

Upper Grand District School Board
Special Education Advisory Committee

Minutes
Wednesday, May 8, 2019

The Special Education Advisory Committee of the Upper Grand District School Board met on Wednesday, May 8, 2019 at 7:00 p.m. in the Boardroom at 500 Victoria Road North, Guelph.

The following Association Members were present: Carrie Proudfoot, Autism Ontario-Wellington County; Laurie Whyte, FASworld Canada; Monica Chamberlain, Learning Disabilities Association of Wellington County; Sharon Dills, Canadian Mental Health Association Waterloo Wellington; Don Richardson, Integration Action for Inclusion in Education and Community (Ontario)

Present from Staff were: Tracey Lindsay, Superintendent of Program; Wendy Donaldson, Assistant to the Superintendent of Program; MaryAnn Schouten, Coordinator of Communication, Language and Speech Services; Hayley Warren, Secondary Vice-Principal; Special Education Consultant, Dave Mesesnel, Jackie Speers

Trustees Present: Jennifer Edwards

Regrets: Stacey Stevens, VOICE for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children; Tina Danese, Easter Seals Ontario; Robin Ross, Trustee; Jason Offer, Association for Bright Children-ABC; Chad Guyitt, Elementary Principal; Audra Cook, Secondary Vice-Principal

Absent: Danielle Richer, FASworld Canada (Alternate); Erin Knight, Integration Action for Inclusion in Education and Community (Ontario) (Alternate), Mandi Naismith, Autism Ontario-Wellington County (Alternate); Kelsey Noseworthy, VOICE for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children (Alternate)

Carrie Proudfoot, Chair called the meeting to order.

Approval of Agenda of May 8, 2019

Laurie Whyte moved that the agenda of May 8, 2019 be approved. Sharon Dills seconded the motion.

The motion carried.

Approval of Minutes of April 10, 2019

Monica Chamberlain moved that the minutes of April 10, 2019 be approved. Laurie Whyte seconded the motion.

The motion carried.

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Action Items

No action items.

Correspondence

1. Letter dated January 28, 2019, addressed to the Honourable Lisa Thompson, Minister of Education, from Tracy Lynn Atkinson, Chair, Special Education Advisory Committee of the Bluewater District School Board acknowledging and supporting UGDSB SEAC's letter of support for Bill 44.
2. Letter dated February 5, 2019, addressed to l'honorable Lisa Thomspson, Ministre de l'Éducation, from Conseil scolaire Viamonde - Sylvie A. Laundry, presidente du Conseil, Manoushka Aimable, coprésidente du CCED, and Benoit Fortin, coprésidente du CCED in support of Bill 44.
3. Letter dated April 9, 2019, addressed to Minister Lisa Thompson, from Valerie Adamo, Chair, Special Education Advisory Committee, Durham Catholic District School Board, expressing concern regarding the recent changes to the provincial funding model for class size averages and mandatory e-learning courses and the impact these changes will have on students with special education needs and students who are at-risk.
4. Letter dated April 21, 2019, addressed to the Honourable Lisa M. Thompson, Minister of Education, from Richard Carter, Chair, Special Education Advisory Committee, Toronto District School Board, expressing deep concern regarding the exclusion of students with disabilities from school.
5. Letter dated April 26, 2019, addressed to the Honorable Lisa M. Thompson, Minister of Education, from Theresa Sanders, Chair, Special Education Advisory Committee of Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board, writing in support of Bill 64, **Noah and Gregory's Law**, *Transition to Adult Developmental Services and Supports* and requesting the Ministry's support in the Bill's passage to a third reading as soon as possible.

Committee discussed the letters and no action is required at this time.

Open Forum – Best Practice and Good News

Laurie Whyte, FASworld Canada – National Post had a multi-day series on FASD that received positive feedback. There are approximately 150 registered for the conference on May 30th at the Hanlon Convention Centre. The Guelph FASD Caregiver event which is on May 29th has 45 registered. Guelph FASD applied for and received more funding for 'Reach For It' which will enable the program to continue in the fall. Great feedback has been received for the program and the engagement of different partners in the community from parents and children.

