



SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SEAC)

Thursday, May 11, 2017

6:00 p.m.

Grimsby Lincoln Room – Education Centre

MINUTES

Committee Members Present:

Linda Morrice (Chair)
Shannon MacDonald (Vice-Chair)
Dale Robinson
Nick Smith
Samantha Sendzik
Amy Dunn
Tiffany Hunter
Danielle Reynolds
Paul Molnar

Pathstone Mental Health
CNIB
Trustee, District School Board of Niagara
Niagara Support Services
Learning Disabilities Association Niagara Region
Autism Ontario, Niagara Chapter
Association for Bright Children of Ontario
Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder – ONE
Down Syndrome Caring Parents Niagara

Administration/Resource:

John Dickson
Paula MacKinnon
Nikki Train
Jennifer Currie
Catherine Matheson
Kelly Irvine-Minor

Superintendent of Special Education
Superintendent of Secondary Schools
Student Achievement Leader: Special Education
OPC Representative: Elementary
OPC Representative: Secondary
Special Education Consultant

Guests:

Courtney Moody, DSBN Psycho-Educational Consultant

Regrets:

Staci Whittle, Niagara Children's Centre
Jen Ajandi, Trustee, District School Board of Niagara

Recording Secretary:

Sue Sentence

QUORUM/CALL TO ORDER

Quorum was established and the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) meeting was called to order at 6:02 p.m. Superintendent John Dickson welcomed Paul Molnar, a new SEAC Committee Member from Down Syndrome Caring Parents Niagara, which is a regional chapter of Down Syndrome Awareness Ontario. Round table introductions followed.

WELCOME – STUDENT VOICE Superintendent Dickson introduced the Principal at Princess Elizabeth Public School, Mike Burns, who in turn introduced a grade 8 student, her family and Deaf and Hard of Hearing Resource Teacher, Katherine Latcham. The student presented a video explaining how her classroom experiences are enhanced through her teachers' use of an FM system, and that in conjunction with her hearing aids, the system acts as her ears. Her video explained how she has grown more confident in herself over the years, and now enjoys participating in all areas of school life. She is looking forward to attending Eastdale Secondary School in the fall, and taking photography and culinary classes.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chair Linda Morrice requested a motion to approve the Agenda of the May 11, 2017 SEAC meeting.

Moved by Nick Smith, Seconded by Samantha Sendzik

"That the Agenda dated May 11, 2017, be approved as presented."

CARRIED

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Chair Morrice requested a motion to approve the Minutes of the April 13, 2017 meeting.

Moved by Amy Dunn, Seconded by Shannon MacDonald

"That the Minutes dated April 13, 2017 be approved as presented."

CARRIED

BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

There was no new business arising from the Minutes.

EARLY INTERVENTION AND ASSESSMENT

Courtney Moody

Courtney Moody, DSBN Psycho-Educational Consultant presented information about Psychological Assessments and explained that these assessments are just one tool being used to support student learning. The purpose of an assessment is to assist with programming, and is completed by a registered Psychologist or Psychological Associate.

REVIEW OF SPECIAL EDUCATION REPORT

Nikki Train

Committee Members discussed pages 1 to 20, Special Education Programs and Services, of the DSBN Special Education Report, asked questions and made suggestions for additions and clarifying points for the document.

ASSOCIATION AND BOARD INFORMATION

Downs Syndrome Caring Parents Niagara

Paul Molnar

The Association's recent AGM was well attended. The group has an active Facebook page where they highlight social events like the summer picnic, Christmas party, play groups, etc. The association has approximately 60 families as active members. They are currently working on getting information to the local hospitals about the group, so that when children are born with Downs Syndrome in Niagara, they can immediately connect with the group for community support and sharing. The group is holding a walk on June 3rd at Heartland Forest, in support of International Day for People with Disabilities.

Learning Disabilities Association of Niagara**Samantha Sendzik**

Registration is open for the LD@School conference on August 22-23rd. Registration for the June 10th Golf Tournament will close on May 31st. Applications for Fall Programs will open on Monday, August 14th.

