

JOINT HEALTH & SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING



St. Clair Catholic
District School Board



Date: June 17, 2022 – 9:00 A.M.
Via: Ursuline Room, CEC

**Dave Ostropec, Dina Carter, Dave Geroux, Thelma McNear,
Beau Cockburn, Silvia Leggiero, Daniel Portelance, Brian Breault,
Dan Solinas, Chad Coene, Wayne Bechard, James Duff, Lisa
Burden, Mat Roop, Steve DeGurse, Jen Morrow, Colleen Cogghe**

Chair: James Duff

Guests: Damon Srokosz
Jeremy Zimmer
Gabe Lacroix

Regrets: Paul Lernout
Tony Montanino
Tamara Johnson

Interpreters: Lori Doig
Christie Reaume

Recording Secretary: Libby Perry

1. Call to Order

The chair called the meeting to order at 9:03 am.

2. Opening Prayer

The committee opened the meeting with a prayer.

3. Welcome

The committee welcomed everyone in attendance.

4. Adoption of Agenda

Agenda approved as presented. Approved by S. Leggiero and seconded by G. Lacroix.

5. Confirmation of Minutes – April 8, 2022

Approved by B. Cockburn and D. Carter.

6. Review of WSIB Reportable Incidents for April & May

Action:

- C. Coene confirmed alignment between emails to JHSC members and reportable incidents listed. The dates on the notifications were questioned. In the notification emails the committee receives, the date listed is the date of the incident vs. the date the incident is reported to WSIB. The suggestion was made to add an additional date field to the notifications to indicate the date of the incident separately from the date the incident is submitted to WSIB. This will make the notices easier to match with the reports the committee receives for the meetings.

- L. Burden clarified that employees have the option of selecting several criteria when submitting an incident report (e.g. struck/contact by and aggression). For reporting purposes, struck/contact by is a sub-group and aggression is used as the main category.
- C. Coene remembers discussions of aggression vs. struck/contact by and believes there is still work to do. He referenced an incident that occurred on April 5, 2022 and doesn't see a difference between struck/contact by and aggression. L. Burden clarified that for this particular incident, even though the student was escalated when they threw their head back (which struck the EA), it wasn't an act of aggression, it was just how they were moving at the time.

7. Review of Employee Accident/Incident Reports for April & May

Action:

- There have been 109 incidents of aggression that involved 46 students at 14 schools.
- St. Angela Merici continues to have the highest number of incidents. 42 incidents from 15 students. St. Matthew was the second highest, having 18 incidents from 11 students. The remaining schools ranged from 1-9 incidents, St. Joseph - Tilbury had 9 incidents involving 3 students.
- This is a higher report than the committee has seen in the past. In looking at these students, a number of them have a diagnosis of autism, there are a significant number of students in JK/SK, and additional complicating factors (e.g. staff shortages).
- Out of this last round of discussions with union presidents, BMS trainers were met with to identify how this will be addressed for next year. They were provided this data to review themselves and troubleshoot, identify trends they're seeing etc.
- We will tighten up messaging to staff who are not BMS trained. Some EAs are not BMS trained and are intervening when there are EAs who are BMS trained present
- If non-BMS trained staff are present, there are strategies they can implement (e.g. remain calm, follow direction, do not engage with escalated student, limit eye contact, move away from student, support those not involved to move to safe location, notify Principal)
- EAs have been stepping in when they didn't have training and have been putting themselves at risk.
- W. Bechard expressed concerns with this problematic data. Staff at St. Angela Merici are tired, and the CST pilot is not working. Staff have a right to go to work and not be hurt. The current strategies we have in place are not working. Lots of staff at St. Angela Merici

have BMS training and are still getting hurt. The number of Health Care incidents is very high. Staff want to know what we are doing.

- J. Morrow clarified that part of doing something different would involve everyone following the plans. Several Principals indicate staff have not been following the plans. The plans are very in depth. They have been created by team members in consultation with staff at these schools. If a student needs time and space staff need to give them time and space. Our staff are overwhelmed and burnt out. People are not at their best. Interventions are happening that are not conducive to the safety plans and staff are putting themselves at risk.
- W. Bechard stated that the safety plans must be designed by staff in the classrooms too. Plans need to be authored by Teachers as well.
- J. Morrow agreed that Teachers need to have a voice in the creation of these plans, however there is caution with Teachers authoring. One Teacher did remove a student in the red into the hallway and implemented strategies that aggravated the situation. When a student is in the red, this is not the time to intervene or teach them a lesson because that is when staff are getting hurt.
- If staff at St. Angela Merici are asking what will be different next year, there will be more preventative pieces in place so students don't get to the red. 7-8 students at St. Angela Merici have been in separate rooms by themselves. It's hard to teach them skills or make them feel connected/that they belong, so they are walking on eggshells and becoming more aggressive as they feel that no one likes them.

