



Ontario Catholic School  
Trustees' Association

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December 19, 2019

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** OCSTA Board of Directors,  
Chairs and Directors of Education  
- All Catholic District School Boards

**FROM:** Stephen Andrews, Director of Legislative and Political Affairs

**SUBJECT:** **Ontario Human Rights Commission Inquiry Regarding Students with Reading Disabilities**

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### Introduction

In late September 2019, the OHRC launched a public inquiry into human rights issues affecting students with learning disabilities. As part of this inquiry, the OHRC has contacted eight school boards in Ontario including two Catholic boards (London CDSB and Simcoe-Muskoka CDSB). The concern is that students with reading disabilities are not receiving the supports they need in order to learn to read. The inquiry is entitled “Right to Read” and will measure boards’ educational practices against the following criteria:

- Universal design for learning
- Mandatory early screening
- Reading intervention programs
- Effective accommodations
- Psycho-educational assessments (if required)

The OHRC will also inquire into whether a board uses scientific evidence-based strategies to meet students’ reading learning needs. It will also review the definitions of learning disabilities and determine whether these terms are used properly in assessing a student’s learning challenges. The inquiry will also consider factors such as whether students are racialized, living in poverty or are recent immigrants to Ontario. The inquiry will ask boards to provide documents, data and information under the criteria listed above by December 18, 2019.

### Inquiry Process

The inquiry will obtain information from the eight school boards, conduct research and analysis of the data, work with experts (including the Ministry of Education, Faculties of Education, the Ontario College of Teachers) and consult with stakeholders.

## **Public Consultation Strategy**

As part of the inquiry process, the OHRC will consult with various stakeholders including parents, students, disability organizations and educators across Ontario. It will report publicly on its findings and will make recommendations to the government. Prior to making its reports public, school boards will have the opportunity to respond to the inquiry's recommendations.

## **Next Steps**

The OHRC has announced dates and locations for public meetings for stakeholders in 2020. Each meeting will run from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.

- Brampton - January 14, Chris Gibson Recreational Centre, 125 McLaughlin Rd. North
- London - January 29, Amethyst Demonstration School, 1515 Cheapside St.
- Thunder Bay - February 25, Public Library-Waverly Community Hub, 285 Red River Rd.
- Ottawa - March 10, Nepean Sportsplex, 1701 Woodroffe Ave.

In addition, the OHRC issued a survey for students with reading disabilities. To date, the OHRC has received a number of submissions from parents, students and disabilities organizations.

OCSTA will continue to monitor the inquiry and provide updates as required. If you have any questions or concerns or for further information please contact me at [sandrews@ocsta.on.ca](mailto:sandrews@ocsta.on.ca)

For details on the process, see [http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/news\\_centre/ohrc-launches-right-read-public-inquiry](http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/news_centre/ohrc-launches-right-read-public-inquiry)