



SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SEAC)

Thursday, November 17, 2016
6:00 p.m.
Grimsby Lincoln Room – Education Centre

MINUTES

Committee Members Present:

Linda Morrice (Chair)	Pathstone Mental Health
Shannon MacDonald (Vice-Chair)	CNIB
Helga Campbell	Trustee, District School Board of Niagara
Samantha Sendzik	Learning Disabilities Association Niagara Region
Amy Dunn	Autism Ontario, Niagara Chapter
Nick Smith	Niagara Support Services
Brent Beaudoin	VOICE for Hearing Impaired Children

Administration/Resource:

John Dickson	Superintendent of Special Education
Kristen Kosh	OPC Representative: Elementary
Catherine Matheson	OPC Representative: Secondary
Kelly Irvine-Minor	Special Education Consultant
Paula MacKinnon	Superintendent of Secondary Schools

Guests:

Christine Bittner	Resource Teacher (BLV)
Sue Dempsey	Resource Teacher (DHH)
Katherine Latcham	Resource Teacher (DHH)
Leslie Allen	Community Member

Regrets:

Jen Ajandi	Trustee, District School Board of Niagara
Dale Robinson	Trustee, District School Board of Niagara
Nikki Train	Student Achievement Leader: Special Education
Danielle Reynolds	Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder - Ontario Network of Expertise

Recording Secretary:

Erin DeRosario

QUORUM/CALL TO ORDER

Quorum was established and the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) meeting was called to order at 6:01 p.m.

WELCOME – STUDENT VOICE

Resource Teacher Christine Bittner introduced a grade 8 student from Richmond Street Public School. The student was born blind, and has been affected by hearing loss. The student noted the many supports that have helped to make him successful at school: having EA support, an Orientation Instructor from the CNIB who taught him how to utilize his cane, a Vision Teacher who helped him how to read and write braille, computer programs, including a program called JAWS (Job Access with Speech), and other special equipment in the classroom. When his equipment is not working properly, support comes in to fix it for him. The student hopes to attend high school next year at W. Ross MacDonald school for blind and deafblind students. When he grows up, he may want to become a Pianist.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chair Linda Morrice requested a motion to approve the Agenda of the November 17, 2016 SEAC meeting.

Moved by Nick Smith, Seconded by Amy Dunn

“That the Agenda dated November 17, 2016, be approved as presented.”

CARRIED

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Chair Morrice requested a motion to approve the Minutes of the October 13, 2016 SEAC meeting.

Moved by Shannon MacDonald, Seconded by Samantha Sendzik

“That the Minutes dated October 13, 2016 be approved as presented.”

CARRIED

BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

There was no new business arising from the Minutes.

DEAF/HARD OF HEARING/BLIND/LOW VISION

SSS Staff

Superintendent John Dickson introduced Resource Teachers Christine Bittner, Sue Dempsey and Katherine Latcham. Together, they presented a power point (attached), providing the Committee with information regarding resource supports for students within the DSBN that are blind/have low vision and are deaf/hard of hearing.

It was clarified for the Committee that “SEA” stands for Special Equipment Amount.

“MAKE THE MOVE TO HIGH SCHOOL”

Catherine Matheson

Superintendent Dickson introduced Secondary OPC Representative Catherine Matheson to present the “Make the Move to High School” power point (attached). She noted that transition for everyone can be challenging, and those at the DSBN aim to make it as seamless as possible for the students. VOICE representative Brent Beaudoin asked what supports are made available to the teachers at the DSBN to assist in student success, and Superintendent Dickson noted that specialty teachers support classroom teachers with co-planning lessons, Professional Development sessions are offered throughout the year, as well as Professional Development Days that take place, to name a few.

SPECIAL EDUCATION REPORT

Nikki Train

Superintendent Dickson informed the Committee that Elementary Principal Nikki Train will be temporarily taking over for Therese Grenier, Student Achievement Leader: Special Education, in her absence.

ASSOCIATION AND BOARD INFORMATION**CNIB**

Shannon MacDonald

No report.

Niagara Support Services**Nick Smith**

A meeting is being held with the Niagara Regional Police on December 12th to discuss the possibility of expanding the Autism Registry to include some other at-risk groups. Monthly Family Activities will not be continuing in the new year, and they will be replaced by a quarterly information event for parents. A variety of community resources will be accessed to present helpful information to parents. The Niagara Regional Police will be the first group to present.

