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**REGIONAL CATHOLIC PARENT INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**Wednesday, February 23, 2022 – 7:00 p.m.**  
**Virtual Microsoft Teams Meeting**

**Present:** Carol Luciani (Trustee), Robert De Rubeis (Superintendent of Education), Lorrie Temple (Superintendent of Education), Kevin Greco (Superintendent of Education), Marcia DeDominicis (Principal Lead), Keri Chartrand (Principal, St. Theresa), Sandra DeDominicis, Kim Doyle, Susan Fitzgerald, Jennifer McLaren Gibbons (Principal, St. Gabriel), Heather Graham (Principal, St. Joseph's), Rebecca Johnson, Courtney Kay, Peter Marchand (Principal, Our Lady of Providence), Stephanie Marr, Carmine McDermid, Andrea Perras, Heidi Pasztor (Principal, Our Lady of Fatima), Joseph Persia, Tammy Pogorzelski, Stéphane Rouleau (OAPCE Director), Jennifer Rudyk, Nancy Smykaluk, Kimberley Spencer (Principal, St. Mary's), Melodie Spencer (Co-Chair), April Taylor, Marie Teskey (Co-Chair), Jeff VanLeuvenhage, Dianne Wdowczyk, Gregory Wilson, Christine Yoeman, Catherine Yurcich

**Guest:** Dr. Jean Clinton, Clinical Professor, McMaster University

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**1. Opening Prayer / Land Acknowledgement**

Marcia DeDominicis, RCPIC Principal Lead and Principal of Christ the King in Brantford, led the group in the opening prayer and provided the land acknowledgement by recognizing the Indigenous land on which we gather.

**2. Welcome and Opening Comments**

Superintendent De Rubeis welcomed Trustee Carol Luciani, all participants, and guests to the meeting. He briefly introduced the special guest presenter Dr. Jean Clinton and her presentation on self-regulation best practices for parents.

**3. Approval of Agenda – February 23, 2022**

Moved by: Marcia DeDominicis

Seconded by: Kerri Chartrand

THAT the RCPIC approves the agenda of the February 23, 2022, meeting.

**Carried**



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**4. Declaration of Interest - Nil**

**5. Approval of the Minutes – November 24, 2021**

Moved by: Marie Teskey

Seconded by: Rebecca Johnson

THAT the RCPIC approves the minutes of the November 24, 2021, meeting.

**6. Update from the Co-Chairs**

RCPIC Co-Chairs Marie Teskey & Melodie Spencer welcomed the attendees to the meeting. They acknowledged that they would uphold the Board's spiritual theme of 'Rebuild, Restore, Renew Together' throughout this academic year. Both Co-Chairs share the same heart and hope for mind, body, and spiritual growth to support students through RCPIC. They were grateful and encouraged to have Dr. Jean Clinton speak at the meeting. They thanked the organizers for their time for facilitating the meeting.

**7. OAPCE Update**

No report.

**8. Child Mental Health – Self-Regulation Best Practices**

8.1 Dr. Jean Clinton BMus, MD, FRCP(C) – Clinical Professor McMaster University, Department of Psychiatry and Behavioural Neurosciences

Dr. Jean Clinton thanked the Board for the invitation to speak at the meeting. She gave a brief introduction related to her personal background in education, as well as her presentation for the evening about self-regulation and the brain.

Dr. Clinton began her presentation with her understanding of the passing of knowledge by Indigenous Elders. The passing of knowledge includes the interests of the next 7 generations when decisions are being made when related to raising our children. She also recalled work being conducted by her colleagues within her department at McMaster University to study parents who reported moderate to high levels of concern about the impact of COVID-19 on their children. Concerns related to managing children's stress, managing screen time, learning, managing time, and uncertainty of pandemic regulations are being considered. Concern for one's own healthy mind as a parent is important to create a healthy mind for a child. The uncertainty of COVID-19 makes one's brain yield control to the limbic system, instead of engaging with the rational "brain" to keep oneself on track.



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She noted the four challenges to a healthy mind and our ability to self-regulation of the mind during uncertain times. The four challenges include distractibility which can be accounted in 47% of adults, loneliness when self isolating, instead of physically distancing with loved ones, negative self-talk and depression, and loss of meaning and purpose in life. She then noted the four pillars of a healthy mind, specifically awareness, connection, insight, and purpose which can be practiced by both parents and children according to Dr. Richard Davidson. COVID-19 has provided opportunities for families to practice the four pillars of a healthy mind despite the pandemic and its restrictions.

