

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 10, 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, Beth Haworth, Community Member-at-Large, Pauline Busby, Community Living Guelph-Wellington, Jason Offer, Association for Bright Children-ABC, 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, and Katie Vanderyt, VIEWS for Children Who Are Blind or Have Low Vision.

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, Collaborative Projects Lead/Special Education Coordinator.

Trustees Present:

Marty Fairbairn
Jennifer Waterston

The following members sent regrets:

Sharon Dills, Learning Disabilities Association of Wellington County, Sandra Roberts, Secondary Vice-Principal and Laurie Whyte, FASworld Canada (Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders).

Jennifer Waterston called the meeting to order welcoming everyone.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Moved by Katie Vanderyt

That the agenda of the October 10, 2012 meeting be approved.

The motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Moved by Stacey Stevens

That the minutes of the meeting held on June 13, 2012 be approved.

The motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Moved by Marty Fairbairn

That the minutes of the meeting held on September 12, 2012 be approved.

The motion carried.

EQAO RESULTS

Through a PowerPoint presentation, Natasha Skerritt, Elementary Curriculum Leader presented 2011-2012 EQAO Primary and Junior Results. She began by providing the number of students in grade 3 that participated in the assessment last spring noting girls represented 48 percent of students while boys represented 52 percent. The Primary EQAO 2008-2012 comparison results in reading, writing and mathematics were reviewed as well as the 2012 gender comparison. The results for primary students with special education needs were then displayed. Nineteen percent of primary students writing the assessment were designated as having special education needs. These students may or may not have been identified through the Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) process however these students would have an Individual Education Plan (IEP). The 2008-2012 comparison graphs showed the areas of growth in reading and writing over the past five years as well as mathematics which remained the same from last year.

Of the grade 6 students, girls represented 50 percent and boys represented 50 percent of students who participated in the assessment. Students designated as having special education needs represented 21 percent of students participating (excluding students identified as gifted). These results showed a steady increase in reading and writing over the past five years and an increase in mathematics from last year.

The accommodations for students with special education needs taking part in the EQAO Assessment may include a change in setting, different presentation format and different response format. Natasha Skerritt concluded by speaking about the next steps and the areas that will be focused on this year.

Carrie Proudfoot inquired if there is gender comparison information available for students with special education needs to which Natasha Skerritt replied she will check into.

Katie Vanderyt inquired if there will be additional assistance provided to schools that received a lower score on the EQAO assessment and referred to the Fraser Report. Jennifer Waterston and Tracey Lindsay explained the difference between the Fraser Report and the EQAO assessment data. Tracey Lindsay responded that staff review EQAO data and look at areas requiring more support.

Don Richardson suggested that staff look at our well performing schools and use the findings to assist schools who are not scoring as well on the assessment. Natasha Skerritt and Tracey Lindsay commented that while we do review this information we also compare the scores of students from their grade 3 and grade 6 assessments. Doug Morrell noted that EQAO assessment results are reviewed and discussed by administrators at Family of Schools meetings.

Paul Costa, Secondary Curriculum Leader provided a PowerPoint presentation entitled EQAO 2011-2012 Assessment of Mathematics – Intermediate results. This assessment is written by grade 9 students in both the applied and academic levels during two 50-minute blocks in either first or second semester. Students with special education needs (excluding gifted) participating in the Grade 9 Assessment of Mathematics represented 30 percent of the students studying at the applied level and 5 percent of the students studying

at the academic level.

The trends over time for the applied and academic levels highlighted the board and provincial results drawing attention to the increase in the percent of students scoring at levels 3 and 4. Forty-two percent of students with special education needs at the applied level scored at or above the provincial standard with 80 percent of students scoring at or above the provincial standard in the academic program. He noted that the scores for students with special education needs are steadily increasing.

Paul Costa concluded by speaking about the next steps in the process and identifying the areas of focus for the current year.

LITERACY BASED LANGUAGE INTERVENTIONS

Trudy Counter, Coordinator of Communication, Language and Speech Services provided an overview of the department which supports students with communication disorders so they can achieve their full academic and social potential. She also referenced the Kindergarten Communication Skills Evaluation information she presented to SEAC last year whereby students requiring assistance may benefit from Literacy Based Language Intervention (LBLI).

The Literacy Based Language Intervention is for students in senior kindergarten to grade 2 and is provided by the Special Program Assistants – Communication, Language and Speech Services (SPA-CLS) who are trained and supervised by the Speech-Language Pathologist. The different types of student communication areas of need were reviewed.

Literacy Based Language Intervention was developed by Trudy Counter and staff Speech Language Pathologist, Mary Ann Schouten following a conference they attended. Since its initial development, LBLI has been revised and expanded and is now used by all staff in the Communication, Language and Speech Services department.

