



CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD OF EASTERN ONTARIO

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

June 13, 2006

Board Office, Kemptville

Present:

SEAC Members:

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

Board Resource Staff:

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

Regrets:

Denis Sabourin, Trustee
Gerry Samson, Trustee

Guests:

Donna Nielsen, Principal, St. Mary – St. Cecilia
Cindy Scott, SSW, St. Mary – St. Cecilia
Lisa Bourette, Special Education Resource Teacher, St. Mary – St. Cecilia
Patty Maddigan, Parent, St. Mary – St. Cecilia
Dave Connors, Parent, Our Lady of Good Counsel
Ruby Mekker, Teacher, St. Mary, Chesterville
Irene Tweddle, Education Assistant (CUPE)

Meeting Called to Order

Sue Wilson called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

Sue welcomed all members and guests to our final SEAC meeting of the 2005/06 school year. Sue lit a candle and asked us to join her in praying for all of our staff and students.

I. Opening Prayer

Tom Jordan led the group in the “Prayer of Mother Teresa”.

II. Approval of Agenda

Moved by: Suzanne Whitney

Seconded by: Rose-Marie Martin

III. Approval of Minutes

It was noted that MACSE should be spelled with an “E” at the end, not an “T”, as recorded in the May 23, 2006, SEAC minutes.

Moved by: Suzanne Whitney

Seconded by: Christina Edge

IV. Association Updates

Rose-Marie Martin, Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario

- LDAO is writing the Ministry to encourage them to make sure that all new anti-bullying programs include an evaluation component, and that each program meets the needs of special education students
- Ministry will be setting up a Special Circumstance Fund
- a question was asked if CDSBEO would be applying for any of this funding
- a letter from Christopher Carew (CEO for LDAO) was presented and discussed (see Correspondence Section of these minutes for further information)
- questions concerning anti-bullying resources and policy were raised and addressed
- discussions took place regarding the Assistive Technology Symposium that will be happening in September 2006; it was agreed that a report will be brought back to SEAC
- discussions took place concerning the Learning to 18 Initiative
 - two co-op credits can be used for two compulsory credits
 - Religion cannot be counted as an exempted course in our high schools
 - only two substitutions can be used during a student’s high school career (not per year or semester)
- the high school version of the SOAR program is being launched and will be ready in the very near future
 - these resources will be ideal for Learning Strategies courses
 - it was decided to make this a topic for a future SEAC meeting

Christina Edge, Autism Society of Ontario

- Christina will be attending the Ontario AGM (Annual General Meeting) June 16-17, 2006, the focus is on teens and adults
- the local AGM (Annual General Meeting) is on June 25, 2006
 - the guest speaker will be Sheila Bell
 - it is open to anyone who is interested (no charge to attend)
 - this meeting will take place at the Community Living Office, in Cornwall, 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Christina Edge, Autism Society of Ontario (cont'd)

- Autism training for parents and caregivers will take place on October 4-5, 2006, at the S.D. & G. Developmental Services, in Cornwall
 - the Geneva Centre Staff will be the presenters
 - topics will include Intro to ASD, Using Visual Aids, Sensory Processing, ASD and Helping Individuals with ASD to Develop Social Skills
 - interested people need to sign up by July 28, 2006, by contacting Helene Lamarche at 613-937-3072, ext. 234, or by e-mail at hlamarche@developmentalservices.ca
 - no charge to attend

Fran Brauneisen, Association for Community Living

- the month of May was Community Living Month, the organization was pleased that the township supported this initiative
 - started with a pancake breakfast which included a play
 - the play was written by an employee of the local association
 - play was very well done; all about inclusion
 - play was narrated and mimed at the same time
 - the township is interested in staging this for their summer camps
 - this play is available for school performances by contacting Rochelle at 613-258-7177 to book a time for this very worthwhile performance
- the Ontario AGM (Annual General Meeting) is scheduled for September 13-16, 2006, in Sioux Lookout
 - accommodations are limited
 - interested people are encouraged to sign up early
- Community Living Newsletter is very active these days; it is available on the website www.communitylivingont.ca
- a copy of the newly released Ministry 's Special Education Transformation document (June 12, 2006) was circulated

Suzanne Whitney, Integration Action for Inclusion, Leeds & Grenville

- one of the parents from Integration Action for Inclusion recently met with Gary Cook (President of Community Living Ontario); this same parent has now been invited to meet with the Minister of Education
- Suzanne reported that she is also the Vice President of the Brockville and Area Association for Community Involvement and shared the following information;
 - the 50th Annual AGM (Annual General Meeting) will take place June 24, 2006
 - a panel of guest speakers will be present
 - there will also be a social time with a band and dancing
 - the event will take place at CJ's Restaurant, in Brockville
 - tickets are \$25.00 each, and must be reserved by June 16, 2006
 - social hour starts at 5:00 p.m., and the dance ends at 12:00 midnight
- The Toronto Summer Institute is being held at Ryerson again this year from July 8-13, 2006, the cost to register is \$600 per person, or \$400 for groups of three or more
 - more information can be obtained by contacting Cathy Hollands at 416-658-5363, or by e-mail at inclusionpress@inclusion.com; space is limited

V. Special Education Department Updates

Paula Perrault and Tom Jordan recently attended a Thresholds meeting at the Brockville and Area Association for Community Involvement. The purpose of the meeting was to bridge closer ties between the Committee and the CDSBEO so that together, we can help build better transition plans for intellectually challenged young people.

