

**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, January 9, 2013, at 7:00 p.m. in the Boardroom at 500 Victoria Road North, Guelph.

**The following Association Members were present:** Kim Brenner and Carole Craig, Parents for Children's Mental Health-Wellington County, Sharon Dills, Learning Disabilities Association of Wellington County, Jason Offer, Association for Bright Children-ABC, Sue Shaw and Carrie Proudfoot, Autism Ontario-Wellington County.

**Present from Staff were:** Trudy Counter, Coordinator-Communication, Language and Speech Services, Christine Kay, Elementary Principal, Tracey Lindsay, Principal of Program, Doug Morrell, Superintendent of Program, Sandra Szpular, Special Education Coordinator/Collaborative Projects Lead.

**Trustees Present:** Marty Fairbairn and Jennifer Waterston

**Regrets:** Pauline Busby, Community Living Guelph-Wellington, Don Richardson, Integration Action for Inclusion in Education and Community (Ontario), Stacey Stevens, VOICE for Hearing Impaired Children.

**Absent:** Sandra Roberts, Secondary Vice-Principal, Beth Haworth, Community Member-at-Large.

Marty Fairbairn called the meeting to order. He asked Kim Brenner to introduce our new Special Education Advisory Committee member, the alternate representative for Parents for Children's Mental Health, Ms. Carole Craig. Regrets received from members for the meeting this evening were also noted by Marty Fairbairn.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Sharon Dills moved that the Agenda of the January 9, 2013, Meeting be approved.

**The motion carried.**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Jennifer Waterston moved that the Minutes of the Meeting held on December 12, 2012 be approved.

**The motion carried.**

**UPPER GRAND DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD – DRAFT ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS POLICY 214**

As a follow-up to the Multi-year Accessibility Plan presented at the December SEAC meeting, Bonnie Talbot, Superintendent of Education presented the Draft Accessibility Standards - Policy 214. This policy is based on the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), 2005. The new policy will

replace Policy 211 as it incorporates all of the standards set out in the two pieces of legislation. Community consultation is one of the requirements. The request for comments/feedback will be posted on the board website and advertised in school newsletters and local newspapers. SEAC has also been asked to provide feedback and to seek feedback from each of the organizations they represent. The Accessibility Standards Policy statement of the Upper Grand DSB is to provide an environment in all facilities that fosters independence, dignity, respect, integration and equal opportunity for students, parents/guardians, the public and staff. It further confirms the board's commitment to ensuring people with disabilities have the same opportunity of access to services and the board's commitment to meeting accessibility needs of people with disabilities in a timely fashion. The policy detail outlines who is responsible for the administration, implementation and review of the policy.

The Accessibility Standards - Procedures Manual 214–A contains: terms and definitions; information regarding general requirements; and detailed requirements for customer service, information and communications, employment and transportation standards. Examples of some of the items highlighted were the appropriate training for all staff, trustees and volunteers to ensure greater awareness and responsiveness to the needs of individuals with disabilities and the need to consider accessibility when planning excursions for students, staff or volunteers. As a means of receiving feedback around accessibility, Accessibility Feedback Forms are available in board sites, through the board website and comments may also be provided by telephone. As part of the information and communications plan, educators will be provided with accessibility awareness training as this relates to the delivery of instruction. This will be done through full day workshops for an administrator and teacher from each school to be shared with staff at their school. As a next step, the Accessibility Steering Committee will begin developing a handbook which will outline ways to implement the items in the manual.

Following an inquiry from Jason Offer about the timelines for the policy, Bonnie Talbot commented that January 2013 is the date for the draft policy to be posted. Following the deadline for public feedback (Feb. 11), it will be presented to Trustees for approval. Bonnie Talbot confirmed that the Accessibility Plan and Report will be brought to SEAC each year. Sharon Dills commented there should be alternate ways for the public to provide accessibility feedback for families who may not have access to a computer or the internet. Bonnie Talbot responded that Feedback forms are available in hard copy at all board sites and it is also possible to give feedback by telephone. Sharon Dills expressed concern that the train the trainer model for training regarding accessibility awareness may not be the most effective. Sue Shaw would like to see the policy include information about differentiated instruction. Sue Shaw expressed concern that the policy requires persons with disabilities to request accessible formats. Bonnie Talbot responded that this is the language of the legislation. In addition, the legislation requires us to consult with those persons so that we are providing a format that best meets their needs. Marty Fairbairn inquired if this document will continue to grow and develop over the years. Bonnie Talbot responded that it will be reviewed and could change. She further commented that this is in the implementation stage and Accessibility Awareness Training is a big part of it. Jennifer Waterston spoke about the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service training that was provided and asked that the new Accessibility Awareness training (regarding the

Information and Communication, Employment and Transportation standards, as well as the Human Rights Code) be provided to SEAC prior to system-wide training. Bonnie Talbot agreed that this would be a good opportunity to pilot the new training program. There was a discussion about accountability and how the board can ensure that effective training happens. Bonnie Talbot clarified that this training is mandatory for all staff and volunteers and will be offered on-line or at professional development sessions. The training taken by board staff and trustees is tracked so the Committee is aware of who has taken the training. A report will also be submitted regarding this training.

Jason Offer suggested we add a footnote to our forms and letters indicating information is available in additional formats. Doug Morrell responded that he will look into this suggestion. (Note: At this time, forms and letters do not have this information but it will be added.) Marty Fairbairn added that this idea may also help address any issue of awareness.

Bonnie concluded saying that feedback could be provided to her through Donna Glodziak or by email through the notice on the board website

## **OVERVIEW OF ORGANIZATION CONDITIONS FOR EFFECTIVE SCHOOL MENTAL HEALTH**

Dr. Lynn Woodford, Manager of Mental Health/Addictions Programs and Services presented a PowerPoint entitled "The Changing Face of Mental Health". She began by providing an overview of her role and the plans to address mental health in our schools.

