

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, September 14, 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, Pauline Busby, Community Living Guelph-Wellington, Sharon Dills, Learning Disabilities Association of Wellington County, Sue Shaw, Autism Ontario-Wellington County, Carrie Proudfoot, 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).

Present from Staff were:

Heather Boswell, Superintendent of Program, Carla Anderson, Barb Tomkins, and Leta Vos, Special Education Consultants, Trudy Counter, Coordinator, Communication, Language and Speech Services, Jacqueline Foster, Special Education Coordinator/Special Education Consultant , Chris Kay, Elementary Principal, Sandra Szpular, Collaborative Projects Lead/Special Education Coordinator and Bonnie Talbot, Principal of Program.

The following Trustee was present:

Marty Fairbairn

The following members sent regrets:

Heather Clemmer, Easter Seals Ontario, Beth Haworth, Community Member at Large, Jason Offer, Association for Bright Children of Ontario (ABC), and Jennifer Waterston, Trustee.

The following member was absent:

Stephen Gayfer, Secondary Vice-Principal

Laurie Whyte called the meeting to order. She referred to a message delivered by Rev. Brent Hawkes who officiated at Jack Layton's funeral.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Moved by Pauline Busby.

That the agenda of the September 14, 2011 meeting be approved.

The motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Moved by Stacey Stevens.

That the minutes of the meeting held on June 15, 2011 be approved.

The motion carried.

As this was the first meeting of the 2011-2012 school year, each member of SEAC was asked to introduce themselves.

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION – SPECIAL EDUCATION UPDATES

Sandra Szpular, Special Education Coordinator/Collaborative Projects Lead provided the Ministry of Education - Special Education updates this evening. She began by speaking about a couple of presentations that took place this summer. These included a presentation at the Supervisory Officer's course whereby Heather Boswell and Sandra Szpular presented along with Kim Brenner from Parents for Children's Mental Health, and the Learning Fair for Upper Grand DSB staff. Sandra Szpular also spoke to candidates at a local Principals course. A YouTube clip about inclusion was then shown to emphasize the importance of a welcoming school system for students with special needs.

A list of Ministry of Education Resources and the suggested ministry release dates in 2011-2012 were reviewed. The *Special Education in Ontario K-12* which will encompass a number of current special education documents, *Guidelines for students who are Blind*, *Guidelines for students who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing* and *Learning For All* are a few of the documents referenced. Once released, it is our plan to review these at future SEAC meetings.

Marty Fairbairn inquired whether our board has received any new information from the Ministry of Children & Youth Services regarding mental health. Heather Boswell responded that we hope to receive more information from the Ministry this fall.

AUSTISM UPDATE

Jacqueline Foster, Special Education Coordinator/Special Education Consultant began by referring to the results of the February 2011 Board Autism Survey which indicated an increase in the number of students on the spectrum in integrated settings from the previous year.

Jacqueline Foster provided information about the ASD Outreach Team that assist students receiving Intensive Behaviour Intervention (IBI) and are working toward Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) through the Connections for Students process. The team, consisting of our ABA Facilitator, Itinerant Special Education Teacher – Autism and an Educational Assistant, provide a 2-day training session for staff at the student's school. Intensive Behaviour Intervention (IBI) is provided through ErinoakKids who work with the student in their home. A new service called the ABA Initiative is being offered by ErinoakKids and Kerry's Place and will focus on communication, social/interpersonal, daily living and behavior management/emotional.

Marty Fairbairn inquired whether there are any children that are not receiving IBI. Sue Shaw responded that less than five percent of children (who may benefit from IBI) receive this service.

Jacqueline Foster then spoke about the Secondary ASD Committee and the Pilot Project last year which focused on secondary schools. The staff taking part in professional development through the TEACCH (Treatment and Education of Autistic and related Communication Handicapped Children) program, the Geneva Centre for Autism Training this summer and the plans for this school year were also presented.

Marty Fairbairn asked for clarification about the role of the ASD Outreach Team. Jacqueline Foster responded that training consists of an explanation about Autism and Applied Behaviour Analysis, strategies to help the student with anxiety, teaching strategies and working with the student, and modeling for all staff. Heather Boswell added that the team comes and stays at the school for a specified number of weeks to model this.

Sue Shaw noted that only a small number of students receive this targeted support.

UPDATE ON THE SPECIAL EDUCATION REPORT

Sandra Szpular referred to the "2011 Special Education Report Checklist" distributed this evening.

The "Special Education Report 2011" is now posted on the Upper Grand DSB website, is an accessible document and contains active links. Our plan is to continue to update this report throughout the year to ensure the information is current.