Trudy Counter explained that oral language skills are required for reading comprehension. Some of the LBLI goals include understanding story structure, building vocabulary knowledge, supporting early writing experiences and developing social communication and interaction skills. The goals are embedded into meaningful activities. An example of a story containing icons to assist with pre-story discussion, story reading, discussion, vocabulary activities, and questions about the facts moving towards higher level reasoning was reviewed. A clip of a Special Program Assistant reading a story to students containing icons was shown. The students were then given pictures and worked on placing their pictures in sequence followed by a syntax activity. The goal was to assist the student learn to retell the story and use these oral communication skills in the classroom. There are four stages of LBLI: language foundations; narrative foundations; advanced narrative foundations; and higher order thinking.

Trudy Counter concluded by noting the number of students receiving language intervention has increased from 302 in 2010-11 to 417 in 2011-12. She also added that we are now able to identify students who may have a language weakness earlier through the Kindergarten Communication Skills Evaluation.

Pauline Busby inquired whether the classroom strategies/materials described have been shared with developmental disability classroom teachers for use with students in their program. Trudy Counter commented that these have not been provided to date and the strategies would apply to many students in these classes. She will look into this further.

Sue Shaw and Carrie Proudfoot commented they were glad to see this approach and wondered if there was a way to use this for foundational learning and suggested the follow-up classroom strategies be shared with all teachers. Trudy Counter responded that we are always working to connect intervention to the classroom. The icon-based method of narrative instruction could be discussed further with curriculum and special education programs.

OPEN FORUM

Stacey Stevens spoke about the SEAC Voice for Hearing Impaired Children Summit being held on October 27, 2012 in Cornwall. This information was forwarded to members.

Katie Vanderyt reported the VIEWS for children who are blind or have low vision conference is scheduled for November 3, 2012 in Toronto. She will be speaking on a parent panel.

Jason Offer reported the Family Information Fair will be held on November 10, 2012 at the Fergus Community Centre from 9:00 am. to 1:00 p.m. Representatives from various associations will be attending. Also reported was the International Baccalaureate study that is taking place. The committee will be meeting later this month and preparing a report to be presented at an upcoming Program Committee Meeting. There will be an information session for parents. More details will follow.

Carrie Proudfoot reported that Autism Ontario has produced their Annual Report. October is Autism Awareness month. Swimming is scheduled for October 20th, the Funmazing Play Group is scheduled for November 4th, and Movie Morning will be held on November 10, 2012.

Don Richardson reported that Integration Action for Inclusion in Education and Community is organizing a conference in Kingston in May through grant money received.

Kim Brenner reported that Parents for Children's Mental Health held their Fall Conference which featured various speakers. The Wellington Region Suicide Prevention Council in partnership with Lutherwood will be presenting the movie "Bully" on October 24 and November 6. This event is free. Registration is available on line at Lutherwood.ca.

UPDATES FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT OF PROGRAM

Doug Morrell began by reminding members to forward the Special Education Advisory Committee year in review information outlining a brief description of the highlights from the 2011-2012 to Donna Glodziak by November 1, 2012 so this may be added to the Special Education Report.

We have added the wording "*Parents and educators are encouraged to work as collaborative partners throughout the steps*" to both the Parent Guide to Special Education and the Special Education Report in response to the suggestion made at the September SEAC meeting.

The webmaster is working to add links to the Special Education page on the Upper Grand DSB website to each School website. This will direct viewers to the: Special Education Report; Parent Guide to Special Education; SEAC Brochure; and Special Education on the Ontario Ministry of Education website.

Don Richardson commented that he does not believe the Special Education Report explains what the Board is trying to achieve. He inquired about goal and objective setting and measurements in place. Sandra Szpular responded that the Ministry of Education outlines the information to be contained in the Special Education Report each year. We also have the Board Improvement Plan for Student Achievement (BIPSA) which is a document we update throughout the year. Tracey Lindsay added that the Board Improvement Plan for Student Achievement will be presented to SEAC once the revisions are complete. Don Richardson asked what role SEAC plays in the goal setting and reviewing of this document. Tracey Lindsay explained that this is a three year plan and the data contained is revised and updated each year. Doug Morrell added that we will have the Board Improvement Plan for Student Achievement shared at a SEAC meeting.

TRUSTEE REPORT

Marty Fairbairn reported the Summit on Children's Mental Health is being held on October 25 and 26, 2012. Trustees Fairbairn and Moziar along with Dr. Lynn Woodford the new Mental Health Lead will be attending.

A report entitled Staff Report on Bullying Prevention was presented at the October 2, 2012 Program Committee meeting. It was recommended that this also be presented at SEAC.

Jennifer Waterston reported that Laurie Whyte has requested a Leave of Absence from SEAC. This request will be forwarded to Board for approval.

OTHER

Don Richardson would like time allocated on the SEAC agenda to discuss some of the objectives we have as a committee and topics the members would like to see presented at SEAC meetings. Sue Shaw would be interested in receiving updates on the suspensions and expulsions information presented last year.

ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Marty Fairbairn
That the meeting be adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

The motion carried.