



# Special Education Advisory Committee

April 12, 2017

A meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) was held on Wednesday, April 12, 2017 at 7:00 pm, in the St Jacobs Learning Hub, Education Centre, with the following members in attendance:

- Trustee members: John Hendry, Cindy Watson
- Association Members: Tina Blanchette, Kristina Campbell, Jennifer Checkley, Mary Cunningham, Janine Oosterveld, Angela Sider, Shannon Taylor, Katherine Waybrant
- Association Alternates: Marianne Domm, Sara Penny, Amanda Schultz, Faye Zevenbergen
- Non-Association Members: Colleen Borman, Stuart Cross, Sherri Popovich

Board Staff in attendance: Cindy Benedetti, Scott R Miller, Karin Sonnenberg  
Regrets: Sophia Catania, Dawn Clelland, Kris Pryke, Carmen Sutherland

Guests: Special Education Consultants Teresa Burch and Kathy Berwick, Amy Dibbon

## Call to Order

SEAC Chair A. Sider called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

## Approval of Agenda

Moved by J. Oosterveld, seconded by S. Taylor:

That the agenda of the April 12, 2017, Special Education Advisory Committee meeting, be approved.

Carried

## Approval of Minutes

Moved by S. Taylor, seconded by J. Oosterveld:

That the minutes of the March 8, 2017 meeting, Special Education Advisory Committee, be approved.

Carried

## Special Education Update

Transition Presentation - Guest speakers Teresa Burch, Kathy Berwick

Kathy Berwick, Dev Ed consultant, defined transition planning. A PowerPoint presentation was shown to members. (*See attachment SEAC transition-2017.pdf*). K. Berwick's portion of the presentation focused on elementary students - transitions and ABA training for all teachers. The resources available to students/teachers to deal with

transitions (class, grade, school) were discussed. The process includes student information being shared with teachers during regular training sessions. T. Burch's portion of the presentation focused on secondary students and explained the process of transitioning between elementary and secondary students, both integrated and congregated classes. Also discussed in her presentation was the transitioning out of school into post secondary for both mainstream and congregated class students. A key message shared was that to be considered recent student assessments need to be within 5 years. Congregated students can be in high school for up to 7 years until the age of 21.

T. Burch provided an overview on WATS (Work and Transition Support), DSO (Developmental Services Ontario), Waterloo Region Family Network and Private agencies.

Questions/comments were fielded.

Transition planning may not start soon enough for students leaving high school and if the process doesn't start early parents may feel overwhelmed. As a result conversations are starting earlier. The WRDSB recognizes we are living in a changing society and it is important to be creative/dynamic to support our students in partnership with parents, caregivers and community supports. We continue to train teachers in respect to transition planning.

With students that have ADHD, high anxiety, does our board encourage having students stay an extra year, which would help with transitioning? Once a diploma is earned, the student should graduate. If the student does not have the required credits, they can be able to come back for an additional year of secondary school.

Ontario Autism Coalition (OAC): OAC Education Report- A New Horizon: Recently was released to the public (*see attached Ontario Autism Coalition Education Recommendation Report 2017.pdf*).

Special Needs Strategy: Is made up of a coordination service plan, which has been completed and the integrated rehabilitation plan proposal is being revised and is almost ready for public consultation.

Support 4 Students: Cardinal Software (IEP writer) has been given the challenge to redesign the program to provide better representation of what's happening in our schools. Thanks to SEAC for their continued conversation in this area.

Special Education Town Hall: Have an open discussion about what we'd like to see and provide strategies to get there. Members were given the opportunity to share their concerns.

- Students with different exceptionalities have different levels of support. There is a concern that these students are not being given the level of support they need. We attempt to put students that have similar needs in our congregated settings.
- Developmental Classes - the name constitutes "labeling", particularly in older students. It becomes part of the culture with the staff and students. Is there a way

that the naming of these classes can be reviewed? Parents do not support this language. For example, programs like Phoenix and Teminos are much more acceptable. It was suggested we could use student voice to provide ideas. Perhaps less segregation with these students and more involvement with the rest of the school population would help. We need to have a broader discussion about this as it applies to our guiding principles. And the name has to live up to the program.

- A concern that schools are not always listening to parents about their students. S. Miller asked to be provided with specific examples and he will follow up on these situations. It's about educating the school/teachers/admin.
- Social inclusion, field trips, clubs - best opportunity for kids to be on the same level. What if we could create work within the school environment to assist in transitioning? What if students could experience different classes? S. Miller spoke to secondary students in leadership and peer helping classes that were supporting other students. A lot of secondary schools are implementing this strategy.
- All students, including those in congregated classes, should have the opportunity to take a career's course.
- If you can provide additional feedback, please contact Angela Sider.

### **Chair Report**

Bluewater DSB letter - some momentum gathering among other school boards regarding this letter. Do we want to endorse/respond? The letter in Bluewater was written in partnership with the Board of Trustees and SEAC.

### **Motion**

That SEAC will support and endorse the Bluewater DSB letter sent to the Minister of Education requesting a review of Special Education funding and this motion will be brought forward to the Board of Trustees.

Moved by T. Blanchette, Seconded by Sara Penny.

Carried.

### **Date of Next Meeting**

The next SEAC meeting date is Wednesday, May 10, 2017, 7:00 pm in the St. Jacobs Learning Hub, Education Centre.

### **Adjournment**

Moved by K. Waybrant, seconded by J. Oosterveld:

That the Special Education Advisory Committee meeting be adjourned.

Carried

The meeting adjourned at 9:05 pm.