Don Richardson, Integration Action for Inclusion in Education and Community (Ontario) - IAI AGM is scheduled for June 8, 2019. Conference will be done via video conferencing to

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enable members to participate throughout the province. Video excerpts of good news stories in the schools will be shared. AGM will feature portions of the Intelligent Lives Toolkit; looking at experiences of "neurodiversity" in the classroom and the workforce, and person-centered planning for inclusive education, and inclusion in the workplace.

<http://iodbookstore.org/intelligent-lives-dvd-education-kit/>

For more information please visit website: <https://www.inclusionontario.ca/>

Monica Chamberlain, Learning Disabilities Association of Wellington County - Workshop on 'UnderstandABILITY – Demystifying Psychoeducational Assessments' scheduled for May 15, 2019 at 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. at Community Living Guelph (8 Royal Road). Cost is \$15 and \$10 for LDA members. Speaker is Susan Slack Miller.

*subsidies available - contact info@ldawc.ca

The May Peer Support Network is meeting on Thursday, May 30, 2019, at Eramosa Engineering, 650 Woodlawn, Guelph. This is a free event. Please register:

info@ldawc.ca

May Newsletter is posted on LDAWC.CA. <https://ldawc.ca/newsletter.html>

Planning for the LDAWC Family Conference is well underway. It is being held at St. James Catholic High School, 57 Victoria Road N. Guelph, ON. Keynote speaker is scheduled for the morning and breakout sessions for the afternoon.

LDAWC will be selling 50/50 draw tickets at the Storm Game this Sunday (if Storm is playing).

Carrie Proudfoot, Autism Ontario-Wellington County – Link for Autism Ontario Consultation Online Survey:

<https://www.ontarioautismconsultations.ca/SE/1/379246?lang=en&p=RNELSPJLJAKG4IX>, is open until May 31, 2019.

Applications for funding for summer ASD support are available on the website:

<https://www.autismontario.com/news/2019-one-one-summer-support-worker-reimbursement-fund>.

Policy Review

No policies are currently out for public consultation.

Evaluation of Phonological Awareness and Phonics Skills (EPPS)

MaryAnn Schouten, Communication, Speech and Language Coordinator introduced herself to the committee and explained that together with Wendy Donaldson, they

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coordinate the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services. She added that May is Speech and Hearing month. To showcase this month, many activities have been planned to help teachers and Principals be more aware of how communication is tied to many areas such as: literacy, poverty, autism, stuttering, speech, wellness, social skills, etc. Part of promoting this month, a teacher website is being launched with resources including videos and handouts, to support classroom strategies relating to communication.

The Evaluation of Phonological Awareness and Phonic Skills (EPPS) was created by the UGDSB Communication, Language and Speech Services Speech Pathologists for classroom teachers and Special Education Resources Teachers (SERTs) to use with students who are not meeting expectations in literacy skill acquisition in JK through to the end of Grade 2. It is a tool that supports teachers on how to identify where students are struggling, and based on their assessments, what tools would be needed to support them. In addition, a 'Red Flags' tools was developed to determine when to administer the EPPS.

MaryAnn Schouten distributed the tool handout to the committee to show what teachers are using in the classroom. She demonstrated how staff accesses the tool on UGShare (UGDSB online forms and data storage) and detailed how it is used. The scope and sequence of this program was initiated from a pilot project at Sir Isaac Public School.

UGDSB received Ministry funding (EPO) for "early intervention" which could include teacher capacity building and/or early intervention resources however, the intervention provided had be connected to a professional assessment demonstrating student need. UGDSB chose to use the funding to support early literacy intervention. Teachers were provided the opportunity to observe administration of the EPPS and given an inservice on research aligned literacy practices. Finally, each school was given decodable books and other early literacy materials to help students. Every school picked one student from their primary class that was struggling in reading for the EPPS assessment. The speech language pathologist provided a brief assessment summary that was given to the parents and included in the OSR.

