

UPPER GRAND DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD
SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

The Special Education Advisory Committee of the Upper Grand District School Board met on Wednesday, May 9, 2012, at 7:00 p.m. in the Boardroom at 500 Victoria Road North, Guelph.

The following Association Members were present:

Pauline Busby, Community Living Guelph-Wellington, Sharon Dills, Learning Disabilities Association of Wellington County, Beth Haworth, Community Member-at-Large, Jason Offer, Association for Bright Children (ABC), Don Richardson, Integration Action for Inclusion in Education and Community (Ontario), Sue Shaw and Carrie Proudfoot, Autism Ontario-Wellington County, Stacey Stevens, VOICE for Hearing Impaired Children, and Laurie Whyte, FASworld Canada (Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders).

Present from Staff were:

Trudy Counter, Coordinator-Communication, Language and Speech Services, Lesley Anne Jordan and Barb Tomkins, Special Education Consultants, Christine Kay, Elementary Principal, Tracey Lindsay, Principal of Program, Doug Morrell, Superintendent of Program, Sandra Roberts, Secondary Vice-Principal, Martha Rogers, Director of Education, Sandra Szpular, Collaborative Projects Lead/Special Education Coordinator and Janice Wright, Superintendent of Finance.

The following Trustees were present:

Marty Fairbairn and Jennifer Waterston

The following members sent regrets:

Kim Brenner, Parents for Children's Mental Health-Wellington County and Katie Vanderyt, VIEWS for Children Who Are Blind or Have Low Vision.

Jennifer Waterston called the meeting to order and welcomed our guests this evening.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Don Richardson requested an item be added to the agenda under Meeting Summary, Recommendation(s) and Motion(s).

Moved by Pauline Busby

That the agenda of the May 7, 2012 meeting be approved with the requested addition.

The motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The following amendment was made to the minutes of the meeting held April 11, 2012;

- Page 5, second paragraph, amendment of the sentence, "Sue Shaw suggested that as the date for the anti-bullying information is not yet set, that SEAC be presented to on current Board policies/practices from PPM 145: Progressive Discipline and

Promoting Positive Student Behaviour.”

Moved by Sharon Dills

That the minutes of the meeting held on April 11, 2012 be approved as amended.

The motion carried.

PARENT GUIDE TO SPECIAL EDUCATION

Sandra Szpular, Special Education Coordinator/Collaborative Projects Lead provided background reminding SEAC of the time spent reviewing and revising the Special Education Report last year. The Special Education Report is to be updated and available on the Upper Grand DSB website by September 1, 2012 along with the Parent Guide to Special Education.

The Parent Guide distributed has been revised to include the recommendations put forward by SEAC in the fall. Some suggestions include changing the order of items, explanation of the Individual Education Plan (IEP) process and Identification Placement Review Committee (IPRC) process and listing the different exceptionalities. Sandra thanked Trudy Counter for her work in editing the document for plain language.

The Parent Guide has been reviewed by the Special Education Review Committee and the suggested changes were incorporated. One addition was to include information about the Case Conference. Sue Shaw expressed concern about adding an additional meeting in the way of a Case Conference. Tracey Lindsay provided information about the difference between a Consultant Supported Team (CST) meeting and a Case Conference.

Members broke into groups and provided suggestions for recommended changes. These include: outlining the importance of the CST meeting and how this should be identified as a professional meeting; information about the Case Conference noting this can take place at any time; emphasizing parents are informed every step of the way; moving the information about the IPRC to the beginning of the document; an emphasis on the result being an optimal educational outcome for the student; a flowchart outlining the process which would include text for accessibility purposes; and ensure it contains plain language.

Laurie Whyte added that parents need to be provided with clear information before they receive things like an IEP for their child. Jennifer Waterston suggested this could be added to the school newsletters and the school websites. Sharon Dills reminded that not all parents have access to computers and are therefore unable to access websites. A common theme for recommendations by SEAC members was the importance of clear communication about Special Education through a variety of methods.

LETTER IN RESPONSE TO THE DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES ONTARIO (DSO) PRESENTATION

Jennifer Waterston asked for feedback about the letter in response to the Developmental Services Ontario presentation and the two amendments which was distributed. Following a brief discussion, it was decided that Amendment #2 was preferred.

