

A meeting of the **Special Education Advisory Committee** was held on Wednesday, November 9, 2016 at 7:00 p.m. in the St Jacobs Learning Hub, Education Centre, with the following members in attendance:

- Trustee members: John Hendry, Cindy Watson
- Association Members: Tina Blanchette, Jennifer Checkley, Janine Oosterveld, Angela Sider, Kris Pryke, Shannon Taylor, Katherine Waybrant
- Association Alternates: Marianne Domm, Amanda Schultz, Faye Zevenbergen
- Non-Association Members: Stuart Cross, Sherri Popovich, Carmen Sutherland

Board Staff in attendance: Cindy Benedetti, Scott R. Miller, Lila Read, Karen Leishman

Regrets: Kristina Campbell, Mary Cunningham, Molly Fortier, Amy Tupling

CALL TO ORDER

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

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

That the agenda of the November 9, 2016, Special Education Advisory Committee meeting, be approved.

- Carried -

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

2. Moved by Janine Oosterveld, seconded by Kris Pryke:

That the minutes of the October 12, 2016, Special Education Advisory Committee meeting, be approved.

- Carried -

Guest Speaker: Rob Lattanzio (ARCH-Disability Law Centre)

Powerpoint: Overview

- **About ARCH and our clients' stories**

Specialty legal clinic specializing in disability law and rights www.archdisabilitylaw.ca

Funded by legal aid

Services:

Summary advice e.g. requesting accommodations; challenging exclusion; human rights

Litigation e.g. cases that have systemic impact

Law reform e.g. submissions to government on education-related matters

Public legal education e.g. workshops for parents, students.

Top 4 issues:

- inappropriate accommodations and/or denial of accommodations,
- inappropriate discipline and exclusion;
- difficulty with the IPRC and IEP development process;
- school's unwillingness to support inclusive placements

Education Act and Human Rights Code

- Ontario's Human Rights Code - creating inclusive school cultures; and enhancing citizenship and ensuring equal access to education services
- Ontario's Education Act - more formalistic; makes fewer promises (e.g. Minister shall ensure access to "appropriate" services)
- Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)
- boards have a duty to accommodate which includes both a substantive and procedural aspect. Substantive = considers the appropriateness of the accommodation provided or whether it cannot be provided because of undue hardship. Procedural = the methods and approach to developing and implementing the accommodations e.g. assessments, consultation, etc.)
- Moore Decision and Meaningful Access
 - individualization;
 - appropriate accommodation;
 - consultation;
 - timeliness;
 - promotion of inclusive environments;
 - universal design;
 - access that is not meaningful is not access at all
- Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario adopted the Moore framework and found discrimination by School Board

3. Inclusive Education & Accommodating Disability

- no actual process for appeals
- should not be used to avoid human rights obligations to accommodate
- no requirements to provide programming
- not duration specific
- any assessments on safety and risk should be made only after the student is accommodated
- no ministry requirements to track this data
- ARCH's FOI requests
- The WRDSB is one of two boards that is able to produce tracking of this type of data.

4. Shortened Days

- Regulation 298 allows for shortening of school days
- shortened days may be an inappropriate response by school board
- a board should not use this section for its own benefit, i.e. because of a shortage of staff

ARCH in partnership with Community Living Ontario, Inclusive Education Canada, Brock University, and University of Western Ontario is currently undertaking a research project and requesting participation. Available in February.

Presentation concluded with a Q&A session.

Scott invited members to submit questions to him for discussion at the December meeting.

SPECIAL EDUCATION UPDATE

Syrian Refugee Update (Special Education)

- Special Education data showing some students accessing supports currently; now seeing some of the trauma from the students and putting supports in place. Have been able to access support from our community partners as well. Major issues are ESL/ELD. Initial assessment in first language has been helpful in determining special education needs.

Mental Health Consultation

- Scott referenced a Ministry session on well-being that occurred today. Will send out a recent Ministry Engagement Paper for further discussion at next meeting. Mentioned a Nov. 29 regional session will be attended by board staff and a rep from SEAC.
- Engagement portal on Ministry website for input by individuals or groups. Discussion item for next meeting.
- Lila gave a brief overview of Ministry session today. Region of Waterloo invited community partners to a broad community well-being dialogue. Referenced desire to engage students in well-being conversation and will welcome SEAC input.

Rick Hanson Foundation (Access 4All Grant)

- Purchasing portable lifts for stages. Deepa Ahluwalia is putting together a proposal for Hanson foundation to purchase 2 portable lifts. ECI now has lift to allow people in wheelchairs to access lower bowl of the auditorium.

Upcoming Meetings (agenda items)

- Barb Ward in January
- December meeting for engagement paper

OTHER BUSINESS

Plan for Christmas gathering - Angela will send out details with agenda for Dec.

ROUND TABLE ASSOCIATION REPORTS

WRDSS (J. Oosterveld) WRDSS hosted our annual awareness event, the Buddy Walk on November 6th at Stanley Park Community Centre. It was overwhelmingly successful! We launched our calendar at the event with photos by Hilary Gauld-Camilleri. She compiled them in an October social media campaign called See.Me which received attention from traditional media including an interview on CBC radio and an article in the Huffington Post. The calendars sold out part way through the Buddy Walk with orders as far away as New Zealand! We are in the process of reprinting and are thrilled with the exposure - showing off the amazing individuals that we have in our organization!

WRFN (C. Sutherland) "Giving Tuesday" inviting people to Dutchmen hockey game and meet & greet with players on Tues., Nov. 29 at 7 pm. Free admission to persons with special needs; other tickets are \$5. Register with foundation. (*See attachment Hockey Night with WRFN*)

TRUSTEE REPORT

Cindy Watson shared that trustees will be working through Purpose statement. Suggested having Nick Manning attend meeting to gather feedback and provide information. Would have to be at the December meeting.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next SEAC meeting date is **Wednesday, December 14, 2016 at 7:00 pm**, in the **St. Jacobs Learning Hub (Bldg 1)**, Education Centre.

ADJOURNMENT

5. Moved by T.Blanchette, seconded by J. Oosterveld:

That the Special Education Advisory Committee meeting be adjourned.

- Carried -

The meeting adjourned at 8:54 p.m.