Carrie Proudfoot asked how is this program being shared with parents. She added that it would be helpful for parents to support their students in reading if they understood what the school is teaching and how it is done. MaryAnn Schouten replied that when the program was launched it was focused on classroom instruction not home programming. Information following assessments was sent home indicating where the student was struggling. She added that parents are supported in another way. When the literacy assessments are done, and the student is struggling with phonological awareness, information about the parent website is sent home indicating where their child is struggling. Carrie Proudfoot asked if any parent could access this website. MaryAnn Schouten replied that the website is shared with parents only after a speech and language

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assessment is completed. Carrie Proudfoot commented that as a community, in and out of the classroom, we are all supporting learning, wouldn't it be better for everyone to understand how this is taught.

MaryAnn Schouten replied that we would encourage parents to reinforce literacy skills taught in school by completing the reading that is being sent home. Specific ways to support a child at home should be part of a parent teacher conversation. Tracey Lindsay responded that EPPS is only used when there is a need for remediation in the classroom. This is different than looking for support in reading. Most primary classes have home reading programs that provide guidelines to parents.

Don Richardson asked if there was a license issue to share the information? MaryAnn Schouten replied that UGDSB purchased the Class Act (phonological awareness) tools from Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board for use within the Board. There are no plans to copyright or publish. Almost all the tools that are integrated into the sequence are free resources that have been aggregated for teacher use. EPPS is not suggested for all students; it is meant as a rich resource to use at various points to bring more practice to a specific skill building. Tracey Lindsay added this was never meant to be a how-to-read program. Don Richardson commented that there are some great resources that could be shared and be valuable. He suggested that a disclaimer be added around this as this tool could benefit other students. Tracey Lindsay responded that is not a reading program; it is a resource to augment small group instruction when students are struggling in specific areas of decoding. If we share this with everyone, they will think this is the way we teach all children how to read. There are many resources on the Board website to direct parents for supporting their child's reading. We could add links to appropriate materials for student reading programs.

Sharon Dills asked that as an early intervention, is there a plan to track the effectiveness of this tool over a long time other than the PM Benchmarks and the Fountas and Pinnel evaluations? Or the impacts? MaryAnn Schouten responded that the PM Benchmarks and the Fountas and Pinnel reading assessments will continue to be used to report student achievements. As teachers become more familiar with the EPPS and its' related instructional resources, they may choose to use the tool to monitor student progress on specific pre-literacy or decoding skills. She added that the pilot project that was done with Grade 1 students at Sir Isaac Brock Public School about six years saw that the majority of children in Grade 3 and 6 did considerably better on the EQAO tests. Several of these students had entered Grade 1 with weak literacy skills. So, EQAO scores could be another performance indicator. Sharon Dills questioned if this assessment would be captured on the report card. MaryAnn Schouten responded that the EPPS can be used to

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identify specific areas of weakness and growth and this information could be captured in the teacher's report card comments. .

PowerPoint presentation was uploaded to the May SEAC folder on UGCloud.

System Transition Support Planning

Carrie Proudfoot introduced Wendy Donaldson and Jenny Marino, Mental Health and Addiction Lead.

Wendy Donaldson addressed SEAC and explained that System Transition planning started last year. There is a total of eighty Program Services staff members available to support students and staff with high risk transitions for this spring and fall. The responsibilities of the staff and the process of receiving system support were detailed. She added that each school has a consultant-based team that includes a speech and language pathologist, psychologist and special education consultant. They work with the Principal all year to support students in the school. This year, this is expanded to include curriculum partners, program leaders etc. to be available the last two weeks in June and the beginning of September. The goal is to be responsive with a specific and simple process.

