



Durham Catholic District School Board

MINUTES of the **SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE** meeting of the Durham Catholic District School Board which was held in the North Board Room of the Catholic Education Centre, 650 Rossland Road West, in Oshawa on **Tuesday, December 8, 2015.**

Present

L. Smart
V. Adamo
L. Cook
K. LeFort
M. LePage
T. McGarry
T. Vetere

Staff

J. Bowyer
C. Baetz
L. Coghlan
D. Mullane
S. Phoenix

With Regrets

B. Cummins
V. Derby
M. Feeheley
J. McCafferty
L. McInnes
P. Pulla
A. Shiels
E. Van de Klippe
J. Vermulst

S.E.A.C. Representatives

K. Plaunt, APSSP
M. Lacy, Principal/Vice Principal Association
C. Colligan, OECTA

CALL TO ORDER

Item a.1 **Memorials and Prayer**

Chair L. Smart called the meeting to order at 7:33 p.m. and offered the opening prayer

Item a.2 **Roll Call and Apologies**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CONSIDERATIONS OF MOTIONS

None

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Item e.1 Declaration of Conflict of Interest

None

PRESENTATIONS

Item g.1 Hearing Services

**Sarah McAvoy
Melissa Fregonese**

Sarah McAvoy, Resource Teacher – Hearing Services, and Melissa Fregonese, Itinerant Teacher – Hearing Services, provided an overview of the Hearing Resources department and role of the staff, which includes Itinerant teachers Leah Van Roessel and Vanessa Waters.

The department provides a wide range of services and supports to students with hearing impairments, including assessment and observation, language instruction, hearing and FM management skills, as well as self-advocacy skills and the development of self-concept.

The presentation stressed the importance of working with parents, especially in the area of Auditory Verbal Education – empowering parents with the information and tools necessary to support their children with hearing loss. This is accomplished through academic and social supports as well as transition planning resources.

It also encourages interaction and mainstreaming children with their hearing peers. Students are further supported in areas of auditory skill development, study and organizational skills, social pragmatics, academic support, and transition planning.

DELEGATIONS

None

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

none.

STAFF REPORTS

Item k.1 **Coordinator's Report – L. Coghlan**

In the month of November, the Assistive Technology team had a unique opportunity to present at Fr. Fenelon Catholic School on the topic of technology and tolerance. The Grade 7s and 8s had an opportunity to participate in an interactive manner by learning the accessibility features of their handhelds, as well as explore the role of technology to support different learners. Students also heard from Justin Marshall, a Grade 12 student from St. Mary's Catholic Secondary School. Justin shared his experience using his assistive technology since Grade 6 and how it has supported his unique learning needs. Justin also shared the importance of accepting people for who they are and supporting the way people learn, as each student learns differently.

Item k.1 **Coordinator's Report – continued**

On November 27, DCDSB hosted over 70 professionals from across Durham region at the Selective Mutism Primer Workshop led by international expert, Dr. Angela McHolm. Attendees included SLPs and Psych staff from our Board, as well as DDSB, KPR, PVNCC, Grandview Children's Centre and Five Counties Children's Treatment Centres. In February, we will be offering the Advanced level where six management teams from six schools will work together to develop an intervention system to address the needs of these students who suffer from this specific, yet severe, form of anxiety.

On November 9 and 10, the DCDSB was invited to be part of a 2-day working table on Infant Mental Health facilitated by Chaya Kulkarni from the Hospital for Sick Children. These strategic planning days brought together decision-makers from multiple agencies servicing children from 0-6 years of age from across Durham region. A draft working document is due to be distributed within the next few days outlining a best practice model for Infant Mental Health service delivery in Durham region.

Several Program Support Teachers and secondary life skill teachers attended a two day "Structured Teaching" workshop. This training opportunity provided participants with the fundamentals of organizing the physical environment, developing schedules and work systems and using visual materials as an effective way of developing skills of students with autism and other developmental disabilities.

Item k.2 Superintendent's Report - J. Bowyer

Plans have continued to progress for the SEAC sponsored Parents as Partners evening in February entitled: Parenting Resilient Children: Promoting Positive Mental Health.

The key note speaker – back by popular demand is Ann Douglas.

The Superintendent called upon Diane Mullane, Mental Health Leader, to provide additional details about the event. The keynote topic will be “Big Picture Parenting”. Invitations will go home to each student as well as by message through the SynerVoice telephone system. Several community agencies will have display booths, and Student Services staff will also be on hand to provide presentations and information to students and parents. Once the flyer for the event is completed, a copy will be provided to SEAC members.

This year the focus for our staff meetings will be on addressing issues of equity and diversity. On the PA day, student services had the good fortune of participating in a full day workshop on Deep Diversity – Understanding our own Biases and how to address them. Our keynote speaker was Shakil Choudhury, author of the book, “Deep Diversity – Overcoming Us vs. Them”.

