

Upper Grand District School Board
Special Education Advisory Committee

Minutes
Wednesday, March 11, 2020

The Special Education Advisory Committee of the Upper Grand District School Board met on Wednesday, March 11, 2020 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; Jason Offer, Association for Bright Children-ABC; Laurie Whyte, FASworld Canada; Stacey Stevens, VOICE for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children; Michelle Barrett, VIEWS for the Visually Impaired (Alternate); Don Richardson, Integration Action for Inclusion in Education and Community (Ontario) (teleconference); Shelley Marks, VIEWS for the Visually Impaired; Denise Helm, Canadian Mental Health Association Wellington Waterloo

Present from Staff were: Tracey Lindsay, Superintendent of Program; Wendy Donaldson, Assistant to the Superintendent of Program

Trustees Present: Jennifer Edwards

Regrets: Kelsey Noseworthy, VOICE for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children (Alternate); Mandi Naismith, Autism Ontario-Wellington County (Alternate); Monica Chamberlain, Learning Disabilities Association of Wellington County; Robin Ross, Trustee; Chad Guyitt, Elementary Principal; Hayley Warren, Secondary Vice-Principal; Audra Cook, Secondary Principal

Absent: Danielle Richer, FASworld Canada (Alternate); Erin Knight, Integration Action for Inclusion in Education and Community (Ontario) (Alternate)

Carrie Proudfoot, Chair, welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Approval of Agenda of March 11, 2020

Stacey Stevens moved that the agenda of March 11, 2020 be approved. Laurie Whyte seconded the motion.

The motion carried.

Approval of Minutes of February 12, 2020

Stacey Stevens moved that the minutes of February 12, 2020 be approved. Laurie Whyte seconded the motion.

The motion carried.

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Action Items

Tracey Lindsay provided the following updates:

- Inclusive Education – Don Richardson to contact Erin Sheldon
- Letter of Support for Windsor-Essex CDSB – Jason Offer to draft letter for April meeting
- Gifted Program – this is on the agenda for tonight's meeting

Correspondence

1. Letter dated February 20, 2020, addressed to the Honourable Stephen Lecce, Minister of Education, from A. Omstead, Chair, Special Education Advisory Committee of the Greater Essex County District School Board, writing in support of the Durham District School Board regarding the current inactive status of MASCE. They are also in agreement with DDSB's recommendation that moving forward, six of the voting members be selected from the Special Education Advisory Committees (SEACs) in the six Ministry of Education's regional areas. They are calling on the Ministry of Education to move forward and fill outstanding MACSE vacancies so that the committee, mandated by the Education Act can resume its previous duties. They have indicated that they are willing to make a representative available from the GECDSB's SEAC.

Correspondence was reviewed and Jason Offer will draft letter on behalf of UGDSB SEAC.

Open Forum – Best Practice and Good News

Laurie Whyte, FASworld Canada – The Annual Conference scheduled for the end of May has been cancelled/postponed.

Denise Helm, Canadian Mental Health Association Wellington Waterloo – YouthTalk conference on April 2, 2020 in Fergus for grade 7-12. Contact Jessica Shumaker for more information.

There are lots of upcoming trainings on our website. We are now offering ASK (Assessing Suicide in Kids) and more information will be on the website.

The upcoming trainings in April may be cancelled due to the recent announcements of school closures and the ever evolving situation around COVID-19. Check website for more information

Shelley Marks & Michelle Barrett (Alternate), VIEWS for the Visually Impaired - Parent teleconference on IEPS with a spotlight on students who are blind or have low vision will take place on Thursday, March 26, 2020 was created and conducted by Shelley Marks and Reena Jain. The teleconference link will be posted on the VIEWS ON website in the last week of March.

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On Saturday, March 28, 2020 at 1:30 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. at the Chatham Public Library, VIEWS will participate in an Information Presentation and Discussion for Parents and Family Members of Children with a Visual Impairment sponsored by the Chatham-Kent Chapter of the Canadian Council of the Blind.