The brain is a social organ, wired to connect. The modern human brain's primary environment is our matrix of social relationship. The foundation of self-regulation is that our brains can be changed by our experiences, whether positive or negative, called neuroplasticity. When discussing self-regulation and asking where behaviour comes from in children, consider that actions are behaviours not just misbehaviours when parents intervene to support children. The environment helps learning and our neurons grow as the more one learns, the more connections neurons make; this is not just genetic. The brain is hierarchical from bottom to top and from simple to complex, specifically the neocortex, limbic, diencephalon, and down to the brain stem. Self regulation and repeated experiences begin in the brain stem which must be regulated, then one can relate, and then reason and where reflection can occur in this order. Mind set matters as what we think, affects how we feel, determines how we act which can lead to punishments and rewards of behaviour. Thinking of one's child as struggling to handle something difficult, encourages the parent to help them through their distress through self-regulation.

What is self-regulation (according to Dr. Stuart Shanker)? How effectively and efficiently a person deals with stress and then recovers. The brain responds to stress with processes that consume energy. Followed by restorative processes to recover from energy expenditure.

All behaviour has a reason, specifically children will do well if they can. Parents can try and see the world from the child's perspective. Today, children may know nothing about COVID-19 but have been living in varied circumstances for the last few months. If parents believe that stress is the underlying issue for most behaviour, they will seek to find the source of the stress. Consider the domains of self-regulation and ask where the stressor is occurring, specifically biological, prosocial, social, cognitive, or emotional. Each domain has its own stressors and interacts with the other domains. Parent's can ask where is behaviour coming from, and why now to act as "stress detectives" and reframe the behaviour? The five steps of self-regulation to recognize stressors, reframe the behaviour, respond, reduce stressors, and reflect to enhance stress awareness. There are red brain teaching moments and how to look at these with soft eyes, instead of yelling, threats we don't mean, humiliation, losing our temper, bribing, or feeling guilt for how we respond. There are ways to recognize the stressors, specifically by hitting the "pause button" and asking "why", the 5 domains where stress and dysregulation can occur, and common stressors. A shift from a judgemental mind set to that of curiosity, to reframe questions



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about if a child who “won’t” do what you want instead of understanding the child maybe “can’t” do what you want just yet. What is our connecting, to directing to correcting ratio?

Dr. Clinton remarked on the three levels of stress: positive (brief increases in heart rate, mild elevations in stress hormone levels, tolerable (serious, temporary stress responses, buffered by supportive relationships), and toxic (a prolonged activation of stress response systems). Self-regulation is not the elimination of all stresses, but rather responses to stress either as a fight or flight response. There are three great states of mind to help students thrive: safe (emotionally, physically, etc., to create safe spaces and communicate), significant (having value/worth, being valued, belonging, and connection) and situated (helping to figure out one’s direction, purpose, goals, and decision making).

Self-regulation begins with parents first to find their own calm, joy, and to take some “you time” before supporting children with their self-regulation. Children that have the support of adults in their live and that they feel safe, significant, and situated can create a sense of resilience, have self-regulatory and self-efficacy capacities, and promote hope and faith.

Dr. Clinton asked participants to stop and think of three occasions when they were grateful (an attitude of gratitude can diminish stress, build neuropathways in the brain, and help to connect to others).

A question-and-answer period took place with Dr. Jean Clinton. She noted that school districts in Canada and the United States are moving away from looking at school as strictly an academic environment and moving towards self-regulation and social development for students that would help to increase academic performance. The Board has worked closely with Dr. Stuart Shanker and Dr. Susan Hopkins, provided over 300+ staff self-regulation training, and have developed a three-year plan for self-regulation in all areas of academics, policy, and communication with staff, parents, and students.

## **9. Closing Remarks/Adjournment**

Marcia DeDominicis thanked Dr. Jean Clinton for her work, messaging, passion, and taking the time to speak with the Board this evening. They also thanked members and guests for their continued support and for taking the time to attend the meeting. The next RCPIC meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 27<sup>th</sup> at 7:00p.m.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.