

**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, October 12, 2011, at 7:00 p.m. in the Boardroom at 500 Victoria Road North, Guelph.

**The following Association Members were present:**

Kim Brenner, Parents for Children's Mental Health-Wellington County, Beth Haworth, Community Member-at-Large, Jason Offer, Association for Bright Children (ABC) and Don Richardson, Integration Action for Inclusion in Education and Community (Ontario).

**Present from Staff were:**

Heather Boswell, Superintendent of Program, Carla Anderson, Lesley Anne Jordan, Barb Tomkins, and Leta Vos, Special Education Consultants, Trudy Counter, Coordinator-Communication, Language and Speech Services, Christine Kay, Elementary Principal, Sandra Szpular, Collaborative Projects Lead/Special Education Coordinator and Bonnie Talbot, Principal of Program.

**The following Trustees were present:**

Marty Fairbairn and Jennifer Waterston.

**The following members sent regrets:**

Pauline Busby, Community Living Guelph-Wellington, Heather Clemmer, Easter Seals Ontario, Sharon Dills, Learning Disabilities Association of Wellington County, Sue Shaw, Autism Ontario-Wellington County, Stacey Stevens, VOICE for Hearing Impaired Children, Katie Vanderyt, VIEWS for Children Who Are Blind or Have Low Vision, and Laurie Whyte, FASworld Canada (Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders).

**The following member was absent:**

Sandra Roberts, Secondary Vice-Principal.

Heather Boswell called the meeting to order as the Chair was absent.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA and APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

As a quorum of SEAC members were not present at the meeting this evening, no motions for approval of the agenda or the minutes of the meeting held on September 14, 2011 were made.

**APPOINTMENT OF NEW SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBER**

Heather Boswell, Superintendent of Program, welcomed Don Richardson as a new

Special Education Advisory Committee member and read the letter addressed to Clayton Eaton, President of Integration Action for Inclusion in Education and Community advising that at its meeting on September 27, 2011, the Upper Grand District School Board adopted the following resolution:

THAT the Board accept Don Richardson as a member of the Special Education Advisory Committee, representing Integration Action for Inclusion in Education and Community (Ontario) for a term ending December 1, 2014.

Don Richardson introduced himself as a parent and noted he is a member of the Upper Grand DSB Equity and Inclusive Education Committee. He provided a brief overview of Integration Action for Inclusion in Education and Community which is represented across Ontario. With a focus on inclusion, they participate in advocacy work, and research and development around new programs. He referred to the book entitled *Leadership for Inclusion*.

### **SPECIAL EDUCATION IN THE UPPER GRAND DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD 2011-2012**

Sandra Szpular, Special Education Coordinator/Collaborative Projects Lead shared Special Education in the UGDSB: Focus on Achievement 2011-12. She began by speaking about building and celebrating the success of students in special education and the planning and reporting of student achievement. Grade 3 and Grade 6 EQAO results in reading, writing and mathematics for special education students achieving at level 3 and 4 were shared and compared to the provincial results. The results presented were for students with an Individual Education Plan (not including gifted students). Grade 9 mathematics and OSSLT results over time were also shared.

Sandra Szpular spoke about the Resource Teacher inservice where teachers were asked to share practices they felt were helpful to the success of their students. The use of technology being more readily available, the assistance of the Itinerant Technology Resource Teacher working with students, and using different approaches (i.e. Differentiated Instruction, Teaching Learning Cycles) were a few examples shared.

The Board's Strategic Plan direction focusing on the three main goals and the key strategies for student achievement were referenced. The key strategies: learning goals, success criteria, descriptive feedback, accountable talk, and guided practice are focused on when working with students with special education needs. The departments within program services are continuing to focus their efforts on increasing student achievement for students receiving special education support.

Work around transition planning, mental health, and collaborating with community agencies and families also continue to be Upper Grand DSB priorities. Improved resiliency and self advocacy is an emphasis as emotional and social well-being is essential. On November 7, 2011, the Upper Grand DSB will be holding a third Mental Health Forum. The document, *Making a Difference: An Educators Guide to Child and*

*Youth Mental Health Problems* to support mental health in our schools will be highlighted.

The Special Education Resources and Procedures were reviewed. UG2GO is one resource that provides support to learning at home. Resource Teacher training is taking place on the updated standardized assessment Woodcock-Johnson III – Form C. It will be one of the tools schools will use when considering a Psychological Assessment for students.

