

Upper Grand District School Board
Special Education Advisory Committee

Minutes

Wednesday, December 12, 2018

The Special Education Advisory Committee of the Upper Grand District School Board met on Wednesday, December 12, 2018 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; Laurie Whyte, FASworld Canada; Don Richardson, Integration Action for Inclusion in Education and Community (Ontario) (non-voting); Sharon Dills, Canadian Mental Health Association Waterloo Wellington (non-voting); Mandi Naismith, Autism Ontario-Wellington County (Alternate)

Present from Staff were: Tracey Lindsay, Superintendent of Program; Wendy Donaldson, Assistant to the Superintendent of Program; Hayley Warren, Secondary Vice-Principal; Chad Guyitt, Elementary Principal; Special Education Consultants, Mark Howe, Dave Mesesnel

Trustees Present: Linda Busuttil, Jennifer Edwards, Robin Ross

Regrets: Tina Danese, Easter Seals Ontario; Danielle Richer, FASworld Canada (Alternate); Monica Chamberlain, Learning Disabilities Association of Wellington County; Stacey Stevens, VOICE for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children; Kelsey Noseworthy, VOICE for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children (Alternate); Carrie Proudfoot, Autism Ontario-Wellington County; MaryAnn Schouten, Coordinator of Communication, Language and Speech Services; Audra Cook, Secondary Vice-Principal, Special Education Consultants, Kim Cozzolino, Erin Leslie, Debbie Snow, Jacqueline Weresch, Kathy Green, Jackie Speers, Andrea Moyer

Public: Michelle Barrett; Cathy Bruder, OSSTF-EA/ECE representative; Susan Schenk

Jason Offer, Vice-Chair, called the meeting to order.

Tracey Lindsay asked the committee to amend the agenda and defer Elections for Chair and Vice-Chair and the Special Education Plan Review to the January meeting as a number of committee members were absent and letters from two associations had not been received and approved. The committee was in agreement and the agenda was amended.

Upper Grand District School Board
Special Education Advisory Committee

Approval of Agenda of December 12, 2018

Laurie Whyte moved that the amended agenda of December 12, 2018 be approved.
Robin Ross seconded the motion.

The motion carried.

Approval of Minutes of November 14, 2018

Laurie Whyte moved that the minutes of November 14, 2018 be approved. Mandi Naismith seconded the motion.

The motion carried.

Elections – Chair and Vice-Chair

Deferred to January

Action Items

Tracey Lindsay welcomed the new committee members and the new Trustees, Jennifer Edwards and Robin Ross who were selected at the inaugural meeting by the Board to represent Trustees on SEAC. She asked that everyone introduce themselves and provide their connections to SEAC. She explained the process of the meetings for the new members present. She added that the meetings begin with actions items and finish with actions items. If anything comes up during the meeting that staff is required to do or look at, it is recorded and updates are provided. Any outstanding items are referenced at the beginning of each meeting.

She provided the following updates:

- Google Hangout – goal of SEAC was to have a venue that is accessible for anyone that may or may not be able to physically attend the meeting. We now have this option, however no one called in to the meeting. We encourage membership on SEAC and the UGDSB covers a large geographic area and this venue would allow anyone to attend remotely. Tracey Lindsay added that they are presently working with DCAFS for a representative from Dufferin. She added that if any committee members know of any other organizations that would like to sit on SEAC and may not be able to attend in person, to let them know they can now do so virtually/remotely.
- Progress Reports in Secondary Schools – working with secondary Superintendents to review progress reports that have the same components and are parent friendly. SEAC provided Carlo Zen, Superintendent of Education with recommendations. Carlo Zen is working with his team and will return at a later meeting with an update.
- Communication Strategy – SEAC asked to review Consent Letters, Class Placement packages and Central IPRC draft letters. The school based IPRC letters have already been standardized to be more inclusive, parent friendly and

Upper Grand District School Board
Special Education Advisory Committee

encouraging. The Central IPRC draft letter was reviewed last month and the feedback incorporated into the letter. The final draft will be brought back to SEAC prior to sending it out to the system. The Class Placement packages were uploaded to the November SEAC folder for SEAC's viewing. Consent forms are being reviewed by UGDSB and our outside agencies and will be brought to SEAC at a later date.

