

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, December 12, 2012, 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, Jason Offer, Association for Bright Children-ABC (by telephone for items 1 through 5), Sue Shaw and Carrie Proudfoot, Autism Ontario-Wellington County, Don Richardson, Integration Action for Inclusion in Education and Community (Ontario), Stacey Stevens, VOICE for Hearing Impaired Children.

Present from Staff were: Trudy Counter, Coordinator-Communication, Language and Speech Services, Tracey Lindsay, Principal of Program, Doug Morrell, Superintendent of Program, Sandra Roberts, Secondary Vice-Principal.

Trustees Present: Marty Fairbairn and Jennifer Waterston

The following were absent: Christine Kay, Elementary Principal and Beth Haworth, Community Member-at-Large.

Doug Morrell called the meeting to order welcoming everyone and explained that he is assuming the role of Chair for the first four agenda items. Jason Offer joined the meeting by telephone for the first five items as requested.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Jennifer Waterston moved that the Agenda of the December 12, 2012, Meeting be approved.

The motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Jennifer Waterston moved that the Minutes of the Meeting held on November 14, 2012 be approved.

The motion carried.

RESIGNATION OF SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBER

Doug Morrell notified members of the following resignation received:

An email was received from Katie Vanderyt on November 15, 2012, indicating she will be resigning as a member of the Special Education Advisory Committee, representing VIEWS for Children Who Are Blind or Have Low Vision.

Marty Fairbairn moved, seconded by Sue Shaw, that this resignation be received.

The motion carried.

ELECTION OF CHAIR OF SEAC

Donna Glodziak and Tracey Lindsay were named as scrutineers, if required.

Doug Morrell called for nominations for the position of Chair of SEAC for the period of December 1, 2012 to November 30, 2013.

Don Richardson nominated Jason Offer as Chair of SEAC. Jason Offer declined the nomination.

Pauline Busby nominated Don Richardson as Chair of SEAC. Don Richardson declined the nomination.

Jennifer Waterston nominated Marty Fairbairn as Chair of SEAC. Marty Fairbairn accepted the nomination.

Sue Shaw moved that nominations for Chair be closed.

The motion carried.

Marty Fairbairn was declared Chair of SEAC for the period of December 1, 2012 to November 30, 2013.

ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR OF SEAC

Marty Fairbairn assumed the Chair position and called for nominations for the position of Vice-Chair of SEAC for the period of December 1, 2012 to November 30, 2013.

Jennifer Waterston nominated Jason Offer as Vice-Chair of SEAC. Jason Offer accepted the nomination.

Pauline Busby moved that nominations for Vice-Chair be closed.

The motion carried.

Jason Offer was declared Vice-Chair of SEAC for the period of December 1, 2012 to November 30, 2013.

ACCESSIBILITY

Through a PowerPoint presentation, Bonnie Talbot, Superintendent of Education and Chair of the Accessibility Steering Committee presented the Multi-year Accessibility Plan January 2013-2018. Ms. Talbot began with a slide entitled Profile of Disability in Ontario which refers to how accessibility impacts us directly or indirectly.

Following the Ontarians for Disabilities Act in 2001, the Accessibility for Ontarians with

Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) passed with the goal to have an accessible Ontario by 2025. These Acts form the basis of the work the Accessibility Steering Committee does. In 2011, the Integrated Accessibility Standards became a regulation and covers customer service, built environment, employment, information and communication and transportation. Customer service standards were covered under the AODA and further regulations regarding the built environment are out for consultation at this time.

The Policy and Plan Requirements were highlighted. The Upper Grand DSB is developing the new Accessibility Policy. The key areas of the policy statement include providing an environment that fosters independence, respect, dignity, integration and equal opportunities for all parents/guardians, students, staff and public to ensure they have the same access to services as others in a timely manner. The Multi-year Accessibility Plan is reviewed once every five years. The Plan contains the Objectives which outline the process to identify, remove, preventing barriers for persons with disabilities; the Board's Commitment to Accessibility; the composition of the Accessibility Steering Committee; Prevention and Removal of Barriers; Identification of Barriers; Achievements to date and the barriers to be addressed over the next five years. The list of barriers for people with disabilities as well as the report following the Accessibility Audit completed in 2010, continue to be reviewed to assist with identifying priorities and increasing awareness in the area of accessibility. The Committee is working on a handbook for staff. The Customer Service training has been completed and integrated standards training will begin in the fall.

The TeachAble Project website was shown. This project began in September 2012 and has been piloted by some Upper Grand DSB teachers. The TeachAble project is a website for teachers and includes lesson plans, and provides a wide variety of resources around equity and inclusion, accessibility and breaking down barriers which can be used in teaching junior kindergarten to grade 12 students.

Pauline Busby thanked Ms. Talbot for her presentation and commented she feels it is very important for us to teach children about breaking down barriers. Sue Shaw also thanked Ms. Talbot and asked if we are able to access the wireless internet in schools to which she replied yes, there is wireless internet in our schools.

Don Richardson thanked Ms. Talbot for her presentation and the opportunity to provide feedback around the Accessibility Plan which outlines the goals, objectives and measureable indicators. He commented that he would like to see the definition of inclusive education added and would like SEAC have the opportunity to review the progress of the plan annually. He also suggested the community and community organizations be made aware of this and be given the opportunity to provide feedback. Ms. Talbot responded that she will take the feedback received to the committee and would be happy to present this at SEAC each year.

Jennifer Waterston asked if perhaps one or two SEAC members could be part of the Accessibility Steering Committee as they have in the past. Bonnie Talbot welcomed any SEAC member that would be interested. The next meeting date will be sent to members through Donna Glodziak.

