

UPPER GRAND DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD
SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

2010 09 08

The Special Education Advisory Committee of the Upper Grand District School Board met on Wednesday, September 8, 2010, at 7:00 p.m. in the Boardroom at 500 Victoria Road North, Guelph. The following were present:

Association Members

Margaret Abbink, Community Member-at-Large
Kim Brenner, Parents for Children's Mental Health
Sharon Dills, Learning Disabilities Association of Wellington County
Jason Offer, Association for Bright Children (ABC)
Laurie Whyte, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders

Staff

Sue Adams, Special Education Consultant
Carla Anderson, Special Education Consultant
Heather Boswell, Superintendent of Program
Bonnie Burgess, Coordinator of Speech & Language Services
Stephen Gayfer, Secondary Vice-Principal
Lesley Anne Jordan, Special Education Consultant
Chris Kay, Elementary Principal
Sandra Szpular, Collaborative Projects Lead/Special Education Coordinator
Bonnie Talbot, Principal of Program

Trustee

Linda Busuttil

Other

John Potocska, OSSTF District 18

Regrets

Denise Smith, Autism Ontario
Pauline Busby, Community Living
Lori McNeil-Chong, Tourette Syndrome Association of Ontario
Stacey Stevens, VOICE for Hearing Impaired Children
Jennifer Waterston, Trustee

Other

Pat Hlushka, Autism Ontario - Wellington
Sue Shaw, Autism Ontario – Wellington

Laurie Whyte welcomed everyone and read an article about Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder in recognition of FASD Day on September 9th. Also reported was that Lori McNeil-Chong has resigned as the Tourette Syndrome Association Representative on SEAC.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Moved by Margaret Abbink
That the agenda of the September 8, 2010 meeting be approved.
The motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Moved by Margaret Abbink

That the minutes of the meeting held on June 16, 2010 be approved.

The motion carried.

Special Education Report

Action

Sandra Szpular, Special Education Coordinator / Collaborative Projects Lead, provided background about the Special Education Report which was previously entitled the Special Education Plan. The Report focuses on Special Education Programs and Services. The Upper Grand District School Board Improvement Plan will now include special education planning information with a focus on student achievement. A copy of the components checklist and letter submitted was distributed this evening. The components of the Special Education Report which is available on the Upper Grand DSB website was reviewed and the key areas were highlighted. Sandra Szpular noted that during this transitional year, revisions will be made through consultation with SEAC.

Special Equipment Amount (SEA) New Directions

Sandra Szpular, spoke about the *Special Education Funding Guidelines: Special Equipment Amount (SEA) and Special Incidence Portion 2010-2011* which can be found in the Special Education Report with a link to the Ministry of Education website. The SEA information is set up in a question and answer format in the Special Education Report with the goal of making the information easy to use and understand.

The funding changes that have been made for the 2010-2011 school year were referred to. Boards now receive SEA funding in two separate ways:

1. Funding is provided to boards in a lump sum which would be used to purchase technology type equipment (i.e. computers, software, training).
2. Boards will continue to submit claims to the Ministry to fund non-technology items that would be used by students with special education needs for items such as physical assistive equipment, deaf and hard of hearing student equipment, vision, sensory and personal care equipment. The Board will continue to pay \$800 per student claim.

Sharon Dills inquired about the technology training. Sandra Szpular replied that with the changes to the funding, we can individualize the training we purchase for students.

Margaret Abbink inquired about the amount budgeted for the physical equipment. Sandra Szpular noted that we have budgeted for 40 claims as this has been historically the number of claims submitted for this category. There will also be an inventory done on all physical equipment not currently in use across the Board.

Sue Shaw wondered about the computer refresh for students who have very old technology. Sandra Szpular replied that if the technology is not working for a student, the parent should contact the Special Education Resource Teacher.

Sandra Szpular asked members if they felt the changes to the Special Education Report met the needs of the community. Some suggestions included: clarifying who to talk to if

parents are unsure about specific documentation required and creating links throughout the document.

Board Improvement Planning Update

Bonnie Talbot, Principal of Program, presented the *Draft - Board Improvement Plan for Student Achievement 2010-2013*. The required components of the plan are set out by the Ministry of Education. It must be a 3 year K-12 plan and based on a needs assessment (not limited to EQAO data). The plan must include SMART Goals (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Results Oriented and Time Bound), how to measure/monitor and who is responsible for each. This year, special education will be integrated into the Board Improvement Plan and will include specific goals for students with special needs and for English Language Learners.

The plan supports the Ministry's goals of increased student achievement, reducing gaps in student achievement and increased public confidence in education. It also aligns with School Improvement Plans. The Overall Long Term Goal is by "June 2011, 85% of students who began grade 9 in 2006 will graduate from high school".

Members of the Board Improvement Planning Team include the Director, School Effectiveness Leads (elementary & secondary), Superintendent of Program, Superintendents of Education, Principal of Program, Coordinator of Special Education and several Curriculum Leaders.

