

Upper Grand District School Board
Special Education Advisory Committee

Minutes
Wednesday, May 13, 2015

The Special Education Advisory Committee of the Upper Grand District School Board met on Wednesday, May 13, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. in the Boardroom at 500 Victoria Road North, Guelph.

The following Association Members were present: Carrie Proudfoot, Autism Ontario-Wellington County, Sue Shaw, Autism Ontario-Wellington County, Jason Offer, Association for Bright Children-ABC (by teleconference), Laurie Whyte, FASworld Canada, Stacey Stevens, VOICE for Hearing Impaired Children, Sharon Dills, Learning Disabilities Association of Wellington County, Carole Craig, Integration Action for Inclusion in Education and Community (Ontario)

Present from Staff were: Trudy Counter, Coordinator of Communication, Language and Speech Services, Tracey Lindsay, Superintendent of Program, Jeni Vaughan, Vice-Principal, Christine Kay, Principal, Jacqueline Foster, Special Education Coordinator, Special Education Consultants; Mark Howe, Lesley Anne Jordan

Trustees Present: Linda Busuttil, Bruce Schieck

Present from Public: John Potoska

Regrets: Don Richardson, Integration Action for Inclusion in Education and Community (Ontario), Cheryl Van Ooteghem, Principal of Program

Absent: Dr. Mary Susan Crawford, Chief Psychologist, Special Education Consultants: Jackie Speers, Carla Anderson, Naomi Theodor, Ben McCabe, Kathy Green

Carrie Proudfoot, Special Education Advisory Committee Chair called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone.

Approval of Agenda May 13, 2015

Bruce Schieck moved that the agenda of May 13, 2015 meeting be approved. Stacey Stevens seconded the motion.

The motion carried.

Approval of Minutes of April 8, 2015

Carrie Proudfoot requested that the minutes reflect that Laurie Whyte will not be sitting on the Pro Grant committee as noted in the "Meeting Summary, Recommendation(s), Motions(s) and Action(s)" item.

Stacey Stevens moved that the minutes of the meeting held on April 8, 2015 be approved as amended. Linda Busuttil seconded the motion.

The motion carried.

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Action Items

Tracey Lindsay reviewed the Action Items chart and provided updates from the April 8, 2015 meeting.

- Feedback from Google Docs was gathered for the “Annual Review of UGDSB Special Education Plan”. The next steps will be discussed in tonight’s meeting.
- Don Richardson provided “Examples of Dispute Resolution in Ontario Boards of Education” to SEAC. Staff will review wording of other Boards and will include Dispute Resolution” in the Parent Guide which will be brought back to SEAC.
- Pro Grant update will be provided by Jason Offer in later agenda items.

Correspondence

The correspondence was reviewed and concerns have been addressed. No action required at this meeting.

Safe, Equitable and Inclusive Schools Update

Carrie Proudfoot introduced Bonnie Talbot, Superintendent of Education to the meeting. Bonnie Talbot thanked the committee for requesting her presentation and providing the questions prior to the meeting.

The Upper Grand District School Boards Safe School Policy (503) is based on Bill 13 which came into effect in 2012. Bill 13, Accepting Schools Act requires school boards to prevent and address inappropriate and disrespectful behaviour among students in our schools. This includes bullying, discrimination and harassment. All Boards are required to use the Ministry’s definition of bullying. Bullying is not a one-time action but ongoing. She explained that she has had many discussions with parents regarding what constitutes bullying. There is much confusion about whether something is considered conflict or bullying or just kids being kids.

The Ministry defines conflict when two or more people have a disagreement, a difference of opinion or different views. Conflict can become bullying if this continues over time and causes harm to the other person. When the other person is feeling powerless, this is an indication of bullying, not conflict.

Cyberbullying was added to Bill 13 in 2013. The other types of bullying include physical, verbal and social-emotional. An online tool is available to report bullying. According to the statistics, elementary schools reported a total of 73 incidents and secondary had a total of 43. More detail is gathered when there is face to face contact. A question was posed regarding the similarities of all bully prevention plans within UGDSB schools. Bonne Talbot responded that the content of the Bully Prevention Plans is mandated mostly by legislation (Bill 13) or by Board Policy. We use a template to ensure that all plans include the legislative and policy requirements. A Ministry requirement is for all school to have a Bully Prevention Plan and that it be posted to school websites by the end of September 2015.