Jenny Marino addressed SEAC and defined the roles of the Behaviour/Mental Health Interventionist (BI-CYCs). She added that the BI-CYCs look at their caseload from the year and propose students who they feel would benefit from more targeted transition support. She detailed the structure in place and explained that BI-CYCs support students throughout the summer. This may include walking through new classrooms and setting them up; planning fall re-entry schedules; working with family/school/community partners; to help build consistency and relationships.

Don Richardson asked what training the Behaviour/Mental Health Interventionist CYC had. Jenny Marino replied that Child Youth Counsellors (CYC) are in all schools and have mild to moderate mental health behaviour training in the classroom. As CYCs they are not part of a regulated body. They are clinically supervised to ensure they are getting their professional development and supports. They belong to an Association of Child and Youth Counsellors. The Behaviour Interventionists-CYCs are part of our specialized system supports. They have the same education, but will typically have more years of experience. They provide intense support to the child in the classroom by working on social skills and building capacity with the teacher, and also helping the teacher and staff to understand the student. They are in the school for up to 6 weeks and work one on one with the student. If there is a high mental health issue, they would refer the student to the Specialized Mental Health Interventionists.

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Laurie Whyte asked how does a student access support if they are not connected to the program? Jenny Marino replied that a conversation would be held with the school specialized team who would then connect with the administrators in that school. Laurie Whyte questioned what happens if the transition plan isn't followed. What is the recourse? Wendy Donaldson replied that the school team would need to monitor the success of the transitions to determine if additional supports were needed. This could also go to a CST meeting. She added that this step could be added to the October CST meeting as a check in. Laurie Whyte questioned who is monitoring the subtle cues that the student is presenting. Tracey Lindsay replied that the team speaks to the school administrator; they circle back to ensure that the transition is working. Jenny Marino added that the BI-CYCs will also circle back to check in and/or participate in case conferences.

Students transition throughout the year and the team needs to be responsive in problem solving to help them return to school. This past year we have had more mental health workers in school allowing staff to be less reactive.

Sharon Dills questioned what happens to students coming in mid-year from another board. Wendy Donaldson responded that an urgent response was created as a process this year with the goal of providing support within a week. High Risk transitions (mid-year transitions) would be included in this category and in place this year. We have had a few times to test this new system and that has gone very well. Staff team will go to the school and work to proactively plan. The plan is to have staff before students get to the school.

Information regarding the transition process will be shared with SEAC in the fall.

PowerPoint presentation was uploaded to the May SEAC folder on UGCloud.

Mental Health Week

Jenny Marino addressed SEAC and added that May 6 – 10 is Mental Health Week and a very important week. She highlighted the work that is done at the system level to support schools around mental health.

Mental Health Week is endorsed by the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) and supported across Canada. It encourages open discussion, empathy and conversation to reduce stigma and helps to increase knowledge and understanding. Mental health is a critical component to student achievement. This work is happening all year, not just for one week.

The Mental Health Week Planning Committee that meets and plans this week is composed of UGDSB staff and Public Health representatives. This committee meets four times a year and creates the activities and materials for Mental Health week.

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This year they received great feedback from secondary students and incorporated their thoughts and words into the material. This was done through focus groups and was very interactive. The students wanted the opportunity to teach adults about how they think, what they believe and feel and how they experience mental health and mental health concerns. Data was collected and the committee developed a theme from the many suggestions – Celebrate You, Building Confidence, Connection & Wellness. A logo was designed by the students based on the theme.

Within the theme, points that were included were:

- Appreciating your uniqueness
- Building self-confidence
- Social connections – taking a break from only online connections
- Emotional and physical wellness – do something for your body
- Have your say: activities to promote student lead activities

All schools received announcement suggestions and activities that were linked to the theme as part of Super Week.

School Mental Health Ontario (Ministry) and the Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario (ETFO) developed a resource that a teacher can do in the classroom that has been proven to improve wellness. This resource could be put in the resource room or the staff room so that staff can sign out sections that they may want to work on with their students in the classroom. This resource is specifically for elementary and a secondary one is in progress.

Jenny Marino explained the meaning of **S U P E R** Week. Activities for each day are based on the letter of the day.