The department hosted a team meeting for the entire Special Education Team on May 25, 2006, in Smiths Falls.

Some members of our team attended the Regional Special Education Committee meeting, in Ottawa, on May 25, 2006. Representatives from all of the Eastern Ontario School Boards as well as representatives from the Ministry of Education attended this meeting.

A Board-wide Student Support Worker meeting was held on June 2, 2006, in Kemptville. The keynote speakers presented on "Trafficking in Women and Children".

Paula Perrault attended a Regional Autism Spectrum recently. Some concrete training and in-service plans were shared.

We have two Non Violent Crisis Intervention Training dates coming up (June 14, 2006, in Smiths Falls, and June 15, 2006, in Cornwall). Both sessions are full. We will continue training in the fall.

The anti-bullying resources that were recently ordered have arrived and have been packaged up in the form of kits. All schools have (or will soon have) received a kit that is tailored to the particular age group of students they serve. In addition to the resources in the kits, we are finalizing dates for a series of training workshops.

CODE Update

Dr. Hawes and Paula Perrault shared the following information.;

- we have finished both phases
- 2nd Coach Reflection Day took place on June 8, 2006
- now looking at the data and some of the assessment information that was gathered
- results have been very promising, especially for special education students
- the video/DVD is in the final stages of development
- teachers have quickly embraced the model of delivery
- school embedded PD has proven to be very effective
- we would like to do a presentation in the fall
- we are in the process of preparing the report to the Ministry
- it looks like we will have the opportunity to apply for more CODE money next year for a new project
- design and implementation was structured around the Education for All document

VI. New Business

Multiple Exceptionality Program (MEP) Presentation

Donna Neilsen (Principal), Lisa Bourette (SERT), and Cindy Scott (SSW) from St. Mary – St. Cecilia presented on the Multiple Exceptionality Program that exists at St. Mary – St. Cecilia.

The team provided an overview on how the program looks at St. Mary – St. Cecilia;

- program is based on the school vision
- vision is embraced by the parish and school community
- students are looked at as individuals
- program is really a Special Education Resource model
- SERT works with specific students with special needs
- Model allows for a lot of individual attention
- program is very flexible and changes all the time (based on student's needs)
- typically students spend 75% of their day in their regular classroom
- 25% of the time they may be in another location (classroom or computer lab for example) working on activities that are specifically targeted at their individual needs
- other students (not regularly part of the MEP program) are brought in if they may benefit from a particular activity/event that may be taking place
- inclusion is an important factor
- there are several teachers and adults involved in the program
- the SERT is primarily responsible for co-ordinating, developing and monitoring the IEP progress
- the SERT works very closely with the classroom teacher and other professionals
- the program fosters positive development experiences in the classroom
- communication with parents is a very important component in the success of the program
- the team follows programs set up by partners such as CHEO
- SSW works very closely with SERT, classroom teacher and educational assistants (very much a team effort)
- social skills are worked on using puppets, games and role playing
- visuals have helped to bring the students along
- strategies are geared towards transference back to peers
- connections to the community are used to consolidate learning and skills
- Speech Language, Occupational Therapist (OT), Psych. Ed recommendations and goals are incorporated into the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP) and where possible, these goals are linked to curriculum goals
- students feel very safe in the small group situation, and are quite comfortable to respond and participate
- the team is thrilled to see that students can, and do, transfer the skills they concentrate on (in the small group setting) when they are in their regular classroom
- goal is to foster independence, success and communication skills

- individual instruction and attention the students receive helps to reinforce curriculum goals
- the program is very much individualized so that all students can be successful
- a great deal of the materials are created by Lisa and the team
- manipulatives are an important component
- the objective over time is to have the students spend less and less time in the MEP, and more and more time in the regular program
- students take on leadership roles and celebrate his or her own success (as well as the successes of peers)
- a wide variety of materials are used to try to maximize the learning
- classroom teachers are an important part of the success of the program
- SERT provides support to classroom teacher
- Lisa helps classroom teacher modify curriculum, supports the students when they are back in the regular classroom and liaises with parents
- EA's work with the team to implement the IEP and support the student and the team
- professional development is ongoing and embraced by the staff
- a strong relationship exists with community partners (CHEO-ASD Team)
- the program is very dynamic and will change over time

Dr. Hawes commented that from a system perspective, that the model presented is a wonderful example of how a staff pulls together to meet the needs in the school. Dr. Hawes reminded us that this is not a program that can be transferred "as is" to another setting, it must be tailored to the individual needs of the students, and the realities of the community that they serve.

