



SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SEAC)

Thursday, January 19, 2017

6:00 p.m.

Grimsby Lincoln Room – Education Centre

MINUTES

Committee Members Present:

Linda Morrice (Chair)

Shannon MacDonald (Vice-Chair)

Samantha Sendzik

Amy Dunn

Nick Smith

Brent Beaudoin

Danielle Reynolds

Kerry Thomas

Pathstone Mental Health

CNIB

Learning Disabilities Association Niagara Region

Autism Ontario, Niagara Chapter

Niagara Support Services

VOICE

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder - Ontario Network of Expertise

Community Living Welland Pelham

Administration/Resource:

Jennifer Currie

Catherine Matheson

Kelly Irvine-Minor

Paula MacKinnon

Nikki Train

OPC Representative: Elementary

OPC Representative: Secondary

Special Education Consultant

Superintendent of Secondary Schools

Student Achievement Leader: Special Education

Guests:

Bob Dunn

Tracey Krysa

Manager of Projects and Maintenance, Facility Services

Special Education Coordinator, School Support Services

Regrets:

Jen Ajandi

Dale Robinson

John Dickson

Trustee, District School Board of Niagara

Trustee, District School Board of Niagara

Superintendent of Special Education

Recording Secretary:

Erin DeRosario

QUORUM/CALL TO ORDER

Quorum was established and the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) meeting was called to order at 5:55 p.m.

WELCOME – STUDENT VOICE

Student Achievement Leader Nikki Train introduced a grade 11 student from Port Colborne Secondary School, her mother, Port Colborne SS Principal Ann Kennerly, and Deaf and Hard of Hearing Resource Teacher Katherine

Latcham. The student explained that she suffered from hearing loss, and wore a hearing aid at a young age to assist with her hearing. At six years old, her hearing ability weakened further and her hearing aid was no longer effective, so she underwent surgery. She has had access to many supports while with the District School Board of Niagara, which have helped her to engage in all aspects of school life. While at Port Colborne SS, she has joined the Student Council to enhance her leadership skills. She would like to attend Western University and become a Pediatrician, specializing in Oncology.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chair Linda Morrice requested a motion to approve the Agenda of the January 19, 2017 SEAC meeting.

Moved by Kerry Thomas, Seconded by Samantha Sendzik

"That the Agenda dated January 19, 2017, be approved as presented."

CARRIED

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Chair Morrice requested a motion to approve the Minutes of the December 8, 2016 meeting.

Moved by Danielle Reynolds, Seconded by Shannon MacDonald

"That the Minutes dated December 8, 2016 be approved as presented."

CARRIED

BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

There was no new business arising from the Minutes.

Linda introduces Bob Dunn from Facilities.

ACCESSIBILITY

Robert Dunn

Manager of Projects and Maintenance Robert Dunn presented a summary of the DSBN's current accessibility with regards to the facilities. He noted that the DSBN regularly installs ramps, lifts, chair lifts, and other equipment to make the facilities more accessible. Some of the schools that are currently undergoing construction and renovations were discussed, such as new school build John Brant which is 100% accessible and Wellington Heights which is currently under construction.

SPECIAL EDUCATION RENOVATION PROJECTS

Robert Dunn and Tracey Krysa

Special Education Coordinator, Tracey Krysa and Robert Dunn, Manager of Projects and Maintenance discussed student specific renovations that take place regularly to ensure that students can attend school, as well the Special Education specific renovations, such as sensory room additions. School washrooms are often renovated to provide accessibility and specialized equipment for students with specific needs. Renovations and builds can have very extensive special education requirements and the members of the department work with Special Education to balance both general and specific needs of students.

Robert Dunn informed the group that he will bring some of their feedback regarding a standardization of the school entry buzzer systems to include consideration for those with vision and hearing needs back to the Facilities Department members for discussion.

PRE-SCHOOL TRANSITION

Tracey Krysa

Tracey Krysa presented a PowerPoint (attached), providing the Committee with information regarding the Pre-School Transition Process. She added that it is a very comprehensive process that requires the support of many outside agencies. Families appreciate the support they receive and can enter school with questions answered, knowing that their child will have the supports necessary to begin school in the coming year.

ASSOCIATION AND BOARD INFORMATION**VOICE for Hearing Impaired Children****Brent Beaudoin**

The Christmas social was well-attended, and it was a great opportunity to discuss ideas and converse with other parents of children who are hearing impaired. On January 28th, the Hamilton/Halton/Niagara/Peel Chapter is holding a workshop, whereby a panel of VOICE members from various SEACs will discuss their experiences. This will be an opportunity for people to learn about what SEAC is and does.