A Draft copy of the Board Improvement Plan will be sent to the Ministry by September 30, 2010. Following the submission, the Ministry Team will visit our Board to provide feedback. After that time, the Plan will be posted on the Board website.

Linda Busuttill asked for clarification on the planning cycle involved with the Board Improvement Plan, specifically when input from SEAC would be solicited. Sandra Szpular and Bonnie Talbot noted that the items in the plan pertaining to special education are things that have been discussed at SEAC (i.e. SEA, Learning For All, Mental Health Forums, Itinerant Technology Resource Program). Heather Boswell further noted that SEAC input would be welcomed at any time throughout the year.

Gifted Program Location Change Update

Heather Boswell, Superintendent of Program, spoke about the Central Guelph FI Accommodation Review that had been referenced by Trustees at SEAC meetings last year. Heather Boswell read the motion that was passed at the May 25th Board Meeting directing staff to consult with the Waverley gifted community about the relocation of the Grade 4-8 programs and prepare a report to be presented at the August 31st Board Meeting. There were 2 parents meetings arranged by a parent, where a copy of a draft survey was reviewed. Following feedback received, a memo and the survey were sent home with each child in the F.A. Hamilton P.S. and Waverley Dr., P.S. gifted programs outlining the different options and returned to the school indicating their preferred choice. The surveys were tallied and found to be inconclusive. This was in part due to the fact that at the June 22nd Board Meeting, the motion that the Board remove any transfer of

gifted classes from consideration within the current ARC scenarios was approved. This motion also directed its programming staff, in consultation with parents, to develop a plan for gifted students and present this plan at the November 2010 Board Meeting.

The August 31st Board Meeting motion relates to consideration of consolidating all gifted students (Grades 4-8) at Waverley Dr., P.S. beginning in September 2011.

Jason Offer mentioned that parents of gifted students have continued to meet over the summer. There will be a meeting for parents of gifted program students held on September 15th at Waverley Dr., P.S. beginning at 7:00 p.m. You may also email any questions about the consultations to parents.gifted@gmail.com

Creation of Orientation Package for New Members

Laurie Whyte asked members for input surrounding the creation of an orientation package for people looking at becoming members of SEAC. Some suggestions made include: general information regarding SEAC meetings and membership, background reading (ie. suggested websites), arranging a SEAC trainer to present and procedural expectations.

Several members volunteered to assist with the creation of a package.

Open Forum

Sharon Dills referred to the Dr. Louise Scott Session – *Why Screen for Sleep Problems in Children with Attentional, Memory and Regulation Problems?* flyer that was distributed to members. Also mentioned was a series of workshops about emerging research from the Hospital for Sick Children beginning in October. More information will follow.

Pat Hlushko spoke about the *Empowering Exceptional Parents* workshop being held on October 2nd at the Ariss Valley Golf & Country Club which is being supported by a Ministry of Education – Parents Reaching Out Grant.

Kim Brenner spoke about CBC and W5 who have contacted Parents for Children's Mental Health and are doing a story on 5 families regarding mental health issues. Further information will be provided.

Laurie Whyte spoke about an upcoming presentation-*Practical Approaches to Challenging Behaviour in Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder* by Nathan Ory being held in Barrie on November 15 & 16, 2010.

Updates from the Superintendent of Program

Heather Boswell referred to the *Caring and Safe Schools in Ontario* document and memo that were distributed this evening. This document will be distributed to Principals and Vice-Principals this month. If you would like further information presented on the document, please let us know.

The New Staff Orientation was held on August 24th at Westside S.S. to welcome our new

staff. This year, designated Early Childhood Educators were among the new staff that attended.

The Learning Fair was held on August 30 and 31st in Guelph. The theme was *Reducing the Gap*. There were several speakers and presentations, including Dr. Leonard Sax.

Heather Boswell will be attending the Regional Special Education Meeting on September 10th. The EQAO results go public on September 15th. On September 16th, the Board Team will be attending a Ministry Meeting on the Board Improvement Plan.

Sandra Szpular and Lesley Anne Jordan will be attending a presentation on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder on September 17th.

The Resource Teacher Inservices are being held on September 23 and 24, 2010. Some agenda items include: school and community agencies working together with a focus on students with special education needs and mental health. The *Caring and Safe Schools* document will also be discussed as will *Growing Success*, the IEP, Autism updates, SEA and technology.

Trustee Report

Linda Busuttill referenced the Central Guelph FI Accommodation Review item at the August 31st Board Meeting.

The Upper Grand DSB Parent Involvement Committee is sponsoring *Don't go it alone!* an evening for School Councils being held on September 30th at John F. Ross C.V.I.

Attention was drawn to a letter written by Chair, Bob Borden to the Honourable Dalton McGuinty, Premier, expressing concern with the mandatory Special Education fixed amount included in the Extended Day fee calculation. A copy of the letter was provided to Laurie Whyte.

September 10, 2010 is the deadline to submit nomination papers to run for a Trustee.

Adjournment

Moved by Kim Brenner that the meeting be adjourned at 9:20 p.m.
The motion carried.