

Upper Grand District School Board
Special Education Advisory Committee

Minutes
Wednesday, September 10, 2014

The Special Education Advisory Committee of the Upper Grand District School Board met on Wednesday, September 10, 2014 at 7:00 p.m. in the Boardroom at 500 Victoria Road North, Guelph.

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

Present from Staff were: Trudy Counter, Coordinator of Communication, Language and Speech Services, Tracey Lindsay, Superintendent of Program, Jacqueline Foster, Special Education Coordinator, Cheryl VanOoteghem, Principal of Program, Christine Kay, Principal, Special Education Consultants; Carla Anderson, Mark Howe, Ben McCabe, Jackie Speers, Naomi Theodor, Kathy Green

Regrets, Lesley Anne Jordan, Special Education Consultant, Kim Brenner, Parents for Children's Mental Health-Wellington County

Absent: Pauline Busby, Community Living Guelph-Wellington, Beth Haworth, Community Member-at-Large, Jennifer Waterston, Trustee

Marty Fairbairn welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the school year and called the meeting to order. He also extended a welcome to Linda Busutill, Trustee and John Potocska.

Announcement: Parents for Children's Mental Health-Wellington County is taking a hiatus this year. Kim Brenner, Parents for Children's Mental Health-Wellington County has communicated her withdrawal from SEAC. Carole Craig will be welcome at SEAC meetings but Beth Haworth is Member-at-Large.

Approval of Agenda

Stacey Stevens moved that the Agenda of September 10, 2014 meeting be approved.

The motion carried.

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Approval of Minutes

Carrie Proudfoot moved that the minutes of the meeting held on June 11, 2014 be approved as printed.

The motion carried.

Welcome

Tracey Lindsay, Superintendent of Program welcomed everyone back to SEAC. There have been several changes through the summer. Jacqueline Foster is now a 1.0 Special Education Coordinator replacing Sandra Ellis who is the Community Connections and Collaborative Projects Lead full-time. Barbra Tomkins has become the Vice-Principal of JD Hogarth and Leta Vos has returned to the school. We have hired new Special Education Consultants: Jackie Speers from East Garafraxa Public School (Developmental portfolio), Benjamin McCabe from College Heights Secondary School (Secondary portfolio), Kathy Green is SERT from Erin Public School (Autism, and Blind and Low Vision portfolios) and Naomi Theodor will be full-time taking the Gifted portfolios.

Jacqueline Foster increased consultants this year by 1.5 and changed the model slightly. Consultants were all ASD trained in the summer. Jacqueline will provide more information at the October SEAC meeting regarding SERT training.

Review of Action Items

1. WIFI Sticks -One action item from the June meeting was the use of WIFI sticks being available to students for home use. IT is still working on the logistics of this possibility.
2. Parent Survey - The initial Parent Survey was prepared on Google Docs and generated a fair amount of responses. IT summer students removed any personal information and left the valuable data. Tracey is working on formatting this data to provide a comprehensive report. There is good information for the Superintendents regarding specific parent concerns. Jason Offer has offered to analyze the data to provide a useable report for SEAC. The committee decided that using a professional organization for the survey will benefit SEAC; both in collecting the data and summarizing the results in a workable format. Tracey will be meeting with a representative to view the options.
Laurie Whyte asked if any results had been shared and Tracey responded that they were shared with SEAC. Comments from the survey reflected the need to improve communication between home and school. Communication is the number one goal on the Special Education Plan and was shared with the Special Education teachers and consultants to find a way to communicate more effectively.

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3. Don Richardson asked about the action items from the June meeting:
 1. Guidelines for Integrated Transition Plans
 2. Lack of accessibility for students with Special Needs on field trips
 3. Feedback to Ministry re: Special Education Plan and Report
 4. Link to glossary of acronyms in Special Education Plan and Report

Tracey Lindsay responded that they will be included for the next meeting.

IEP Information

Mark Howe, Special Education Consultant presented an update regarding IEPs. An internal audit was done in 2011-2012 using a scoring rubric. Area of need that was identified was “Annual goals for modified and alternative programs”. In 2013-2014, workshops for elementary SERTs, teachers of LD and MID special classes were held in Orangeville and Guelph. Participants worked together to improve annual program goals in modified and alternative programs and also to introduce the writing of Transition Plans for all students with IEPs (PPM 156). All work completed was saved on UG Cloud for later use and for sharing with staff at their school. The plan is to bring this information to the new SERTs each year in a condensed format. An IEP working group comprised of elementary and secondary resource, itinerant and classroom teachers brought different ideas together for a new document to be created to support classroom teachers and SERTs with writing IEPs. This is a work in progress and is being piloted in several schools.

Jacqueline Foster commented that in the past there have been some good exemplars from the Ministry.

Sue Shaw responded that some exemplars are quite good from the Ministry. However, if a parent needs to explain everything to the classroom teacher, some communication may not be as clear. Sue Shaw has offered to help with the explanation that needs to be in the IEP.

Mark commented that the plan was to complete the IEP Writing Guide by the end of this school year (2014-2015) or the beginning of September 2015. This guide needs to be accurate before it is released.

The IEP accommodations have been modified to allow more than 10 selections. Previously, the engine allowed only 10. We are advocating that teachers provide accommodations that are appropriate for the student, not generic or too numerous. We have now included a pop-up starting on the ninth accommodation for each category will ask questions to ensure that the appropriate accommodations are chosen for the student.