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Other questions that were presented are: how do we monitor implementation of the plan; ensure there is one; measure the successes; and address the idea of inclusion. Bonnie Talbot responded that the Ministry provides a consistent template for all school plans which includes legislative and policy requirements. Requirements are to be posted on school websites by the end of September each year and are monitored by the Superintendents. One way we monitor implementation is through consistent communication to schools regarding expectations. This includes the following:

- Safe Schools Checklist for Principals (distributed in September)
- Annual training for Principals and staff
- Email reminders to Principals and Equity Representatives to establish Safe Schools Teams and to review Bully Prevention Plan
- Superintendent Fall Visit where the Superintendent review the Bully Prevention Plan with the administration team
- Consistent communication re: (for example, on Field trips, in extra-curricular activities, etc.)

Regarding the monitoring of success, the following helps us to monitor how we are doing with Bully Prevention:

- Climate surveys done at the school every two years – the data collected is used to create and monitor plans
- \$500 provided for implementation of plans. Schools must apply and it is monitored by Superintendent Talbot
- On-line Reporting Tool
- Suspension/Expulsion rates (specifically for bullying)

Board and Ministry funds are available for Safe Schools and Equity and all schools access the funds.

Suspension rates were collected over the last three years. General trend for students not identified and identified is declining. More supports are available for students and staff through training (ie: Ross Greene philosophy). According to last year's data, a large number of suspensions were from the behavioural designation. Within this designation, other exceptionalities may be involved making it difficult to pinpoint the specific identification for accurate data.

Full presentation is available on SEAC May 2015 Meeting folder on UGCloud.

Carrie Proudfoot thanked Bonnie Talbot for her detailed presentation. She questioned what are the ways we are ensuring that the meetings are being held with the in-school teams (including a parent on the team) and ensuring that the plan is being adhered to and posted. Bonnie Talbot responded that this is on the school visit template. The Superintendent will review with the principal when they visit. Bonnie Talbot monitors all of the Bully Prevention Plans every fall. The Bully Prevention Plans are unique to each school and the principal is responsible for ensuring that it is being followed. If this is not occurring, please direct your concerns to the Superintendent or Bonnie Talbot for resolution.

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Linda Busuttil questioned the trend for 2013-2014 data for suspension rates. Bonnie Talbot responded that we receive the data from the Ministry and this is not available at this time. The 2013-14 data that was provided in her presentation was pulled from Maplewood. These are UGDSB actual numbers where the Ministry's are percentages. Linda Busuttil asked where fetal alcohol syndrome was included in the suspension data. Bonnie Talbot responded that this is classified under "Behaviour". Laurie Whyte questioned the numbers for FASD in the Upper Grand District School Board. Bonnie Talbot responded that she can only rely on the data from Maplewood and ONSIS. Tracey Lindsay responded that ONSIS only pulls "Behaviour" which does not specify FASD. Laurie Whyte questioned whether this data could be gathered by the Special Education consultants from the IPRC minutes to track the specific identifications.

Laurie Whyte questioned whether the gender category on the Online Reporting Tool could be left blank or offer more choices. Bonnie Talbot will discuss with Colinda Clyne as the list of options continually changes.

Carole Craig questioned whether the School Climate Survey had indicators and the data brought to SEAC. Bonnie Talbot responded that the information is available. Students in Grade 4 -12 complete the survey. Feedback from staff and parents is included in the results. Carole Craig asked if the trend indicates that the school climate is improving regarding bullying. Bonnie Talbot responded that we have only completed one survey and do not have data for comparison. Another survey will be done this fall. Carole Craig commented that Special Education students do not have the ability to report or understand bullying. Is there a mechanism in place to support these students? Bonnie Talbot responded that there are school education programs to help students recognize and understand bullying. There are staff members (principals, teacher, child youth counsellor) at the school to offer assistance. A counsellor is available in the classroom to work with small group of students.

Linda Busuttil reported that the province had sent a letter notifying us that there will be a Fetal Alcohol Provincial strategy outlining the behaviours of FASD. She asked if UGDSB SEAC be proactive in developing a strategy.