This report will also be shared at the Special Education Resource Teacher in-service sessions scheduled for September 22nd and 23rd.

PARENT GUIDE TO SPECIAL EDUCATION "DRAFT"

Sandra Szpular referred to the "draft" Parent Guide to Special Education which is also posted on the Upper Grand DSB and the booklet used over the past number of years. The Parent Guide has been updated to be easier to follow, contains links to the Special Education Report, the SEAC Brochure and is an accessible document.

Committee members were asked to review the revised Parent Guide and asked to consider the following questions:

1. Does this guide answer questions that you are asked about the IPRC process?
2. Do you have any suggestions for our year-end review?

Some suggestions included changing the language used in the introduction and placing the organizations to assist parents at the beginning of the document.

This item will be discussed further at the October SEAC meeting.

Laurie Whyte inquired whether members had received this information from their child's

school when invited to a Central Level IPRC. The majority of members responded they had not. Heather Boswell commented that this will be addressed at the Resource Teacher in-service.

OPEN FORUM

Katie Vanderyt spoke about the VIEWS - Music and Orientation & Mobility camps held this summer. There will be weekend camps planned at the W. Ross Macdonald School for the Blind in Brantford.

Sharon Dills reported the September Learning Disabilities Association Ontario Newsletter will be distributed soon. She also reported that LDAO is hosting a Homework Help session at Community Living on September 20th which is being presented by Sean Cameron, an Upper Grand DSB teacher.

Stacey Stevens referred to the VOICE SEAC Workshop being offered on November 5th in Toronto. Everyone is welcome to attend. The flyer will be distributed by Donna Glodziak.

Carrie Proudfoot spoke about the recent Annual Golf Tournament which raised money for Autism. There was also an information session provided to some OPP staff on Autism. The Annual General Meeting was recently held and a new board was elected. There will also be SEAC training in Toronto this October. Information will be distributed through Donna Glodziak.

Kim Brenner spoke about the Parents for Children's Mental Health Golf Tournament held at the end of June.

Laurie Whyte talked about International FASD Day on September 9th. There were displays set up locally recognizing FASD Day and FASD "knots" were sold. The FASD Action Group is hosting "FASD Strategies for Success at School and Home" on September 24, 2011. The flyer will be distributed through Donna Glodziak.

UPDATES FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT OF PROGRAM

Heather Boswell distributed the Program Services Organization Chart and the Areas of Responsibility for the Special Education Departmental staff pointing out new staff in the various departments and introduced new staff present this evening. Attention was drawn to the new Itinerant Special Education Teacher – Deaf/Hard of Hearing who is working with students returning from the Waterloo District School Board programs.

Laurie Whyte asked what Special Education Consultant held the FASD portfolio. Heather Boswell responded it was Barb Tomkins and noted she was registered to attend a 3-day FASD training in November.

EQAO – Grades 3 & 6 Reading, Writing and Mathematics and Grade 9 Mathematics results were released publically today. Our Board will continue to focus on mathematics again this year.

The Family Information Fair is being held at the Fergus Arena on October 29, 2011 from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Heather Boswell inquired whether anyone had any concerns or heard of any concerns around bussing for students in Special Education programs this fall. No members had heard of any issues.

Sandra Szpular spoke about the Accessibility Committee meeting she attended today and showed a device she was wearing which is used with the new amplification system installed at College Heights S.S. to assist deaf/hard of hearing students. She then requested feedback on an Accessibility Poster that will be posted in schools. The SEAC Committee felt "Accessibility – UGDSB is breaking down barriers" was the most suitable wording.

Heather Boswell mentioned we have received various flyers from different groups and asked that members sign any flyer they are interested in receiving.

The Special Education department was acknowledged for their hard work over the last couple of weeks making arrangements for students who have come to us over the summer. The Special Education Consultants or Heather Boswell may be contacted if there are any concerns.

Members were asked to review the SEAC brochure and notify Donna Glodziak of any changes required to the Provincial Associations Contact Information on the brochure.

TRUSTEE REPORT

Marty Fairbairn reported a new Capital Plan is being rolled out. More information will be provided in the future.

Plans to build a new elementary school in Shelburne were presented and approved at the Business/Operations meeting on September 13, 2011. This school would be targeted to open in September 2013.

Some good news was reported for Trellis as they have received a grant which will be used for a new building in Guelph.

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

Sue Shaw suggested that we engage a presenter to provide SEAC training at an upcoming meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Katie Vanderyt that the meeting be adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

The motion carried.