

Good evening Trustees and Staff. My name is Jennifer Di Francesco and tonight I come before you not as a CSPC Chair or CPIC Ward 1 Rep, but as a parent. You just saw a video from the Ontario Human Rights Commission regarding the Right to Read Inquiry that was launched in 2019.

I am now going to read the press release on Monday, February 28th, 2022 from the Commission directly.

The Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC) released its [Right to Read inquiry report](#) on human rights issues affecting students with reading disabilities, calling for critical changes to Ontario's approach to early reading, in areas such as curriculum and instruction, screening, reading interventions, accommodations and professional assessments.

The inquiry found that by not using evidence-based approaches to teach students to read, Ontario's public education system is failing students with reading disabilities such as dyslexia, and other students.

"Students are not just being denied an equal right to read – their future, and the generations that follow, could be impacted," said OHRC Chief Commissioner Patricia DeGuire. "Learning to read is critical in building a life-long sense of personal empowerment. It fundamentally shapes how we learn, work and socialize; builds self-confidence; improves employment opportunities; and enhances physical, emotional, and mental well-being."

*Right to Read* includes recommendations to the Ministry of Education, school boards and faculties of education on how to address systemic issues that affect the right to learn to read, including:

- Adopting a new Kindergarten Program and Grades 1 to 8 Language curriculum that features direct and systematic instruction in foundational reading skills, and preparing current and future teachers on evidence-based approaches to teaching students to read
- Screening every student, at least twice a year from Kindergarten to Grade 2, to identify students at risk for reading difficulties, using standardized, evidence-based screening tools
- Standardizing and providing stable funding for evidence-based reading interventions
- Making access to interventions equitable for all students
- Providing and supporting timely and effective accommodation, including greater access to evidence-based software and assistive technology
- Improving access to professional assessments and ensuring greater consistency and transparency in the assessment process

- Setting clear and consistent standards for school boards and mandating better data collection, analysis and reporting
- Improving communication with students and parents
- Working with experts in the science of reading to implement the OHRC's recommendations.

The OHRC calls on all partners in Ontario's education system to meet their responsibilities and legal duties under the Ontario *Human Rights Code* to remove barriers that limit students' opportunities to learn and succeed. This work will require many partners to collaboratively implement system-wide changes. It will also require sufficient, stable and ongoing funding.

In conclusion, I am asking this Board, Trustees, Staff and SEAC to take these findings seriously and work to change the system we have in place. I am asking for Staff to put together a report of what can be changed and instituted immediately at Board level from the Commission's report and that the Trustees will work together to pass the motions required to enact these changes. What we have is NOT working and if we are serious about inclusion and equity, we need to be the ones to start and not wait on someone else to make the decisions we can make today. We can not play political ping pong with our kids' education any longer.

Thank you