Dr. Hawes and Sue Wilson thanked the St. Mary – St. Cecilia team for their informative presentation. A display of materials (many of them produced by the team) was highlighted and available for viewing.

VII. New Business

Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education (MACSE) Update

Sue Wilson provided an update on the Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education (MACSE);

- a copy of the information that MACSE was looking for from the CDSBEO was shared
- Sue has received some feedback from the Chairperson who wasn't able to bring forward our feedback to the most recent MACSE meeting, however, she will bring this information forward at the October, 2006 meeting

Mileage for SEAC Members

- a discussion took place regarding whether or not the CDSBEO has ever provided mileage reimbursement to SEAC members in the past (since amalgamation)
- when the CDSBEO asked SEAC members to attend a specific training session, mileage was paid (a recent example would be the Planning for Entry to School training)

- Suzanne Whitney reported that she has submitted mileage claims and has been reimbursed for the past two years
- Dr. Hawes has agreed to review this issue and report back to the group

SEAC Letter to Ministry of Health & Ministry of Education (Action Item from last meeting)

Paula Perrault presented a draft copy of a requested letter to the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education, concerning the lack of speech-language services. It was agreed to make a couple small revisions and then send it.

Moved by: Ann McGahey

Seconded by: Fran Brauneisen

SEAC Reps on Catholic School Councils

- CDSBEO did recommend that all Catholic School Councils have a person responsible for the dissemination of SEAC information a couple years ago
- it is important to note that this is a recommendation, and there is no way that SEAC could mandate this (this would require a change in legislation)
- we will continue to support this recommendation, a reminder will be sent out by Dr. Hawes

Parent Involvement Committee Update

CDSBEO already has a committee in place (Catholic Education Coalition Committee)

- this committee meets the present requirements of the legislation
- this committee presently meets, at least, three times per year with the next meeting scheduled for Thursday, June 15th, 2006, at 7:00 p.m., in Kemptville
- the plan for the future is to elect individuals from the people in attendance at the Catholic Education Coalition Committee meetings

Annual Report

Dr. Hawes and Paula Perrault handed out copies of the Annual Report to the Ministry of Education on the Provisions of Special Education Programs and Services, June, 2006.

- members and guests were reminded that this is an amended year, so only the sections of the June, 2005 Annual Report that have changed from last year, are included
- Dr. Hawes discussed the Funding Section
- the history of what was shared with SEAC thus far this year, was reviewed
 - a recommendation did go forward to the Board
 - SEAC didn't support any reduction in staff
 - recommendations did go to the Board, but the Board did not feel they were in a position to accept SEAC's recommendations
 - Board recommended that we go forward and staff according to known funding
 - this resulted in redundancies, surpluses and vacancies

Some new information regarding funding was made available June 12th, 2006.

- Special Education Funding does recognize the salary increases for SEPPA and other grants at 2.5%
- this doesn't fully reflect the cost increase (this part is still good news)

- we will be receiving approximately \$450,000 more dollars than last year, which is approximately \$311,000 more dollars than we had projected
- in the CDSBEO, Special Education has always received a significant amount of money through the Learning Opportunities Grant
- this grant has changed dramatically (is not good news for Spec.Ed)
- there is now a new grant called The School Foundation Grant which may help make up some of the lost Learning Opportunities Grant
- unfortunately, at this point in time, we haven't received all of the information that will be necessary to fully comprehend the impact on the CDSBEO from the Ministry changes (this will take time)
- any changes that go to the Board will be e-mailed to SEAC members over the summer and will be reviewed, in detail, at the meeting in September, 2006

VIII. Correspondence Received

A letter from Christopher Carew, Chief Executive Officer, Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario, was shared and discussed with Ms. Marie-France Lefort, Director – Parental Engagement Office, Ministry of Education.

- in the letter, the Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario is strongly urging the Parental Engagement Office to communicate and consult with organizations such as SEAC and School Councils when gathering information and data so that they will have an accurate picture of the needs of all students, and concerns of all parents
- it was agreed that a copy of this letter would be shared with our Director of Education, Ann Perron
- we currently have a committee established; the Catholic Education Coalition Committee
- Partner's Meetings happen three times a year now;
 - legislation says that you need a committee (Catholic Education Coalition)
 - in the future, individuals will be elected from the people in attendance at the Partner's Meetings

IX. Topics for Future Meetings

- Gifted Website – Fall, 2006
- Anti-Bullying Guidelines Draft Policy – Fall, 2006
- Assistive Technology
- HAWK (CODE Project) Update
- Fetal Alcohol Syndrome
- Secondary School SOAR Program

X. Good News Sharing

Members and guests shared many positive stories.

XI. Next S.E.A.C. Meeting

- Tuesday, September 12th, 2006, at the Board Office, in Kemptville

XII. Closing Prayer

Tom Jordan led the group in the Board Prayer.

XIII. Motion to Adjourn the Meeting

Moved by: Rose-Marie Martin

Seconded by: Fran Brauneisen

All members were invited to stay and share some refreshments and fellowship after the meeting.