Bruce Schieck commented that Youth Options provides many services for secondary students that have been suspended. Students work on their credits and are happy to be in an alternative learning environment. He added that there are other locations with specialized programs. Tracey Lindsay added that students from Grade 7 and 8 have been placed at Youth Options on a rare occasion. She commented that there are not many interim places for students that might need services offered at treatment centres which are not available at the school. This topic is being brought to the Special Needs Strategy group. Roundtable discussions are being held to talk about the need for specialized services and treatment centres for students that have complex issues. This will be brought forward to the Ministry of Child and Youth Services.

Bonnie Talbot thanked the committee and will provide more information as requested.

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Budget

Carrie Proudfoot introduced Janice Wright, Superintendent of Finance.

Janice Wright presented the budget information that was provided at the SEAC conference on May 2, 2015. The slide provided an overview of Special Education programs and services and special education funding policy for Ontario's publicly funded District School Boards.

In 2013-14 school boards reported that 16.59% of the total student population or 334,312 students were receiving special education programs and/or services. Approximately 83% of all students (86% secondary) receiving special education programs and/or services are placed in regular classrooms for more than half of the instructional day.

In 2015-16, Special Education Grant (SEG) will provide Ontario's 72 publicly funded District School Boards with a projected \$2.72 billion which is an increase of \$1.1 billion or nearly 68 percent since 2002-03. In 2015-16 a new model for allocating the High Needs Amount (HNA) allocation will continue to be phased in over a four year period. SEG has six components:

1. Special Education Per-Pupil Amount (SEPPA) – is allocated on the basis of total enrolment. It provides additional assistance to the majority of students with special education needs.
2. High Needs Amount (HNA) – addresses the variation among boards with respect to students with special education needs and boards' abilities to respond to these needs.
3. Special Equipment Amount (SEA) – made up of two components. SEA Per Pupil Amount and SEA Claims-Based Amount. The 2015-16 SEA Funding Guidelines will be made available on the Ministry's funding webpage:
<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/funding.html>
4. Special Incidence Portion (SIP) – supports pupils who require more than two full-time staff to address the health and safety needs of both the students who have extraordinary high needs related to their disabilities and/or exceptionalities and of others at their school. The 2015-16 SIP Funding Guidelines will be made available on the Ministry's funding webpage:
<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/funding.html>
5. Facilities Amount (FA) – Supports education programs for school-aged children and youth in Government-approved facilities such as hospitals, custody or correctional facilities, or a care and/or treatment facility (program based).

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6. Behaviour Expertise Amount (BEA) – provides funding for the hiring of additional board level Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) expertise to support principals, teachers and multi-disciplinary transitions teams.

Linda Busuttill questioned whether there is an uneven burden across the province between the Catholic and Public school boards regarding funding. Janice Wright responded there is no data to confirm this.

Linda Busuttill questioned the amount received from the Pupil Foundation Grant as this is not included with the SEG. Janice Wright responded that depending on the grade, it is \$5,000 to \$6,000 per pupil.

Dr. Martha Rogers provided an overview of the draft budget. Enrolment is declining across the province and there are 400 less students in our board. Mental health is a large concern in the Upper Grand District School Board.

Linda Busuttill questioned whether the students we are seeing are special needs or high needs. Where do these students come from? Dr. Martha Rogers responded that the public boards get a greater number of high needs as they provide more specialized programs. There is an increase in autism, FASD, emotional and behavioural students. Other boards have cut their funding and many students are relocating to the rural areas or to other boards to access their programs. Sue Shaw questioned whether class sizes would be affected. Dr. Martha Rogers responded that class sizes are legislated and would not be changed.

Special Education Plan and Report

The Special Education Report and Plan are being worked on. The feedback from SEAC has been included in the updates. Tracey Lindsay has colour coded sections of the Plan to determine how often each section will need to be reviewed and updated. Green signifies updates for this year. Pink is reporting for this year but changes required for the next year. Feedback from Google Docs and the goals from BIPSA will be the changes reflected in pink. Yellow is for review only and next year these sections of the Special Education Plan will be brought to each meeting for review.

Tracey Lindsay would like to see the difference with the Plan and Report. She has designed a new reporting document and with the committee's approval, we will submit the Report in the new format. An update and final draft will be brought to the June meeting.

