

Regional Meeting in Portage La Prairie SD

March 10, 2023

HOSTS: Alexandra Smith, Maxine Mutcher, Carly Brooks

Special thanks to these school psychs who made the day relevant and informative!

Meeting Minutes

1. Ron Teffaine reviewed the results of the online survey conducted in February 2023 to determine member preferences for PD related topics. Sixty-seven percent of the members responded to the survey, with representation from 87% of the school divisions in the combined Southeast/Interlake and Central regions. The number one preferred topic across 3 survey domains was *Mathematics Learning Disabilities*. Other preferred topics included subjects such as reading and writing disabilities, autism spectrum disorders, selective mutism, self-injurious behaviors (e.g., cutting), ADHD, threat/risk assessment, trauma-informed school interventions, as well as self-regulation skills. The results were emailed to all group members, and they are posted on the school psych website (click on the Feedback button).
2. There was some informal discussion about assessing and diagnosing SLD in different school divisions. Some are using the *Processing Strengths & Weaknesses* (PSW) model proposed by Dawn Flanagan et. al with her X-BASS cross-battery tools, and others are using testing with interviews and concomitant background information while following the DSM-5-TR criteria. It was suggested that it may be beneficial to have MASP recommend the best procedure(s) for diagnosing SLD in Manitoba to provide some degree of uniformity and fairness in how students are diagnosed. Some school psychologists are also diagnosing older students who have not been previously identified so that they can get appropriate supports in post-secondary education. There was mention that the PAST kindergarten screener for phonological awareness has been translated into French, and that Nancy Wise (French Immersion Consultant) has worked on a French reading intervention.
3. There was no time for discussion of Threat/Risk Assessment models currently being used. Ron Teffaine commented that he believes *Sociometry* (measurement of social status) could have a useful role in Threat/Risk Assessment. It can provide information about students who are marginalized in their social status (i.e., rejected/neglected). Perpetrators sometimes get other students to help carry out mass violence. Potential perpetrators and their alliances could be detected early on so that appropriate supports could be initiated to prevent violence from occurring. However, there is currently a lack of supportive research.
4. Mike Hogan reported on executive function assessments. He recommends the NEPSY-II, CPT-3 (visual and auditory), CAS-2, TVCF, and Wisconsin Card Sorting Test. He also reported that low scores on the BRIEF do not predict poor functional outcomes related to the measures on the scale. Some additional things to consider about rating scales for EF:
 1. *Behavior ratings of EF do not correlate highly with performance-based measures of EF (Conway et. al., 2005).*
 2. *Several studies have found no support for the premise that the BRIEF informs about the child's ability to apply EF in a real-world context. There was consideration that parental and self-reports of deficits on the BRIEF or any EF questionnaire may be more indicative of a child's behavioral and attention problems than of executive functioning (McAuley, Chen, Goos, Schachar, & Crosbie, 2010. Is the BRIEF more strongly associated*

with measures of impairment or EF? Journal of the International Neuropsychological Society, 16, 495-505).

3. Of concern is the practice of any clinician who relies solely on a questionnaire as the sole indicator of EF, as if parental or teacher report is a satisfactory replacement for performance-based testing (Neuropsychological Evaluation of the Child: Domain, Methods, & Case Studies: Second Edition. Ida Sue Baron (2018).

4. The authors of the BRIEF/BRIEF-2 also emphasize the importance of using this instrument in context with other measures because it is not a diagnostic instrument, in addition to evaluating domain-specific aspects of behavior to fully understand the significance of the obtained findings about self-regulated problem solving and social functioning.

5. The discrepancy between performance-based and behavioral data raises questions about whether each type of measure can be considered equally valid for understanding EF and whether the same or different aspect of functioning are being measured by each method (Neuropsychological Evaluation of the Child: Domain, Methods, & Case Studies: Second Edition. Ida Sue Baron (2018).

5. Lisa Shackleton from Manitoba Education gave some updates. In particular, she went over the guidelines for modification and individualized programming in Manitoba schools. She pointed out that a 1 on a report card is better than getting a modified curriculum whenever possible. This is because modifications limit future opportunities for student more than receiving a 1 on the report card. Show also talked about the different kinds of student specific plans are available to support students in school (e.g., AEP, CMP, IEP, BIP, etc.). It was mentioned that every student during the early years can achieve some success with the ELA curriculum, but it gets more difficult as the student gets older. It was mentioned that Sue Weldon (Student Services Coordinator) may be able to consult regarding adaptations for math learning disability. When there's a considerable gap in math achievement for high school students, one can consider Trans Math in grade 9 and SSL courses.
6. Lunch was enjoyed by all at the OM Indian Cuisine restaurant in Portage la Prairie.
7. Patti Lawrence gave a wonderful presentation about the Portage la Prairie SD Early Numeracy Screening Tool and talked about how to teach and support students with learning disabilities and other challenges in mathematics. Early screening in grades 1 and 2 is important to reduce the number of students who might otherwise struggle in mathematics. It can be used during "Strong Beginnings" in September. She went over all of the screening components to talk about their importance to math success (e.g., one-to-one correspondence, counting sequence, cardinality, conservation of number, stable order counting, visual magnitude comparison, symbolic magnitude comparison, subitizing, matching numerals to amounts, ordering numbers, decomposing quantities, sorting, and quantifying skip counting). She also mentioned the importance of using the Boehm-3 concept screener, and getting students to explain how they get their answers when using error analysis. She also said that grade 2 students should be using a *Bottom-Up Hundreds Chart*. When teaching fractions, don't use circles – use linear models. In addition, use an analog clock to teach fractions, skip-counting, and time. Also, encourage kids to touch objects as they count them.
8. The next school psychology meeting will be hosted by Sunrise SD on September 21, 2023.