The World Health Organization states that "Mental Health is...A state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity." A chart outlining the mental health continuum was displayed. The definition of mental health problems, the range of difficulties and some facts and figures were also outlined. Dr. Woodford displayed the YouTube video "Change the View 2012" showing students dealing with mental health type issues. Following the clip, she spoke about the new ways we can support students and the unique opportunities schools have to reduce the stigma around mental health, promote positive mental health and build pathways to care. There are challenges as mental health is not well understood. School Mental Health-ASSIST is part of the provincial strategy to assist boards promote student mental health and well-being.

The Mental Health & Addictions Strategy is a 10 year strategy focussing on children and youth for the first three years. It is a joint initiative with the ministries of Children & Youth Services, Education and Health and Long-Term Care. Dr. Woodford's role as Mental Health Leader is part of this strategy. Her role includes providing leadership for the board mental health team, gathering feedback to complete the Resource Mapping for the board to determine the areas of strengths and needs, working with senior administration to develop a strategy as well as working with the community partners. This new role aligns with the roles of other staff members supporting school mental health. The priorities will be to address the structural, knowledge and implementation challenges. The list of Organizational Conditions for Effective School Mental Health was shared. The chart showing Mental Health Capacity – Building for Educators and the resources to support this were outlined. The Implementation of Evidence-Based Mental Health Promotion and

Prevention Programming chart provided information about the tiered support system of care and the resources to support mental health promotion and prevention.

The Board Scan is one item that has been completed. The next step will be to gather information for the Resource Mapping Strategy for our board. The Board Mental Health Strategy will be reviewed annually. Dr. Woodford concluded her presentation with the slide “Anticipated Ripples of Impact” from the provincial, board, school and students levels.

Further information about School Mental Health – ASSIST can be found on their website at <http://smh-assist.ca>

Doug Morrell spoke further about the Mental Health Lead position and the work Dr. Lynn Woodford has been doing since the position began in September. He also mentioned that she will be attending future SEAC meetings to gather feedback for the Resource Mapping and provide updates.

Carrie Proudfoot and Sue Shaw thanked Dr. Woodford for her presentation and commented the board website should contain information about student mental health.

### **REVIEW OF INFORMATION COMPILED ABOUT SEAC PRESENTATION TOPICS**

Doug Morrell referred to the graph provided to everyone this evening which displayed the results of the agenda/presentation topic ideas feedback gathered by members at the December meeting.

The Upper Grand - Individual Education Plan (IEP) Review/Audit will be shared at the February meeting. Once the Ministry feedback is received, this will also be shared.

Clarification was requested by Sandra Szpular about the requested topic “following an identified student from kindergarten to grade 12”. Carrie Proudfoot responded that they would like to see examples of possible accommodations, modification or both that could be used for an IEP which could be shared with parents.

Since this graph will be referred to at future meetings, it was requested that Donna Glodziak provide an electronic version to SEAC members.

Doug Morrell concluded his updates by reporting he is investigating alternate ways in which to communicate SEAC information (i.e. website).

### **LETTER IN RESPONSE TO THE CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED**

In response to the motion adopted at the December SEAC meeting, a letter to the Honourable Laurel Broten was drafted on behalf of our SEAC which was distributed to everyone this evening. This letter supports the Near North District School Board-Special Education Advisory Committee’s concern about Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder and the Wellington Catholic District School Board’s SEAC requesting Special Education preparatory courses for all Teachers Colleges in Ontario.

Marty Fairbairn asked if members would like any revisions made to the letter before it is mailed. There were no revisions suggested.

Sue Shaw moved that SEAC forward a letter.

**The motion carried.**

### **OPEN FORUM**

Jason Offer reported that the ABC Annual Meeting will be on January 12, 2013 in Toronto.

Kim Brenner reported that the link to Parents for Children's Mental Health will be forwarded to members through Donna Glodziak. This website contains links to some YouTube videos featuring mental health.

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

Doug Morrell spoke about the Kiwanis Christmas Luncheon for students in the developmental disability programs commenting the event was enjoyed by everyone.

He referred to the information distributed from the Parent Involvement Committee (PIC) – the "Annual Spring PIC Event" and the "Parent Focus Group Training Workshops".

The Resignation of SEAC member Katie Vanderyt representing VIEWS for Children who are Blind or have Low Vision was adopted at the December 18, 2012 Board Meeting.

The Special Education Class Placement Committee meeting will be held on January 14, 2013 to review the placement requests for September 2013.

The EQAO Regional Parent Forum is being offered on Saturday, February 9, 2013, in St. Catharines, ON. If you are interested, please forward your name to Donna Glodziak.

The Gifted Class Parent Information Evening is scheduled for January 10, 2013 at Waverley Drive P.S. from 7:00 to 8:00 p.m.

Regarding concern raised about the Special Education Plan/Report, Doug Morrell explained that we have requested feedback and clarification about this from the Ministry of Education. Once received, this will be shared with members. Feedback following the upcoming Ministry meeting regarding the Board Improvement Plan for Student Achievement will also be shared.

Doug Morrell concluded by speaking about labour updates and the planned ETFO day of protest scheduled for January 11, 2013. Information is also on the board website.

### **TRUSTEE REPORT**

Jennifer Waterston reported that the King George JK-8 FI Boundary Review was approved at the December 18, 2012 Board meeting.

They will now begin working on the new South Guelph JK-8 French Immersion Centre Boundary Review.

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

It was recommended that the Mental Health information be added to the board website.

It was also recommended that a footnote be added to letters and forms about Accessibility.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Jennifer Waterston moved that the Meeting be adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

**The motion carried.**