Sandra Szpular concluded her presentation by reading a statement from *Caring and Safe Schools in Ontario* “Feelings of belonging enhance students’ self-esteem and can contribute both directly and indirectly to improvements in academic and behavioural functioning and overall mental health.”

Members were asked to consider the following questions:

1. What messages from this presentation are priorities for your organization?
2. Are there topics that you would like to bring to SEAC related to this presentation?

Kim Brenner commented that it was nice to hear about Ministry resources and new technology.

Don Richardson would be interested in hearing about what practices are successful and implications for recommendations on effective practices.

Marty Fairbairn asked about the earliest age we would consider assessing a student. Sandra Szpular stated that a number of students entering school come with rich assessment information. In our Board, the Woodcock-Johnson III – Form C can be used for students in kindergarten to grade 12. Trudy Counter added that the Early Learning Needs Assessment (ELNA) which is used by staff in the Communication, Language and Speech Services and Psychological Services departments is available for students in kindergarten and grade 1.

Marty Fairbairn inquired whether staff envisioned a time when all students had a Psychological Assessment for social/emotional. Bonnie Talbot spoke about the At-Risk screening for students in grade K – 8 and provided explanation around this screening tool. It is a questionnaire completed by classroom teachers each year and can be used to identify students, classrooms or schools where additional support may be needed (e.g. Child and Youth Counsellor). Heather Boswell added that this questionnaire draws the teacher to the whole child. Sandra Szpular mentioned there is a common tool being used in the Dufferin area for social/emotional called the Child & Adolescent Strengths and Needs Assessment.

### **PARENT GUIDE TO SPECIAL EDUCATION – COMMITTEE FEEDBACK FOLLOWING THE SEPTEMBER SEAC MEETING**

As a quorum of SEAC members was not present at the meeting this evening, this item

will be presented at a future meeting.

### **OPEN FORUM**

Kim Brenner reminded everyone of the Family Information Fair in Fergus on October 29, 2011 from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Kim will be attending on behalf of Parents for Children's Mental Health-Wellington County. She also spoke about the series featured on Canada AM last week about Suicide and Mental Health in Canada.

Don Richardson would like to have a guest speaker present on inclusion and equity. He inquired whether the Equity and Inclusive Education Policy had been presented to SEAC and if SEAC had been given an opportunity to review this policy. Heather Boswell responded that this could be an item on an upcoming agenda and Donna Gerber, Equity Officer will be invited to speak to this policy.

Jason Offer reported the Association for Bright Children of Ontario (ABC) is holding their Annual Conference and Annual General Meeting on October 28 and 29, 2011 at Sheridan College in Oakville. You may register on-line at [www.abcontario.ca](http://www.abcontario.ca)

### **UPDATES FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT OF PROGRAM**

Heather Boswell reported the Resource Teacher inservices held on September 22 and 23, 2011 were well attended. Special Education Consultants have been working with schools and reviewing Educational Assistant allocation support and the necessary changes have been made. The EA allocations will be reviewed again in the new year.

This afternoon, Heather met with an Auditor who has been hired by the Ministry to work with boards. These meetings are used to review board practices and provide guidance regarding risks and efficiencies, where necessary.

Flyers received from various groups were displayed on a side table. Heather Boswell reminded anyone interested in receiving any of the flyers to sign their name on the particular flyer. These will be emailed to you. Also a reminder to review the Provincial Associations Contact Information on the SEAC brochure and notify Donna Glodziak of any updates as we are having more brochures printed.

At the November 9<sup>th</sup> SEAC Meeting, Alison Morse from Ontario Association for Families of Children with Communication Disorders will be providing SEAC Training. Topics will include: Legislation and Requirements, PAAC on SEAC, SEAC Meetings, and Best Practices. If members would like additional information presented they are to notify Donna Glodziak who will pass this along to Alison.

### **TRUSTEE REPORT**

Jennifer Waterston reported the implementation of Full Day Kindergarten has put some pressure on the accommodation of students in certain areas of the board. We are

therefore working on a capital plan which may impact schools (i.e. renovations or boundary changes). Three public meetings have been scheduled to share an overview on the following dates: October 13, 2011 at Westside Secondary School, October 18, 2011 at College Heights Secondary School and October 19, 2011 at Centre Wellington District High School. More information will be provided in the future.

Marty Fairbairn shared some of the items reviewed at the Ontario Public School Boards Association (OPSBA) meeting including: The Child and Youth Mental Health Strategy at the Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education (MACSE), The Child & Youth Mental Health Summit, and a Diagnostic Assessment.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 8:46 p.m.