- Definition of Inclusive Education – Don Richardson will present tonight.

Correspondence

Letter dated October 21, 2018, from Barbara Holland, Chairperson and Jillian Fenech, Chair, Special Education Advisory Committee of the Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board, writing in support of the letter sent to the former Minister of Education, Indra Naidoo-Harris, by the Peterborough Victoria Northumberland and Clarington Catholic District School Board Special Education Advisory Committee, regarding the finds contained in the Auditor General of Ontario's Annual Report, 2017 requesting that the Ministry of Education follow the recommendations of the Auditor General to review the formulas used to determine Special Education Grants and update them to provide equitable funding to support our students with special education needs.

Letter dated November 21, 2018, from Teresa Westergaard-Hager, Co-Chair, Special Education Advisory Committee, Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board, writing in support of Grand Erie District School Board's request for support of Bill 44. BHNCDNB requests that the Ministry of Education amend the Education Act so that every Board shall promote awareness and understanding of permanent brain injury resulting for prenatal alcohol exposure, including best practices to support pupils who may have FASD.

No action required.

Open Forum – Best Practice and Good News

Laurie Whyte, FASworld Canada – Guelph Support Group received a grant from the Ministry in November for a pilot program for children and youth with FASD. A coordinator has been hired. Laurie Whyte will be sending out information regarding dates and asking for anyone interested in volunteering and helping out. Guelph Police have partnered with this program and plan to have 10 officers at the sessions. This program is open to diagnosed and suspected FASD children. Sessions run for two hours on a Saturday and are capped at 20 kids. Tracey Lindsay responded that this information can be shared in the Special Education community folder for staff.

Upper Grand District School Board
Special Education Advisory Committee

Mandi Naismith, Autism Ontario-Wellington County (Alternate) – had their Christmas party on the weekend. It was well attended with approximately 100 people in attendance.

Don Richardson, Integration Action for Inclusion in Education and Community (Ontario) – The annual Strategic Planning session for IAI was held in Guelph. IAI has hired a part time person to help launch provincial programs of web-based workshops focused on inclusive education. Information will be shared at a later date.

Policy Review

Tracey Lindsay on behalf of Martha MacNeil – no report

Inclusion Definition

Don Richardson, IAI representative introduced himself to the committee. He added that as a partner in an environmental consulting firm based in Guelph, he travels all over Northern Ontario, Nunavut, Labrador and Newfoundland working with the First Nations, Inuit, Metis communities providing environmental assistance.

He began his presentation by speaking about inclusive education and suggested that SEAC explore ways of moving forward in defining inclusive education; and to build goals and objectives around inclusive education at all levels using indicators. He added that he feels that the Board's policy and the terminology of inclusive education does not provide a clear definition of inclusive education.

He shared the various definitions of inclusive education from the Ontario Ministry of Education; Integration Action for Inclusion – Ontario; Inclusion Alberta and Inclusion BC. Alberta's model was preferred by Don Richardson as he felt that it clearly explains policy and principles of inclusive education and has measurable indicators. He added that the organization of Alberta is similar to Ontario and they have been very successful in their practices.

His proposal is that UGDSB SEAC assist Board with goals, objectives and indicators of Inclusive Education – possibly follow the Alberta Education Indicator's Guide.

Tracey Lindsay thanked Don Richardson for his presentation. She commented that this presentation is timely as the Board has already started these conversations. We currently have special class placements – LD, MID, Gifted and DD – with different criteria for placement in each. In secondary, there are only DD classes. The question is what is inclusive education for all? Parents always have a choice – they don't have to choose a placement, inclusion is always a first choice for staff and students.

Upper Grand District School Board

Special Education Advisory Committee

Tracey Lindsay sits on the Regional Special Education Committee (RSEC) which is a group of Superintendents from across the region that get together to discuss Special Education concerns. She developed a survey (in collaboration with another Superintendent) that was sent out in the Toronto region asking what each board offers: what types of classrooms were available in their board; what resources were used; do they have classrooms with waitlists; would they open or close this class; are they successful? The data collected has provided good feedback for more discussion and research.