8. Review of Incident Trend Reports for 2021-2022

Action:

- C. Coene in looking at the number of aggression incidents, it's clear there is a very high number, but what to do about it is the challenge this committee is faced with
- J. Duff confirmed that these numbers continue to drive strategy and focus when ensuring staff and students are safe. We are all in this together to navigate these matters. There is work to be done as we transition out of this pandemic. This is an item of top tier importance. We have great people doing hard work trying to figure out how to make this better for staff, students and everyone involved.
- C. Coene suggested for the October 2022 meeting, he would be interested in taking some of the 2021-22 data and looking at the age or grade of the students causing the

incidents. Maybe we will find out it is mostly JK/SK, grade 1 students. We could look at our numbers from 5 years ago and compare to this year to see how things have changed.

- J. Duff confirmed that for those on the committee, they can pull up the reporting from the previous meetings. Also, as the Board has transitioned to our online reporting tool, this review might not provide the data you are looking for.
- W. Bechard clarified that he knows this is not an easy task, to implore staff to try something new. When reviewing these reports as a committee staff are looking for something to change. What can/should the committee be doing?
- J. Morrow welcomed feedback from the committee, Teachers, EA's etc. There has been a heightened level of stress across all employee groups. "Those kids don't belong in our schools." J. Morrow hears this all the time. We are an inclusive system. If there are solutions from the committee, they are welcomed. This must be a collaborative effort. We need everyone on board to give the students the support and tools they need. We need to show these kids they do belong here. When they feel welcomed and supported, they will settle. What's happening at St. Angela Merici is a lot of this disconnection. We need to find a balance between these high needs students and the rest of the students at the school.
- J. Zimmer asked if it can be assumed that with this data, when we are looking at the unique identifiers, if it is the same identifier, is that going to be the same EA each time?
- J. Morrow confirmed that yes, some EA's bear the brunt, but Principals are encouraged not to have one EA with the same student each time.
- M. Roop questioned if we have support programs for the parents of these students so we can coordinate our strategies with the home environment.
- J. Morrow clarified that anytime we have a student with incidents one of the first things completed is a school-based team meeting where parents are called in, community partners are involved, Social Workers provide supports also. Unfortunately, we have no control on what parents follow through with. A good majority don't see it as an issue and implement things at home.
- C. Cogghe confirmed that a lot of time parents are on a journey, and it takes them time to come to terms with acknowledging this, or acknowledging a medical diagnosis. As Principals and school communities, we go on that journey with them. We share what is working at school, ask them what works at home and make use of school-based team meetings for community supports, the ABA team and collaborative teams within our Board to be involved.

- D. Ostropec commended J. Morrow for the work she is doing and the difficult position she is in. Teams work diligently with parents. Parent engagement has always been a struggle. Even getting consent can be a real struggle. As a Social Worker, I work with students on multiple levels of social/emotional learning, dealing with trauma, COVID has played an incredible role in the lives of these young kids. School staff deal with this as we are their safe place. Kids feel safe when they come to school and that is when we see these behaviours, because they know we care and support them. Parents don't want to deal with their kids during the day – they view it as a school problem. Collaboration with staff is of utmost importance; the Teacher must be included. There are a lot of pieces at play.
- D. Ostropec is in a unique position to comment as he has also been an EA with the Board. It will take time and consistency. When it comes to the plans being implemented, we need 100% buy-in from administration to custodial staff. Many times, when a plan has been presented, designed and approved by everyone backing from administration is lacking. Then, when the behaviour happens this is the consequence. There has been great change in the past 3 years but there is still work to be done.
- J. Morrow confirmed that caseloads are high. 3 consultants meet every Monday to go over referral forms. Last year we averaged 10-15 a week, this year it's 30-40 per week. This is a significant increase, alarming but not surprising due to needs that have come up in the system this year.
- B. Cockburn confirmed that getting parents engaged and involved has been an ongoing issue, regardless of what the student presents us with. This probably won't go away. Our job as a committee is to look at what we are doing in the schools for these students. Focus on Teachers and EAs involved and provide supports, show our appreciation for what they have been through.
- D. Solinas questioned if all EAs were BMS trained on a PD Day. J. Morrow confirmed this is not the case. Coverage is a complicating concern. Additional sessions were hosted at St. Angela Merici and St. Matthew, however a few EAs were unable to participate and had to return to their schools as their jobs were not filled.
- We need to ensure the primary Teachers are also BMS trained as most of these incidents involve students Grade 2 and under.