Carrie Proudfoot thanked Tracey Lindsay for her update.

Open Forum

Sharon Dills (Learning Disabilities Association of Wellington County) – reminder of workshop “Mathematics – Supporting Students with a Learning Disability” on May 26, 2015 with Peter Wright. Register online at info@ldawc.ca

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Stacey Stevens (VOICE for Hearing Impaired Children) – VOICE Family Camp is August 7th – 9th weekend in Haliburton Highlands.

Jason Offer (Association for Bright Children-ABC) - Updated committee on the Pro Grant application. Committee has met several times and collaborated online as well. The goal is to raise the visibility of SEAC with parents and associations outside Upper Grand District School Board. Pro Grant committee is working at building a communication strategy between the school board and parents on how to advocate for the student. An all-day seminar is being planned for October 2015 for this purpose. The application will be submitted by May 19, 2015.

Carole Craig, (Integration Action for Inclusion in Education and Community (Ontario)) – “Stories of Possibility: Supporting Roles, Relationships, and Places of Belonging” workshop with Janet Klees on Saturday, May 23, 2015 in Barrie. Onsite childcare is available; everyone welcome. AGM is at 2:30 p.m. Register online at www.integration-inclusion.com for workshop

Carrie Proudfoot (Autism Ontario-Wellington County) – Webinar “Transitioning to Adulthood: Employment Strategies and Life Skills for Teens and Young Adults with ASD”
- One-to-One Summer Support Worker Reimbursement Fund is available
www.autismontario.com

Laurie Whyte (FASworld Canada) – May 14 is Ontario Children and Youth in Care Day through the Ontario Association of Children’s Aid Societies. FASD will hold roundtable discussions to discuss strategies for Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder. Deadline for online survey is August 2015
<http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/topics/specialneeds/fasd/survey.aspx>

Updates from the Superintendent of Program

- Digital Saturday on May 9, 2015 in Palmerston had over 100 people in attendance. Ben McCabe was available to answer questions from parents and students.
- William C. Winegard Public School official opening is May 21, 2015
- Every Day Heroes presentation will be made on Wednesday, May 27, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. in the E. L. Fox Auditorium, John F. Ross C.V.I. A reception will follow in the school's cafeteria.
- “Achieving by Believing” awards will be presented at the Program Committee meeting on June 2, 2015
- Educational Assistants (EA) and Child and Youth Counsellor (CYC) allocations will be held this month
- Special Olympics Track and Field day on May 20, 2015 at St. James High School at 10:00 a.m.
- Trudy Counter informed the committee that the “Dufferin Wellington Special Needs Strategy Proposal Table-Communique #2” has been posted on their website:
dufferinwellingtonspecialneedsstrategy.weebly.com

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Trustee Report

Linda Busuttil – In Camera session at Business Operations meeting discussed administration changes for September 2015-16.

Elementary and Secondary Identified Schools Reports presented to Board regarding enrolments for 2015-16.

French Review to begin Thursday, May 14, 2015.

Sue Shaw questioned if Special Education training was a requirement for Principals and Vice-Principals. Tracey Lindsay responded that there are no requirements but recommendations. There is a course that Principals and Vice-Principals can complete. Brent McDonald, Superintendent of Education is responsible for Board Leadership and will be addressing Special Education and French Immersion as part of their bio. Bruce Schieck has been on the selection committee and confirmed that there are no requirements at this time.

Meeting Summary, Recommendation(s), Motions(s) and Action(s)

- Action Item – Dispute Resolution – take the research that Don Richardson has brought to the committee and articulate the process. This will be added to the Parent Guide, posted to the website and included in future communications.
- Research mechanism to collect statistics for FASD
- Special Education Plan and Report will come back to June SEAC with changes
- Google hangout for SEAC meeting
- Pro Grant application is due on Tuesday, May 19, 2015. Linda Busuttil will draft up a form letter of support for associations and Board to be included with the application. Jason Offer will collect all data and submit application.

Jason Offer requested that presenters provide their information to be available on UGCloud for review prior to the meeting.

Email your list of questions for Inclusion presentation to Tracey Lindsay for our June SEAC meeting.

Other

Adjournment

Laurie White motioned for adjournment of meeting at 9:50 p.m. Seconded by Carole Craig.

The motion carried.