VIEWS ON submitted a Brief to the Ontario Human Rights Commission's Inquiry on the Right to Read, February 14, 2020 and asks that the Commission expand the inquiry's terms of reference to include the barriers facing any students with disabilities to the right to read, <https://viewson.ca/brief-to-the-ontario-human-rights-commissions-inquiry-on-the-right-to-read/>

Policy Review

No policies for review

Gifted Education

SEAC had requested that Wendy Donaldson come back with documentation regarding gifted education. All of the parent communication was uploaded to the folder on UGCloud. The committee wanted to review the communication and provide feedback. Members gathered into groups to discuss and give their input.

PowerPoint presentation was uploaded to March SEAC folder on UGCloud.

Special Education Support in French Immersion

Jonathan Walker presented an overview of "French Immersion Supports for UGDSB Students" which included ministry resources, board resources, professional development, and how FI students are supported.

The Ministry created a document "Including Students with Special Education Needs in FSL Programs". This document provides options for all students, including students' with Special Education needs, to study a second language.

The documents were shared and reviewed with Principals, teachers and special education teachers.

This has changed how we are providing professional development.

UGDSB has French qualified staff – experienced and with special education experience.

Professional Development is provided in French. We offer professional development with French Immersion special education resource teachers.

- How to write effective IEPs in French Immersion.

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- Reading development instruction guide and writing guides were developed for French Immersion teachers.

Links to documents will be uploaded to the UGCloud.

SEAC had concerns about students being counselled out of French.

UGDSB-tracks the students that leave FI – we know who has left and why.

SEAC questioned why students were leaving and what the data shows. SEAC discussed why students leave.

There were questions about whether or not SERT teachers and EA and ECEs are able to speak French. It was explained that it is difficult to find EAs and ECEs who are fluent in French.

Jonathan Walker was open to receive any feedback that could be incorporated in the UGDSB next 3 year French plan.

PowerPoint presentation was uploaded to March SEAC folder on UGCloud.

SEISSC Monthly Update

No update.

Trustee Report

Jennifer Edwards – Trustees sent a letter to the Minister on behalf of the Board supporting staff and hoping they will get to the table and settle contracts.

Board sent a letter to everyone regarding how to stay safe during the Coronavirus flu pandemic.

ETFO was meeting today – hopefully we are on the road to settling.

Updates from the Superintendent of Program

1. Nominations are now open for the 2020 Everyday Hero Awards. Eligible candidates can be an employee, student, volunteer, individual, or community group active in schools – anyone who has a relationship with the system across Dufferin and Wellington Counties and the City of Guelph. Criteria for the award includes the performance of duties at a high level at all times, a significant school or system-related achievement, a specific innovation or achievement of significant value or importance to the system, or a unique circumstance considered worthy of recognition by the board - anyone who goes above and beyond is being sought by the board to honour as an Everyday Hero.

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Nominations are open until April 14, 2020. The awards ceremony is set for May 27 at the E.L. Fox Auditorium (John F. Ross CVI), 21 Meyer Drive, Guelph beginning at 7:00 p.m. A reception will follow the awards.

2. #WeAllHaveAbility – This March, caption a video - According to the Hearing Foundation of Canada, out of the 10% of Canadians who have learning loss, only one in six wear a hearing aid, meaning that more than 80% of hearing-impaired Canadians may have trouble following conversation. Adding closed captions to videos makes programing accessible for many people. Last month, we challenged students and staff to get creative by making a described video. This month, we are challenging students and staff to create a closed captioned video.

Take a short movie or TV clip from a legally obtained source and insert closed captioning to help those in our community who are hearing impaired. If you cannot find a clip you want to use, create your own video clip or use the clip you used for the described video challenge. Send us your new clip or a link to the clip on social media using #WeAllHaveAbility.

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

- New Action item: Jason Offer to draft letter on behalf of UGDSB SEAC supporting Greater Essex County DSB to move forward and fill outstanding MACSE vacancies so the committee can resume its previous duties.

Tracey reminded SEAC that the group requested that each organization give a short presentation about their organization – what they do to support kids.

Other

Adjournment

Stacey Stevens motioned for adjournment of the meeting. Jennifer Edwards seconded the motion.