In February we will have another full day inservice - Aboriginal Cultural Competency Training. First Nations, Metis, and Inuit students are not achieving at the same rate as other students in the province and they are over represented in the special education population. There is a real call to action by the Ministry of Education to make intentional decisions to support this group of students. We also know that in the Durham Region, our largest population of First Nations, Metis and Inuit students is in Oshawa because of the high population of Metis in Oshawa. Cultural competency training is a good step in helping all members of student services understand the population that we are called upon to support.

The Father Fénelon school community officially moved into their new home on Monday, December 1. Superintendents and Trustees were given a tour of the new facility, and the accessibility features are particularly impressive, including spacious areas for Special Education and braille signage.

On Monday, December 1st, the Board of Trustees elected a new chair of the Board: Teresa Corless; and Vice Chair – Janice Oldman.

The Superintendent thanked our trustee representatives, Kathy LeFort and Paul Pulla, for their contributions to our SEAC during the past year. Committees will be assigned by the next Board meeting, and our SEAC Trustees will be welcomed at our January meeting.

Thank you to Lynne Smart for her leadership this year. Elections will be held at the next SEAC meeting which will take place on the first week back , January 5, 2016.

We will also review our SEAC Handbook at the January meeting. Members are asked to bring the draft copy of the handbook they received at our November meeting.

ASSOCIATION REPORTS

VOICE for the Hearing Impaired – V. Adamo

VOICE is preparing the 2016 Calendar of Events.

Dress Loud Day – May 6, 2016 -during which participants are encouraged to wear loud and ‘wacky’ clothing.

Voice Conference – will take place at the University of Guelph – May 2016 - agenda to come in late January / early February.

VOICE Camp – August 12 – 16, 2016 – will host up to 250 families this year.

Autism Ontario – Durham Region – T. Vetere

Durham Movie Morning – Saturday, Dec 19 – ‘Star Wars – The Force Awakens’ - sensory friendly for children with Autism, their siblings, and caregivers. Flyer was shared by email with SEAC members. *Note: the movie is full as of December 18 but another event will be offered in March.*

Learn to Skate – Winter Session -Village Arena – 100 Church St. N., Ajax. Sundays, January 31 – February 28, 2016 – 12:00-1:00 pm. Small group, specialized lessons geared for your beginner skater on the spectrum! Registration opens December 15, 2015 at 7 pm and closes when full.

Creative Arts Evenings - Autism Ontario is partnering with the Whitby Station Gallery to provide a family art event on Monday evenings beginning January 25 from 4:45 to 6:45 p.m.

Learning Disabilities Association – Durham Region – L. Smart

The next Chapter meeting will take place on January 28, 2016. Topic is still to come.

Community Representative – L. Cook

Linda extended an invitation to all members to attend the Advent Mass and Open House at Father Fénelon Catholic School to celebrate the new facility:
Thursday, December 17, 2105 – Mass at Holy Redeemer Catholic Church at 7 p.m. followed by an open house and tours at the new school. All are welcome.

ASSOCIATION REPORTS-continued

Cystic Fibrosis Canada – Durham Chapter – M. LePage

Parent Information Day – was held at the Hospital for Sick Children – doctors and clinical staff came together to provide information and support to parents of children with CF on several topics including infectious diseases, treatment, and support strategies.

Outrun Cystic Fibrosis 5k Run/Walk – Sunday April 10, 2016 at Carruthers Marsh Pavilion on the Ajax Waterfront.

Strokes for Life Golf Tournament – June 9, 2016 – Oshawa Golf Club

INQUIRIES AND MISCELLANEOUS

SEAC Handbook – discussion will resume at the January 5 meeting – members are asked to bring their copy of the handbook draft which was distributed at the November meeting.

PENDING ITEMS

none

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:34 p.m. followed by a Christmas social opportunity for members and guests.

CLOSING PRAYER

The closing prayer was offered by K. LeFort.



Lynne Smart
Chair, Special Education Advisory
Committee



Janine Bowyer
Superintendent of Education

Recording Secretary: Cynthia Mackey



OTTAWA-CARLETON
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD



Friday, 06 November 2015

Mr. Michael Barrett
President, OPSBA
Ontario Public School Boards' Association
439 University Avenue, Suite 1850
Toronto, Ontario
M5G 1Y8

Dear Mr. Barrett,

On behalf of the Special Education Advisory Committee at the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board, I take this opportunity to express our support for the efforts launched by Thames Valley District School Board, and further echoed by the Upper Grand District School board in their correspondence to you regarding the subject of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD).

While our SEAC has not taken a position regarding a coordinated provincial FASD strategy, we do absolutely support their efforts to support children with FASD in Ontario schools.

In closing, we thank you for the continued support and hard work of your member school boards on behalf of students and their families.

Kindest regards,

Rob Kirwan
Chair,
Special Education Advisory Committee
Ottawa Carleton District School Board

Cc:
OCDSB Trustees
OCDSB Senior Staff
The Honorable Liz Sandals, Minister of Education
OPSBA Board Members
Cheryl Lovell, Ministers Advisory Council for Special Education
English Public School Board Special Education Advisory Committees
French Public School Board Special Education Advisory Committees
English Catholic School Board Special Education Advisory Committees
French Catholic School Board Special Education Advisory Committees
Ontario Public School Boards' Association

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