Autism Ontario, Niagara Chapter**Amy Dunn**

The annual Fundraiser Gala is being held on Saturday, November 26th. Tickets are \$65 each. Proceeds from the Gala help subsidize summer camp programs. A four-week course called "Money Matters" has recently been launched. It is for young adults and teens with Autism Spectrum Disorder, and it is geared towards budgeting, keeping money safe and comparison shopping, amongst other money-management topics.

Trustee Report**Helga Campbell**

The Ontario Public School Board Association had a meeting at Walker Living Campus on Wednesday night, and the facility was introduced to the Trustees from the region. The PIC Conference was held on November 2nd at Eden High School; with the parents who registered, students and vendors there were approximately 800 people in attendance. Synthetic fields are going to be installed at various schools throughout the DSNB; the first one will be installed at Greater Fort Erie SS. The field will be showcased, then installations will take place at four additional schools. The new Greater Fort Erie Secondary School is the first new secondary school build in 40 years, and this has been made possible through amalgamation. The Ministry has sent out the engagement paper about well-being. School Climate Surveys are being completed, and are a good indicator of how things are going with staff and students at the DSNB, in addition to EQAO and OSSLT results. Despite the computer issues with the OSSLT, 65% of students did complete the test, and the Ministry has announced that completed tests will be marked. The "I Matter" Strategic Plan has been embraced throughout the DSNB by Principals, Vice-Principals, teachers and students.

Learning Disabilities Association of Niagara**Samantha Sendzik**

The fall programs have been running well, and will soon be ending. Winter program dates have been set, with applications opening on December 1st. The Leadership Niagara team has been working on different projects, and one focus will be on increasing awareness of LDANR to families and schools throughout Niagara.

OPC Representative: Elementary**Kristen Kosh**

Progress reports were sent home last week. They are designed to let parents know how students are progressing, and they give them an indication of how the students will do by the end of the school year. Parent/Teacher interviews are taking place this week. Regarding the Grade 8 to 9 transition, the grade 8s have been attending Grade 8 Days throughout the DSNB, and staff are having conversations with parents about various pathways for students.

OPC Representative: Secondary**Catherine Matheson**

Term one reports will be sent out next week. Tomorrow is a Professional Development Day, and it is self-directed, so teachers will be able to choose from different PD sessions. Instructional Coaches play a large role in the planning and execution of PD Days. Secondary Open Houses are being held during the week of November 28th.

Superintendent of Secondary Schools**Paula MacKinnon**

The Student Trustee Senate Committee is comprised of two representatives from every secondary school, and it meets once per month. The Committee is led by two Student Trustees. Last year, they organized a walk to support Mental Health Awareness, and this year they are planning a walk/run that is centered around the "I Matter" theme. There are also Student Voice Forums, with the last one being held in early November. Approximately 300 students were involved, and it was facilitated by students that were trained by members of

the DSBN. Students were asked how they are feeling with their secondary school experience, how they thrive and do best. Superintendent MacKinnon noted that she would be pleased to bring some of that information forward.

Special Education Consultant

Kelly Irvine-Minor

At the upcoming PD Day for the secondary group, several central staff members, including Speech Language Pathologists, Psychoeducational Consultants and Special Education Consultants will be presenting. For the elementary group, over 300 Educational Assistants will have professional development options to choose from.

Superintendent of Special Education

John Dickson

This year the Ministry of Education has mandated school boards to place a great deal of focus on Mathematics within the curriculum. The PD Day tomorrow will be largely focused on Mathematics, and there will be PD sessions for all Kindergarten teachers.

VOICE for Hearing Impaired Children

Brent Beaudoin

A Christmas social is planned for December 10th at an indoor playground in Oakville. The Hamilton/Halton/Niagara/Peel Chapter is planning a workshop in January, and they are looking into having a panel of VOICE members from various SEACS discuss their experiences. The VOICE website has valuable information and resources for parents, teachers and professionals.

Pathstone Mental Health

Linda Morrice

In January 2017 the Pathstone service pathways will be updated. November 4th was Clinicians Day. There were many members present from various agencies who intersect with Children's Mental Health. An overview of services and collaborative work on two case scenarios were the highlights of the day. The Children and Grief Conference was held last weekend, and Angel G. Graham who works with children with grief, spoke at the conference.

CORRESPONDENCE

There was no additional correspondence.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

There were no further questions and answers.

ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Nick Smith, Seconded by Shannon MacDonald

"That the Special Education Advisory Committee meeting adjourn."

CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 7:27 p.m.

ATTACHMENTS

Resource Supports for Students within the DSBN – Blind/Low Vision and Deaf/Hard of Hearing PowerPoint
Make the Move to High School PowerPoint

NEXT MEETING: Thursday, December 8, 2016 at 6:00 p.m. – Grimsby Lincoln Room