9. Review of Incomplete Workplace Inspection Notes – Cumulative

Action:

- L. Burden confirmed most of the incomplete notes are from April/May. In terms of when they were submitted, these are recently uncovered items
- B. Cockburn noticed 3 notes in relation to computer technology. For example, at Gregory Hogan in classroom #113, the issue identified involves the Chrome towers in the room and the cables not being tied up. Not sure why this is in the workplace inspection notes because the way the tower is set up, the plug is behind it. You would have to take the tower off the wall to tie the cable up. This is a computer technician issue, not a workplace inspection issue.
- L. Burden identified this may be because tripping hazard with the cord.
- D. Srokosz confirmed these issues have been referred to John Davis.
- B. Cockburn continued that a lot of this falls with the way the Teachers teach the students to put chrome books back in towers. They need to make sure students know where the wire goes when putting it back in tower.

10. Review of Workplace Inspection Reports for April & May

Action:

- No discussion occurred.

11. Business Arising

11.1 School Absences & Reporting COVID Cases – J. Duff

Action:

- J. Duff confirmed that as cases were starting to increase, a Toronto Board decided to start reporting
- Our Board's decision was to not report since the data would vary and appear much thinner than the reality. It would give appearance we're trying to communicate there is less COVID in our schools than is the case.

12. New Business

12.1 – JHSC Discretionary Access to Reporting Tool – J. Duff

Action:

- The goal behind granting discretionary access to JHSC members is so members do not have to wait until the JHSC meetings to receive this data. The issue lies in school boards having to redact private information.
- The Board has been working with eBase to identify a way we can provide this. We have been waiting on OCSTA and OECTA to share further information.
- C. Coene has reached to provincial OECTA and J. Duff has reached out to OCSTA for clarity and will report back to committee.

12.2 - JHSC Reportable Incident Notifications – J. Duff

Action:

- Our requirement is to ensure the JHSC is aware of any reportable incidents that occur while maintaining a level of confidentiality. Through an incident with a Principal, it was discovered that when the notification lists the location, it becomes obvious which staff member was involved in that incident.
- It was questioned if we need to modify the way we share reportable incident notifications for this classification. Whatever conclusion we reach, it cannot erode into simply “employee – elementary.”

12.3 – First Aid & BMS Training – J. Duff

Action:

- J. Duff confirmed the Board’s attempts to try and have ERT members trained while balancing unfilled vacancies.
- Our idea this year is to offer ERT members the opportunity to complete this training outside of the workday and they will be compensated. We hope to extend this opportunity through the summer months for staff. It will be clear that this is a voluntary opportunity. The committee was asked for feedback.

- C. Coene confirmed he has no issue with this.
- D. Geroux asked if training will be set up during the next school year so staff can complete on work time. Yes, this will be the case.

12.4 – Workplace Violence Prevention & Freedom from Harassment & Discrimination Policy and Procedure Review

Action:

- No changes were made to the Freedom from Harassment & Discrimination policy/procedure.
- The Workplace Violence Prevention procedure, items 7.6, 7.7 and 7.8 were modified. Everything else remains the same. This will be open for review and renewal next year.

12.5 – Summer Workplace Inspections – L. Burden

Action:

- As we approach summer, we need to determine the process by which summer inspections will be completed. As per past practice, our 12-month employees who are site-based safety reps will continue summer inspections. For schools that have 10-month safety reps, we ask for volunteers if they wish to complete July and August inspections (they will be compensated). If not, we work with Facility Services to ensure someone from maintenance/custodial team that has training in conducting workplace inspections will complete the inspections.

12.6 – Summer JHSC Meeting – J. Duff

Action:

- The last 2 years we have held an August JHSC meeting. Right now, we do not intend to hold a meeting. If something changes that deems this group needs to get together we will send correspondence throughout the summer in an effort to bring us together.

12.7 – Selection of JHSC Co-Chair (Management) – J. Duff

Action:

- Early in the new school year, the Terms of Reference confirms that each side nominates/selects which co-chair they will have. Management reps will identify a process to help determine who will be co-chair.

Green books were available for JHSC members to take on their way out of the meeting.

J. Duff adjourned the meeting at 10:32am.

John Van Heck
Chair of the Board

Scott Johnson

Director of Education & Secretary