Workshops were held in February and May and the audit was done in May. The audit showed that the 2013-2014 Special Education Plan goal for improved annual goals was met in the samples of audited IEPs. The audit identified parent contact and/or documentation of contact as an area of weakness on the IEP.

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Goals for 2014-2015 include transition plans for each IEP and improving communication.

Carrie Proudfoot suggested that a workshop for parents to understand their student's IEP would be helpful.

Sue Shaw commented that the transition plan and statements need to be more informative. She felt that if there was no transition plan indicated, that did not mean there wasn't one in place. Mark Howe responded that additional statements can be added.

Sue Shaw asked if the statements regarding smart goals could be more understandable.

Don Richardson commented that last year SEAC passed a motion to not limit the accommodations and the Board would not listen. Tracey Lindsay responded that we did find a way to address SEAC's motion and still have a mechanism to alert teachers to be mindful of listing accommodation that are appropriate for the student, not generic or too numerous. Don Richardson asked that the minutes reflect the decision to have more than 10 accommodations as per SEAC's motion is now in effect.

Special Education Resource Teacher In-Service

Jacqueline Foster, Special Education Coordinator welcomed everyone and is excited to be in her new role. The SERT in-service will be held on September 15 and 16 and will provide training and networking for everyone. Some of the experienced SERTs will be mentors for the new staff. Exercises will be set up carousel style. Questions include: What is the role of principal, teacher, SERT, EA? How would you support the students? How is the student support working? Ask parents if this is working. Case study will be part of this in-service. What will be the best practices for this?

SEA equipment and delivery will be updated by Carla Anderson.

A new PPM has come from the Ministry regarding learning disabilities. This information will be shared at a future SEAC meeting.

Trustee Elections and SEAC

Marty Fairbairn suggested that as this is the election year, elections for SEAC will be deferred to the December meeting.

Open Forum

Stacey Stevens (Voice for Hearing Impaired Children) November 16, Kidsability will be hosting a talk – Auditory Everyday – and how to incorporate this each day.

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Sharon Dills (Learning Disabilities Association of Wellington County) Newsletter distributed to the Board. An extra one will be delivered in December. On September 17, a workshop "I Have A Diagnosis, Now What?" will discuss learning disabilities and how to support them.

Laurie Whyte (FASworld Canada) Annual reminder that September 9 is FASDay. This is recognized in 42 countries and 2014 is the 25th anniversary of this organization. The message is that alcohol and pregnancy do not mix.

Carrie Proudfoot (Autism Ontario-Wellington County) Building Better Futures is opening up. Autism training is available in October.

Updates from the Superintendent of Program

- September 11 is Suicide Prevention Day
- We have a new name and logo
- Four new schools were opened this September 2014
- Full day Family of Schools meeting on September 24, will be all about Student Support and Program Services. This is an opportunity for all Principals and Vice-Principals to take back the information of support services available. The message is that they are there to support the students and we support the teachers to teach the students. Information from this meeting will be brought to SEAC.
- Sandra Ellis is still involved with SEA equipment. Sandra was able to purchase all the SEA equipment for all the claims that were put forth to June 2014.
- Transportation issues have been reviewed and students are no longer going home earlier unless it there are serious health issues.
- EA support will be reallocated at the end of September.
- We now have more students from out of board and need more EA support.
- We have started a Twitter account and a Facebook page. We will need training on how to tweet and post. Both avenues are a great way of communicating our services.

Laurie Whyte asked if Jaqueline Foster would like FASworld input regarding EA training and support. Jaqueline Foster will contact Laurie.

Don Richardson commented about students signing contracts regarding their learning and behaviour. The feedback has not been positive. Tracey responded that all forms have been revised to include parents and students input: Tracey will remind Principals that teachers should use the new forms and not Behaviour or Academic "contracts". We do not advocate this. Thank you Don for bringing this to our attention.

Sue Shaw asked if smart goals were being done in the IEP. Mark Howe responded that they are observable and measurable types of goals, not smart goals.

Sharon Dills would like to see an ongoing list for items that need to be addressed. Tracey Lindsay responded that we will generate one.

Carrie Proudfoot thanked everyone that worked on the SEA claims and they are all completed.

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Trustee Report

Election on October 27, 2014: Everyone is preparing for the election. Linda Busutill informed the committee that the draft of the Strategic Directions Plan has been approved. Equity of Access is included.

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

Correspondence received: Don Richardson moved that Marty Fairbairn draft a letter of support on behalf of SEAC regarding the Teacher's College requirement of have Special Education Part 1 mandatory. All agreed.

For Action Item Chart

- Guidelines for Integrated Transition Plans to be shared (Sandra Ellis)
- Next year's Special Education Plan to be discussed earlier
- SEAC provide feedback to the Ministry to make the Special Education Report and Plan more meaningful for parents
- Rubric (IEP review) added to report as an appendix (done-page 96 of Report)
- Clarifications about Special Education Field Trips – assumptions around field trips
- Explore the possibility of a workshop for parents around IEPs

New Action Items

- Marty will write a letter on behalf of SEAC regarding the Teacher's College requirement to have Special Education Part 1
- Sue Shaw recommends that we should have parent feedback for Accommodations and Modifications
- Message to SERT and Administration regarding Learning/Behaviour contracts

Adjournment

Sue Shaw moved that the Committee adjourn at 8:40 p.m. to report to the Board.

The motion carried.