in meeting the needs of students with an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), new vice-principals and principals took part in the Catholic Principals' Council of Ontario's (CPCO) Special Education for Administrators Additional Qualification Course (SEA-AQ), this school year. To date, 35 CDSBEO administrators have completed the additional qualification. The course was taught by Superintendent of School Effectiveness, Heather Gerber. Principal of Special Education, Renée Rozon, and vice-principals, Céline Langevin and Lucie Matte-Hogue, shared details with Trustees on how this program provides essential, practical learning and best practices to support students with special education needs.

Participants engaged in creative learning using various tools with assignments that encouraged ingenuity around inclusive education, and how administrators can impact special education programs in a positive way, while addressing current needs in schools and across the system. The practicums looked at relevant legislation, literature, and policies and included data, considerations of benefits to schools, parents, and students. Additionally, participants had the opportunity to meet with behavioural professionals from the Special Education department to create a practicum proposal. Topics included creating measurable IEP goals, supporting ASD in the adult education setting, building shared social connections, and teaching conversational skills to students with an ASD.

Lucie Matte-Hogue noted that in her practicum, which focused on improving instructional programs for students with an ASD while also building capacity around attendance, self-regulation, and academic efforts, several strategies were implemented. These strategies resulted in increased productivity and learning, a more positive mindset, and a significant decrease in dysregulation in the classroom. Due to their success, they will remain in place indefinitely.

"It is evident these faith-filled leaders found the course very worthwhile, as it was an opportunity to collaborate, build relationships with colleagues, and build their capacity as leaders to best support the students in their care," concluded Principal Rozon.

STEO Inclement Weather Zonal Cancellation – Final Report

STEO GM/CAO Janet Murray presented information to CDSBEO Trustees last November, on the STEO Inclement Weather Cancellation Review. That presentation provided an overview of the current cancellation model and what factors would need to be considered in shifting to a model that cancelled transportation by zones. At the April 5 board meeting, Murray returned with STEO Operations Manager Marc Gosset, to present the outcome of the review.



Under the current model, transportation is cancelled on a system-wide basis. There are several reasons for this, but primarily because the weather patterns within Eastern Ontario generally are consistent and impact all or most zones within the region at some point during the school day. Because of the rural nature of the system, road maintenance services, timing challenges, cross-boundary driver and student travelling routes, and accurate and effective communications are all principles which are considered under the current regional system-wide model.

Moving to a zonal cancellation model would include many elements for consideration including weather patterns, student and driver safety, driver coverage, geographic zonal identification, special programming locations, and the complexities of school boundaries,

“One example would be the implications to student and driver safety, and the considerations of a driver shortage. Again, because of the rural nature of our board, about 80 per cent of our drivers park out, which means they don’t park at a depot, but they park the bus at their homes,” noted Murray. “Because of the rural nature of the region, we may be asking a driver to cross a non-operational zone to service an operational zone. This adds another layer of complication because now you may be operating in certain zones, but potentially not operating certain vehicles within those operational zones. I mention this to note that there are many complex considerations, and a zonal model impacts many different stakeholders.”

Gosset presented details of how routing may be affected under the proposed model, based on the establishment of four regional zones as identified by KSMI Weather Advisors, who were consulted during the review process. With complex routes travelling rural roads, Gosset noted that in order to minimize crossing of zones, school boundaries would potentially require changes.

Findings in the second phase of the review, which included consultation with bus operators, neighbouring transportation consortia, and municipalities, found that solving some challenges such as road maintenance variability by region and bus driver pool constraints would be extremely difficult. Feedback from other transportation consortia identified that vehicles travelling through or in a cancelled zone would also be cancelled, which creates additional risks of miscommunication to families. The geography of the region, therefore, must be suitable for zonal cancellation, with minimal impact of overall service delivery.

Based on this thorough assessment of zonal cancellation viability, STEO recommends the continuation of a system-wide cancellation model to support student and driver safety, driver engagement and continuity of service.