Autism Ontario, Niagara Chapter**Amy Dunn**

The annual Ride n' Stride Event is taking place on June 17th at Fort George. The event will be accessible to everyone and will include many activities for children. Registration is available online. Local AGM is being held on Saturday, May 13th. The provincial AGM will take place on June 9 & 10th, in Waterloo.

Association for Bright Children**Tiffany Hunter**

The group is currently working on getting their social media sites up and running.

Niagara Support Services**Nick Smith**

Nick explained that a community member would like to start a ball hockey league for children with special needs, but is looking for a way to contact interested children. The group suggested contacting Niagara Children's Centre, and Niagara College or Brock University's – Special Education Departments.

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder - ONE**Danielle Reynolds**

No news at this time.

OPC Representative: Elementary**Jennifer Currie**

EQAO is coming up in 2 weeks; the scribes are in place and assistive technology packages for students are ordered. The staffing process for 2017-18 is in full swing and schools are planning classes and looking closely at where needs are for next year. The spring is a fun time in the schools as well, as they prepare to say goodbye to their grade 8 student.

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

The DSBN Special Olympics will take place on June 8th.

Special Education Consultant**Kelly Irvine-Minor**

No report at this time

OPC Representative: Secondary**Catherine Matheson**

Secondary Schools are preparing for EQAO Math in June. There are 5 weeks left before exams. Transition meetings are happening for students moving from grade 8 to 9 next year. The SERT, Student Success Teachers, and Administration meet with the Elementary School Staff to gather information about the students. SERT's attend IPRC meetings for applicable grade 8 students, and case conferences for students with higher needs.

Sir Winston Churchill Secondary School organized a "Sir Winston Walks" Day and raised over \$6,500 for NCC.

Superintendent of Special Education**John Dickson**

The board is in the middle of establishing budgets for next year. This process usually takes until the end of June. John and Paula brought SEAC feedback to the table this year and as a result will see an increase in LRT time in elementary schools and SERT time in secondary schools. There will be an increase in EA's to the system as well, and at least one increased social worker to support Special Education Programs.

Superintendent of Secondary Schools**Paula MacKinnon**

No report at this time.

Pathstone Mental Health**Linda Morrice**

2017 HOPE Award celebration is tomorrow night. The Association's new building opened on April 24, 2017, and will hold an Official Open House on June 16th.

Pathstone's will be adding to their service pathway by providing all new referrals with an orientation session. The session will provide parents and families with a better understanding of what to expect when they enter programs at Pathstone, and the commitment involved in order for the treatment to be successful.

CORRESPONDENCE

There was no additional correspondence.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Superintendent Dickson addressed an email he received inquiring about whether the board had or considered doing a survey with parents, to see if an Inclusive Education Model was preferred. It was explained that the model is not something new, and is a core belief of the Ministry of Education and the District School Board of Niagara. The curriculum is written to support diverse learning profiles, and permits accommodations and modifications to support all learners through the categories of thinking, application, communication, and knowledge and understanding. The DSBN has consistently focused on an inquiry stance to learning and has also developed a long-term partnership with the Critical Thinking Consortium to assist schools, teachers and students to develop and utilize critical, creative and collaborative thinking skills.

As well, our math strategy has consistently encouraged the use of a variety of strategies that engage and challenge all students to develop and deepen their understanding of mathematical concepts. For example, the use of "low floor, high ceiling" questions/opportunities allows students to enter learning at the level they are performing at and continue to grow.

We have not surveyed a specific group of learners' families. However, parents at all of our schools are always encouraged to connect with their child's teacher or principal if they have any questions or concerns. As well, the recently initiated school climate survey provides parents an opportunity to share their school experience regarding their child's learning.

ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Amy Dunn, Seconded by Tiffany Hunter

"That the Special Education Advisory Committee meeting adjourn."

CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 8:21p.m.

ATTACHMENTS

Overview of Assessments - PowerPoint Presentation

LDANR 2nd Annual Golf Tournament Fundraiser

NEXT MEETING: Thursday, June 8, 2017 at 6:00 p.m. – Grimsby-Lincoln Room