Tracey Lindsay uploaded two documents to the folder for SEAC's review and feedback: Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy; and a TDSB report on inclusive education - A Case for Inclusive Education. She suggested that sections could be discussed at SEAC as staff works through it. Don Richardson replied that Erin Sheldon would also be available to help.

Laurie Whyte asked how that would look if parents did not want their child integrated? Don Richardson replied that in many cases it may not be appropriate. However, the more that inclusive classrooms are available to parents, the more that parents will accept them and want them. Part of the problem with students being put in regular classrooms is that the supports aren't there and this is frustrating for all. The big challenge is to create a norm for inclusive classrooms so that parents and students have a positive experience in the inclusive classroom versus getting frustrated with the system. More students are being identified with learning disabilities and parents are getting frustrated as their child is not in an inclusive classroom. Is the answer to create more segregated classrooms or to create a better inclusive classroom?

Don Richardson said that from the legal perspective and a rights perspective, everyone has the right to have their child included in a regular classroom. The schools and the Board have to make reasonable efforts to be inclusive if that is the parent's choice. Laurie Whyte commented that unless the Ministry provides funding, the UGDSB does not have the ability to support the child the way that they need the supports. And parents do not have the resources to put in a legal fight to make this happen.

Tracey Lindsay responded that Special Class Placements are a choice; the board wants students to stay in their home school with their peers but sometimes it doesn't happen. She added that Toronto District School Board tried to close some of their self-contained classes but parents didn't want to go that route. It is about the classroom experience and we need to look at doing the best we can.

Next steps – future agenda items – small group discussions about Alberta document; Ministry document and the TDSB document to pull key learnings from these documents.

Upper Grand District School Board
Special Education Advisory Committee

Don Richardson requested that we schedule Erin Sheldon to come SEAC sometime in the spring. Tracey Lindsay responded that timing will depend on the work that is done at SEAC for inclusive education.

PowerPoint presentation was uploaded to the December folder on UGCloud.

Special Education Plan Review -The Special Education Advisory Committee

Deferred to January

SEISSC Monthly Update

No update. Tracey Lindsay suggested that members consider sitting on the SEISSC committee and the Accessibility committee. Meetings are held from 4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. She will provide more information for anyone interested. At the January elections, SEAC members will be appointed to sit on these committees.

Updates from the Superintendent of Program

- The Guelph Kiwanis Club sponsors the Christmas lunch for UGDSB DD students on December 13th. Christmas carols are sung and Santa joins the event. It truly is the best day of the year! If anyone is interested in attending, please let Tracey know.
- The Dufferin DD lunch, sponsored by the Optimist Club this year was held at the Orangeville Agriculture Centre on December 7th. The lunches were divided into two locations last year as the number of students has increased and one location could no longer accommodate all the students, parents and UGDSB staff.

Trustee Report

Linda Busuttill, Chair of UGDSB, welcomed everyone and explained the type of information Trustees will bring from Board to SEAC. She added that at the inaugural Board meeting, 50% of the Trustees are new and there are new committee assignments.

She updated SEAC with the following: Carlo Zen, Superintendent of Education and his team will go out to the secondary schools to talk about the characteristics that we want to achieve for graduating students. In the fall the Board will look at their Strategic Plan; how the recommendations are operationalized? what does it look like?

SEAC Orientation

Tracey Lindsay distributed copies of PAaC on SEAC to the committee. This document is a valuable resource for members and is included in the December SEAC folder on UGCloud. She asked that SEAC review it prior to the next meeting. The UGDSB Special Education Advisory Committee – Memberships and Responsibilities; and SEAC – Process for Membership and Elections documents were also distributed for SEAC's review. She

Upper Grand District School Board
Special Education Advisory Committee

added that the other component of SEAC is to review and revise the Special Education Plan each year. Last year, many sections of the Plan were extensively revised.

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

- Inclusive Education – two steps –
 - ✓ unpack three documents – A Case for Inclusive Education TDSB; Ontario’s Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy; Indicators of Inclusive Education.
 - ✓ invite Erin Sheldon to SEAC meeting

Other

Adjournment

Laurie Whyte motioned for adjournment of meeting at 8:10 p.m. Mandi Naismith seconded the motion.

Jason Offer thanked everyone and wished everyone a great holiday!