Carrie Proudfoot referred to the SEA training available for students and parents and expressed concern around the assistance available to parents following the initial training session.

BOARD IMPROVEMENT PLAN FOR STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Tracey Lindsay, Principal of Program presented the Board Improvement Plan For Student Achievement (BIPSA) 2011-2014 and distributed copies to everyone this evening.

She began her presentation by providing an overview of the BIPSA which was developed in 2011 and is in place until 2014 noting revisions are made each year. The revisions made this year were to provide more clarity and precision with the goal of having all board staff see where the work they do fits in the BIPSA. The areas specifically related to special education were highlighted in one of the copies provided.

The Board Improvement Plan for Student Achievement is aligned with the Ministry template. It outlines the Vision Statement and System Foci in the areas of Instruction, Community, Culture and Caring as well as the Pathways Pillars. The Needs Assessment data was gathered through system feedback and relates to the goals including cohort data. The instructional strategies in the Smart Goals –If/Then Statements information is based on the EQAO data for students including those with special education needs. The Targeted Evidence Based Strategies/Action and Monitoring columns were revised and include the steps that will be taken to meet the goals and who will do what to achieve the goals outlined. The Professional Learning lists how we will focus our professional learning this year.

The School Improvement Plans and the Board Improvement Plan for Student Achievement align with the direction provided by the Ministry as well as Student Success and other special project funding. An example of the Elementary School Improvement Plan template and Teacher – Learning Cycle Plan were shown.

Don Richardson inquired if SEAC was being consulted for feedback about the BIPSA. Tracey Lindsay explained that this is a three-year plan and is revised annually. She will gather any feedback received for the next revision.

SEAC AGENDA / PRESENTATION TOPICS

As a follow-up to the SEAC Committee Planning item at the November SEAC meeting, Doug Morrell explained that the list of suggested presentation items compiled had been added to chart paper and posted. Each association was asked to choose the top five items they would like presented at upcoming meetings. This information will be compiled and used for future meeting planning and will be shared at the January SEAC meeting.

OPEN FORUM

Pauline Busby spoke about a letter to Ombudsman Andre Marin from Community Living Ontario regarding the “Investigation of province’s services for adults with developmental disabilities in crisis”. She inquired if this letter could be distributed to the families of

children in the developmental disability programs. This will be forwarded to Doug Morrell for consideration.

Sharon Dills reported on the Technology Forum held in November which was well attended. Learning Disabilities Association – Wellington County is investigating hosting a follow-up session. The Annual General Meeting was held on December 5, 2012.

Don Richardson reported the website address for Integration Action for Inclusion is www.Integration-Inclusion.com.

Carrie Proudfoot spoke about the News Release entitled “Victory at the Supreme Court of Canada on the Right to Education”. Doug Morrell explained there is discussion taking place about this. She also referred to the series featured in the Toronto Star called “The Autism Project.”

Kim Brenner reported that there is a new logo for Parents for Children’s Mental Health-Wellington County (Support, Education and Empower). There is also on-line shopping available through their website (i.e. calendars).

UPDATES FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT OF PROGRAM

Doug Morrell thanked Jennifer Waterston for her leadership as SEAC Chair over the past year.

He advised members that the Upper Grand DSB website home page now contains a link to “Special Education / SEAC” in the navigation menu. There is also a link to the Special Education page of the Upper Grand DSB website on the school websites.

The Kiwanis Christmas Luncheon is taking place on December 13th for students in our developmental disability programs.

There is updated information posted on the board website entitled Labour Update which contains the newest information. A letter to parents and guardians from the Director and Chair of the Board has been sent home about the closing of elementary schools on December 14th as a result of the one day teacher walk out. The Other Sanctions posted were also referenced.

Doug Morrell referred to the News Release entitled “Ontario Creating Expert Committee on Autism”. If you are interested in receiving this, please let Donna Glodziak know.

Members were asked to provide feedback about committees or meetings they had attended since the November SEAC meeting:

Sue Shaw attended the EQAO Parent Forum in Toronto. She referred to the field questions in the assessment noting these are not scored but used to assist creating questions for the following year. She suggested these be removed from the assessment for students with special education needs.

Carrie Proudfoot updated members on the new type of laptop that will be purchased through Special Equipment Amount (SEA) claims. They will be investigating an alternate option to the knapsack currently being provided. The Upper Grand DSB - Home Use of Assistive Technology protocol will be reviewed as it requires updating. Carrie Proudfoot also attended the Safe, Equitable and Inclusive Schools Committee meeting. A future meeting has been arranged and she will provide feedback following that meeting.

Doug Morrell asked members on various committees to advise Donna Glodziak when they have something they would like to share so this may be added as an agenda item.

TRUSTEE REPORT

Jennifer Waterston reported there was no Program Committee Meeting in December.

At the Business Operations Committee meeting an interim report on the International Baccalaureate was received and direction provided to the committee.

MEETING SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATION(S) AND MOTION

Marty Fairbairn asked if there was any action members would like to take on the correspondence received.

Don Richardson suggested SEAC send a letter in support of the letter from the Upper Canada DSB supporting the Near North District School Board-Special Education Advisory Committee's concern about Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder and supporting the Wellington Catholic District School Board's SEAC requesting Special Education preparatory courses becoming mandatory for all Teachers Colleges in Ontario.

Don Richardson moved, seconded by Pauline Busby, that SEAC forward a letter.

The motion carried.

Doug Morrell reminded members if they are interested in attending the next Accessibility Steering Committee meeting, to please let Donna Glodziak know.

ADJOURNMENT

Jennifer Waterston moved, seconded by Pauline Busby, that the Meeting be adjourned at 9:13 p.m.

The motion carried.