Niagara Support Services**Nick Smith**

A group of agencies including Niagara Support Services will be hosting information sessions to learn about the Autism Registry for children diagnosed with or suspected of having Autism Spectrum Disorder or a developmental disability. The information sessions will be hosted in Niagara Falls, St. Catharines and Port Colborne. Niagara Training and Employment Agencies adult programs continue to undertake significant changes. The purpose of these changes is to create opportunities for competitive employment, job training and community involvement.

Autism Ontario, Niagara Chapter**Amy Dunn**

The Autism Ontario, Niagara Chapter received a generous grant from Intact Insurance, and a new health and wellness program is going to be run this summer for youths with ASD. The Parent and Tot program will run this season free of charge, due to a generous grant from the Fowler Foundation. The children and youth enrolled in the program created lovely water colour paintings that the Chapter members have made into 2017 calendars. The cost per calendar is ten dollars.

OPC Representative: Elementary**Jennifer Currie**

Kindergarten Open Houses are taking place on February 2nd from 10:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. Parents will have the opportunity to come in and register, and see the classroom functioning with the students during the day. Grade 8 transitions have started, with students choosing their courses, so they will be prepared for next year. Grade 8 Open Houses have taken place at the secondary schools. The schools will be holding meetings that involve staff, to discuss the individual needs of students. Tomorrow is a PD Day, with a focus on Assessment and Evaluation, as well as curriculum areas such as Mathematics. The Mental Health Strategy this year has started to blossom; each school has its own Mental Health team, and schools are seeing some positive impacts from some of the programs that have been running.

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder - Ontario Network of Expertise**Danielle Reynolds**

FASD-ONE is holding a four-part motivational workshop called “Finding Purpose”, on living with FASD. The workshop is being held on April 5, 2017 at Bethany Community Church in St. Catharines. The cost is \$75 for professionals and \$25 for parents.

Learning Disabilities Association of Niagara**Samantha Sendzik**

The regular LDANR programs will be offered this winter, with most spots already filled, and with children on a waitlist, particularly for the Reading Rocks Program. The association is still seeking volunteers in Welland and Beamsville. LDANR's application to the Ontario Trillium Foundation to pilot a new math program was successful. With this funding, the association will be offering two program sites this spring, and two in the fall for children with diagnosed or suspected Dyscalculia. LDANR's B.E.S.T. Program was covered by the St. Catharines Standard, and since the article was printed, the association has received heightened awareness and interest in the program.

Community Living Welland Pelham**Kerry Thomas**

A two-day workshop called “The Good Life” is being held on February 21st and 22nd at Best Western Plus Rose City Suites, 300 Prince Charles Drive in Welland. (Flyer is attached)

OPC Representative: Secondary**Catherine Matheson**

It is exam time for secondary schools, and students are in the midst of preparing. There has been a great deal of planning in Special Education, with the focus on assisting students with course work, and helping students ensure that they've been connected with supports for post secondary applications.

Student Achievement Leader: Special Education**Nikki Train**

The DSBN received funding from the Ministry to provide after school supports for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder, ages five to eleven years.

Special Education Consultant**Kelly Irvine-Minor**

The Special Education team has been working on a variety of learning opportunities for tomorrow's PD Day. Topics of focus include self-regulation, ABA Strategies and Pre-school Transition.

Superintendent of Secondary Schools**Paula MacKinnon**

The Grade 9 Math Assessment is quickly approaching, and a very supportive approach is being taken for students, and a central team of Instructional Coaches will be available to go to the schools with student specific support and coverage.

Pathstone Mental Health**Linda Morrice**

The Pathstone Mental Health Manager is retiring, and is not being replaced, so there is some re-shuffling of staff occurring. The Hope Award is being presented, with May 2nd as a tentative date. Recipients of the award are parents who have supported other parents of children with challenges. The new Pathstone Mental Health site is right near the hospital on Fourth Avenue in St. Catharines.

CORRESPONDENCE

Superintendent Paula MacKinnon informed the group that Superintendent John Dickson extends his regrets this evening. He was in a skiing accident, and recently had surgery. He hopes to join us for the next meeting.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

There were no questions or answers.

ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Kerry Thomas, Seconded by Amy Dunn

"That the Special Education Advisory Committee meeting adjourn."

CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 7:17 p.m.

ATTACHMENTS

"Transition to School" Power Point

"The Good Life" flyer

NEXT MEETING: Thursday, February 9, 2017 at 6:00 p.m. – Grimsby Lincoln Room