S – Social Connections

U – Understanding Emotions

P – Personal Health

E – Empathy

R – Resilience

There is a social media contest every year, Hashtag #MHUG on Twitter for students to submit pictures of the different activities they are participating in along with the slogan. The winner receives a \$100 Chapter Indigo card. This is always a huge success.

Don Richardson commented that one of the contributing things to mental health among young people is exclusion. Exclusion is often not happening in the classroom but in less structured environments in the school setting. Exclusion is defined as bullying in the

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UGDSB and other boards' Bully Prevention and Action Plans. He asked how do you help those that may be excluding understand how their behaviour is contributing to someone else's mental well-being and for those that are being excluded, to find adults to speak up to. Most students think of bullying as a physical activity and not about exclusion, but this is a predominate form of bully. There are no evident scars with this type of bullying but it has very serious implications.

Jenny Marino agreed and commented that those unstructured times would be more difficult because you would need to have the ability to reach out. Some of the activities that the teachers are using this week connect to those themes. She added that she believes there is a concentrated effort to support students to speak up and reach out for help, and, to have the perpetrators of exclusion understand the impact of their actions. There is a lot of good work being done and we can continue to make more of those connections.

Don Richardson added that students with various learning disabilities or who are on the spectrum that may have communication impediments, may be excluded more often because they have difficulty participating. How do the tools relate to that for the common theme?

Jenny Marino responded that she didn't have specifics but was confident that the awareness is there because the students that have difficulties relating to their peers also have difficulties communicating to adults who could potentially help them. Some activities are done in a variety of ways in the classroom so that students can access the information in different ways, not just verbally. As there are no specifics coming out of this week it is difficult to answer. Much work is done through the year through other departments – speech and language; psychology, child youth counsellors, social work. Professional development allows staff to be aware and supportive.

Carrie Proudfoot thanked Jenny Marino and suggested that any additional questions be sent to her.

PowerPoint presentation has been uploaded to the May folder on UGCloud.

Special Education Plan Review – Draft Special Education Plan 2019-2020

Wendy Donaldson distributed the draft Special Education Goals that will be included in the Special Education Plan 2019-2020 and asked the committee to review. She explained each of the goals and the actions attached to them. She asked SEAC for feedback for Goal 7 regarding IEP audits and suggested that this could be changed or removed. Last year the consultation piece was dropped as it was going very well. In the last IEP audit, there were good changes reflected. Suggestions/feedback for revisions are to be emailed to her directly.

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The draft Special Education Plan is almost complete; we are waiting for staffing to be done at the end of this month for the final numbers. The final draft document with all incorporated suggestions/changes will be available for the June SEAC meeting. The Special Education Goals will be incorporated.

Don Richardson will meet with Wendy Donaldson to discuss results or expectations of each of the draft goals.

SEISSC Monthly Update

No update

Trustee Report

Jennifer Edwards provided the following updates:

- ✓ Most Trustees attended Empowerment Day at the Sleeman Centre on May 8, 2019. There were great messages from speakers about kindness and anti-bullying.
- ✓ Everyday Heroes chose 11 finalists from the nominations submitted. Examples of going above and beyond your job included: crossing guard made mittens for every child; teacher saved her head for cancer; an office coordinator helped to save a child who was having an asthma attack.
- ✓ The official opening of Mental Health Week was held at Centre Wellington District High School on May 6th, 2019
- ✓ Jenny Marino presented her Mental Health Week presentation to Trustees

Updates from the Superintendent of Program

1. Today is OSSTF Staff Appreciation Day – all of support staff, clerical staff, EAs
2. Dufferin Youth Employment Opportunity Fair was held Tuesday May 7th
3. Youth Employment Opportunity Fair is scheduled for May 14 at the Hanlon Convention Centre from 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

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

None

Other

Adjournment

Sharon Dills motioned for adjournment of meeting at 9:04 p.m. Monica Chamberlain seconded the motion.