Laurie Whyte moved that Amendment #2 of the letter in response to the Developmental Services Ontario presentation be approved.

The motion carried.

2012-2013 BUDGET

This evening, Dr. Martha Rogers, Director of Education and Janice Wright, Superintendent of Finance thanked SEAC for the invitation to attend and present information about the budget. Martha Rogers explained the budget information being shared this evening is still in draft and has not been shared with Trustees; however a balanced budget will be shared with Trustees on June 4, 2012.

Janice Wright spoke about the revenue side of the budget and referred to the 2012: B5 memo entitled "Education funding for 2012-13" which was distributed. This memo provides information about the Grants for Student Needs (GSN) and begins by referring to the government's commitment to elementary and secondary education.

The Support for Student Achievement outlines the government's commitment to the existing Provincial Discussion Table (PDT) agreements that will carry-over. The 2012 Provincial Discussion Table refers to the proposed 2012-13 staff compensation, sick leave plans and retirement gratuities. The enhancements to keep up with costs, reforms and refinements to the GSN were reviewed as was the program enhancement grant and outdoor education and learning opportunities grant. The New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP) Allocation funding was also referenced.

The Special Education Grant is projected to remain the same. Our board continues to spend more money than we receive in the area of special education. The Ministry plans to continue to review and refine the components of the Special Education Grant during 2012-13. The Efficiency and Savings Measures from 2011-12 and the Savings Measures introduced for 2012-13 were also shared. One of the savings measures to be implemented in 2013-14 is a four-year high school program whereby once a student reaches a limit of 34 secondary school credits, additional credits will be funded at a lower rate than the day school rate.

Memo 2012: B6 entitled 2012-13 "Funding in addition to Grants for Student Needs" outlines the funding to be allocated to Boards. The names of the "Education Programs – Other (EPO)" and "Official Languages in Education (OLE)" are contained in the memo as well as a brief description of each. Some of the EPO funds we need to apply to receive whereas others do not require an application. The allocated funds have been added beside the name of those where we know how much funding we will receive.

The 2012-13 Projections/Comparison – Boards of Similar Size and the 2012-13 Projections/Comparisons of Neighbouring Boards displays how funding varies from board to board.

Sue Shaw asked if the four-year high school program covers students in special education programs. Janice Wright responded that this is based on credit acquisition and since

students in developmental disability programs may attend until the age of 21 they will obtain credits at their pace.

Jason Offer asked how many students we had attending secondary school even though they had already earned their 34 secondary school credits. Janice Wright responded that in 2010-11 we had approximately 249 students who had in excess of 34 credits. Jason Offer also inquired about how many students the Special Education Amount is based on. Janice Wright responded explaining there are four components to the Special Education Per Pupil Amount (SEPPA) and the Ministry is continuing to review and refine this grant.

Sue Shaw inquired about the special education transportation amount. Janice Wright explained that our board was part of an efficiency review whereby we received a high rating and therefore receive a higher amount of funding for transportation.

Don Richardson asked if our board received any funds for Safe Schools – Student Support Leadership Initiative. Janice responded that we did not. Sandra Szpular added that although our board did not receive this funding we benefit from the Student Support Leadership Initiative services. Don further inquired whether we participate in Equity and Inclusive Education – Parent Engagement. Doug Morrell answered yes, through the Toronto Area Regional Office.

Martha Rogers provided information about the expenditures portion of the budget this evening. She began talking about the projected enrolment which appears to be leveling off in the elementary panel however some areas of the board are seeing a decline at the secondary panel. Despite the projected enrolment, there is a projected increase in the number of elementary teachers required which is partially due to Full Day Kindergarten and the increase in elementary teacher planning time. There may be an additional special education program added in the City of Guelph to accommodate the number of students moving from elementary to secondary.

Although some boards are projecting a significant reduction in the amount of Educational Assistants, the number of Education Assistants allocated to special education in our board has not been reduced in the draft expenditures budget.

The number of Early Childhood Educators in Full Day Kindergarten (FDK) has increased as the number of schools offering FDK in our board has grown. There are no reductions to the Professional and Para Professional group.

Jason Offer asked if he could receive a copy of the final allocations once the budget has been approved. Janice Wright responded that the budget presentation will be held on June 4, 2012 at 7:00 p.m. and is open for anyone to attend. The final budget handouts will be available at the meeting. If you would like to receive a package, please let her know.

