



# CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD OF EASTERN ONTARIO

## MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

April 10, 2007

**Bishop Macdonell, in Cornwall**

### **Present:**

#### **SEAC Members:**

Sue Wilson (Chair), Trustee  
Nancy Kirby, Trustee  
Karen McAllister, Trustee  
Fran Brauneisen, Association for Community Living  
Rose-Marie Martin, Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario  
Suzanne Whitney, Integration Action for Inclusion of Leeds & Grenville  
Christina Edge, Autism Ontario  
Ann McGahey, Member-at-Large, OECTA

#### **Board Resource Staff:**

Dr. Donaleen Hawes, Superintendent of Education  
Tom Jordan, Principal of Special Education  
Paula Perrault, Special Education Co-ordinator  
Rod McLeod, Special Education Consultant

#### **Guests:**

Ruby Mekker, Special Education Resource Teacher, St. Mary, Chesterville  
Natalie Cameron, Principal, Bishop Macdonell, in Cornwall  
Frances Spagnolo, Vice Principal, Bishop Macdonell, in Cornwall  
Stephanie Burke, Principal, Sacred Heart, in Cornwall  
Rick and Kim Stallberg, parents, Pope John Paul II, in Hammond  
Colleen Kelly Jansen, Community Living, Dundas County  
Nancy Fischer, Community Living, North Grenville

### **Meeting Called to Order**

Sue Wilson called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Sue welcomed all participants to Bishop Macdonell and thanked Natalie Cameron, Principal, and Frances Spagnolo, Vice Principal, for hosting the meeting.

Sue lit a candle to help us remember all of the students that we serve.

## I. Opening Prayer

Tom Jordan led the group in an opening prayer.

## II. Approval of Agenda

Moved by: Karen McAllister

Seconded by: Christina Edge

## III. Approval of Minutes

One correction was noted to the minutes from the meeting on March 7, 2007; Under the Chair's Report, the parent representative for Prescott-Russell (Michelle Forrester) should state that she is a parent at both St. Patrick School, in Rockland, and St. Francis Xavier CHS, in Hammond.

Moved by: Nancy Kirby

Seconded by: Christina Edge

## IV. Association Updates

Rose-Marie Martin, Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario

Nothing to report at this time.

Fran Brauneisen, Association for Community Living

The Canadian Association for Community Living and Community Living Ontario are joining forces to present a National Conference from May 30 – June 1, 2007. It will be held in Toronto. The theme is "**Re-inventing Community Supports**". The conference will following three important streams relating to the theme:

- **System Transformation** – discovering how local community agencies are transforming themselves to deliver more inclusive and individualized supports
- **Re-building the Grassroots Movement** – beyond services and supports to social change
- **Community Development** – opportunities to engage with one another to learn from the experiences of diverse communities

The deadline for reservations at the Sheraton Centre, in Toronto, is April 29, 2007. There is a range of fees for participants. For more information go to [www.cacle.ca](http://www.cacle.ca), or [www.communitylivingontario.ca/conference2007](http://www.communitylivingontario.ca/conference2007). The Community Living Ontario Annual General Meeting will follow the conference on June 2, 2007.

Christina Edge, Autism Ontario

The Annual General Meeting is taking place on April 29, 2007, at the Ramada Inn, in Cornwall. The keynote speaker is Ed Mahoney and the cost to attend is \$10.00.

Mr. Mahoney will focus on decreased anxiety and associated “meltdowns” in autistic children. Registration information can be found on the Autism Ontario website. All interested parties are invited to take part.

Suzanne Whitney, Integration Action for Inclusion of Leeds & Grenville

- Suzanne attended the Community Living Conference, in Edmonton, during March break. The conference had a big focus on inclusive education (including post-secondary education). Suzanne’s daughter attended the Youth Forum at the same time and enjoyed it very much.
- Suzanne also attended the Marilyn Dolmage workshop on High School Inclusion during March. It was held in Cornwall and Suzanne found it very worthwhile.
- Darcy Elks will be presenting at a conference being held at the Glen House Resort (near Gananoque) on the weekend of April 14-15, 2007.
- Suzanne will be attending a Special Education Advisory Committee training event in Toronto on June 2-3, 2007.

**V. Department Updates**

The Prescott Alternative to Suspension (ABLE Program) is up and running. The Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario has three students in the program. We were part of a community Open House meeting for the program on March 26, 2007.

Dr. Hawes, Paula Perrault, Judy Dallas, Rod McLeod and Tom Jordan all attended a Regional Special Education Committee meeting on March 30, 2007. The meeting was hosted by the Algonquin Lakeshore Catholic District School Board, and was held at their Board Office, in Napanee. These meetings are important because they allow us to learn about best practices from our neighbouring boards, and the meeting provides us with Ministry updates and feedback.

The Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario is partnering with Brockville and Area Community Living, the Leeds and Grenville Threshold Committee and the Upper Canada District School Board to host an after-school workshop on the importance of inclusion. The keynote speaker will be Darcy Elks, a mother of three children, one of whom has Down Syndrome. The workshop will run from 4:00-5:30 p.m., on Monday, April 16, 2007, at J. L. Jordan School, in Brockville. The workshop is open to educators and parents.

The Special Education Department will be facilitating a number of workshops for the break-out groups during the Board-wide Professional Activity Day, on May 11, 2007.

Paula Perrault and Natalie Cameron provided a STOMP overview (Council of Directors of Education Project Update);

- Paula shared that the project is entering the final phases of implementation for this school year, and that the response from the schools continues to be very positive.
- Natalie Cameron described how the program helps students to identify their strengths and weaknesses, thereby helping them to set goals and learn what they need to do to achieve their goals.

- Natalie Cameron pointed out that the transition from the FROG, HAWK and STOMP initiatives has had a very logical flow to it.

Rod McLeod provided an update concerning the mini-enrichment courses be held in May;

- the course selection has been completed
- most students were able to get into the course that they wanted
- there are approximately 138 students from across our Board participating in this upcoming round

## **VI. Transition Planning Presentation**

Fran Brauneisen presented an overview of a document entitled, **“Transition Planning from School to Adult World”**;

- a working definition of Transition Planning was shared and discussed
- it was stressed that all good Transition Planning must identify goals, actions, responsibilities and timelines
- specific roles and responsibilities for School Boards, Principals and other Transition Planning Team members were shared and highlighted
- the need for an integrated plan, with a focus on outreach, was stressed as critical to creating a good plan
- Transition Plans will look different from student to student, and community to community
- the importance of the team was discussed
- Transition Planning includes the integration of a variety of plans (Individual Placement Review Committee, Individual Education Plan, Annual Education Plan, Cooperative Education Personalized Placement Learning Plan, Exit Plan and Individual Support Agreement)
- a discussion took place about how these ideas are dealt with in the Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario
- Fran referred participants to access the following website for further information:  
<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/speced/transiti.html>

Colleen Kelly Jansen (Community Living, Dundas County) contributed to the presentation by sharing a number of tools that are used to help develop Transition Plans;

- the High School inclusion video entitled, “Petroglyphs” (<http://iod.unh.edu>) was highly recommended
- Colleen stressed the importance of starting the planning early (Grade 9), waiting until the students are almost finished high school to start planning is highly problematic
- Colleen shared a template that deals with a number of important areas and issues (while the individual is still in school, and after they are finished high school)
- Colleen shared a number of other templates and tools that are used in Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry (services available in our other counties will be very similar)

Nancy Fischer (Community Living, North Grenville) continued the presentation by focusing on the importance of co-operative education opportunities (especially for students with special needs);

- cooperative education placements not only help the students, they help the employers get over some fears/concerns that they may have about employing people with disabilities
- the importance of the candidate enjoying the experience was stressed
- at times support is needed to make co-op placements work (especially in the initial stages of a new placement)
- a discussion took place on how to use volunteers or other community supports to help fill this supportive role

## **VII. Topics for Future Meeting**

- Gifted Website

## **VIII. Correspondence Received**

- A letter was received from the Toronto District School Board, to Minister Wynne, expressing funding concerns. A copy of this letter was not available at the meeting on April 10, 2007, so it will be carried forward to the meeting on May 8, 2007.

## **IX. Chairperson's Update**

A question was raised concerning the Parent Involvement Committee. Sue Wilson provided an overview of what has happened thus far.

## **X. Good News Sharing**

Members and guests shared many items of good news with the group.

## **XI. Next S.E.A.C. Meeting – May 8, 2007, at the Board Office, in Kemptville – All SEAC members are asked to bring their copy of the CDSBEO Annual Report to the Ministry**

## **XII. Closing Prayer**

Natalie Cameron, Principal, and Frances Spagnolo, Vice Principal, presented lovely handmade, standup crosses to all of the Special Education Advisory Committee members and guests present. The crosses were made by the students and staff from Bishop Macdonell's ALEP program.

Members of the group shared the "Board Prayer".

**XIII. Motion to Adjourn the Meeting**

Sue Wilson thanked Natalie Cameron and Frances Spagnolo for hosting the meeting, and asked that our thanks and gratitude be passed on to all of the students and staff at Bishop Macdonell for making us feel welcome.

Sue Wilson adjourned the meeting at 9:00 p.m.

Moved by: Suzanne Whitney

Seconded by: Anne McGahey

**We invite all parents and interested staff to attend SEAC meetings, and for SEAC members to bring guests to each meeting.**

*We are people of God ..... Transforming the world!*