Sue Shaw thanked Martha Rogers for the information presented and the fact that there are no plans to reduce Educational Assistants.

Sue Shaw further acknowledged and congratulated Martha Rogers on her recent Women

of Achievement Lifetime Achievement Award.

ACCESSIBILITY POSTERS

Sandra Szpular spoke about the Accessibility posters following feedback and concerns received from SEAC.

The concerns expressed were about the wording on the Accessibility Poster. This was shared with the Accessibility Committee and the decision was made to recall the original Accessibility Posters and re-issue new posters. The Accessibility Poster in the main foyer of the Board office has been replaced and others will be replaced throughout the Upper Grand DSB.

OPEN FORUM

Stacey Stevens reported on the Annual VOICE Conference held the weekend of May 4th and was happy the Upper Grand DSB was represented at the professional workshop day as part of the conference. The Waterloo Wellington Chapter is having a BBQ on May 31 at Kidsability 6:00 p.m.

Don Richardson reported on the Annual General Meeting of Integration Action for Inclusion in Education and Community (Ontario). They are planning a provincial conference in Kingston to take place in the spring of 2013 and looking at ways to work with other associations. He commended the board on their work with Guelph Police Services around bullying. The Guelph Police and the Bookshelf partnered for a special screening of "BULLY" in April. This is scheduled to be playing at the Elora Cinema May 12 to 24th.

Jason Offer reported ABC is currently talking about the IEP Internal Review and ways we can get SEAC members involved so we are aware of how this is progressing. Sandra Szpular mentioned that Sharon Dills and Lesley Anne Jordan are part of this process and the review will be on June 12th. The report is due at the end of June and will be shared with SEAC in September.

Carrie Proudfoot referred to the "BULLY" movie and it is hoped that Autism Ontario will be featuring this in the fall. A movie morning will be held on May 12th, the open forum will held on May 14th and swimming is scheduled for May 26th. The Annual General Meeting will be on May 28th and the Provincial AGM will be held in June. The family BBQ is scheduled for June 26th.

Laurie Whyte reported on the Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) training provided to Educational Assistants on the PA Day noting it was well attended and there has been positive feedback received. She also advised that FASD1 has received funding for a public health campaign to increase awareness. She asked whether Special Education Consultants were still gathering information about the number of students with FASD to which Barb Tomkins responded that the numbers gathered are of students diagnosed with FASD. Laurie Whyte further inquired about the Sticks and Stones video that she suggested be shared with SEAC. Doug Morrell responded that we are requesting the

person that developed this video come and share it at the June meeting.

Sharon Dills reported LDAO is planning their fall events. She spoke about Eric Gillis, an Olympian, teacher and father diagnosed with dyslexia who spoke about his challenges growing up with dyslexia at a recent presentaion. The LDAO Newsletter is expected shortly. She reminded this week is Children's Mental Health week.

UPDATES FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT OF PROGRAM

Doug Morrell congratulated staff on the PA Day sessions. The Parent Involvement Committee (PIC) offered a workshop for parents, teachers and administrators on April 26th featuring Anne Henderson author of Beyond the Bake Sale whereby positive feedback has been received.

On the afternoon of May 7th, the Special Education department provided an inservice for Special Education Resource Teachers. The topics included IPRC reviews, the role of the transitional educational assistant and mental health. An inservice for secondary will focus on mental health with three secondary schools presenting on how they support other schools in the area of mental health.

The memo "Instructions Regarding School Boards' Reports on the Provision of Special Education Programs and Services, 2012" was received and will be an item discussed at the June SEAC Meeting.

The Special Olympics Day for students in developmental disability programs will be held on May 23, 2012 at St. James High School.

TRUSTEE REPORT

There was nothing to report this evening.

MEETING SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATION(S) AND MOTION(S)

After reviewing Policy 503 Student Discipline, Bullying Prevention and Intervention and Policy 504 Equity and Inclusive Education, Don Richardson tabled until the next meeting, a motion outlining the actions he suggested SEAC urge the Board and Director of Education do regarding board policies, ministry regulation compliance and conducting an audit. This will be attached to the meeting minutes.

ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Laurie Whyte

That the meeting be adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

The motion carried.