



CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD OF EASTERN ONTARIO

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

November 26th, 2008

St. Michael CHS (Library), Kemptville

7:00 p.m.

Present:

SEAC Members:

Sue Wilson (Chair), 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 Nichols, Association for Bright
Children of Ontario
Joe Sparling, Easter Seals – Ontario
Ruby Mekker, Member-at-Large

Board Resource Staff:

Dr. Donaleen Hawes, Superintendent of Education
Brian Peters, Principal of Special Education

Regrets:

Nancy Kirby, Trustee
Jason Edge, Autism Ontario
James Borer, VOICE

Guests:

Rebecca McEvoy, Student Trustee
Terry McEvoy, Parent
Diane Bartlett, Parent

Meeting Called to Order

Sue Wilson called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.
Sue provided everyone with an early Christmas gift which was greatly appreciated.

I. Opening Prayer

Brian Peters led us in a prayer of Hope as we prepare for the Advent season.

**** Minutes will be presented for approval at the next SEAC meeting on January 28, 2009.**

II. Welcome and Introduction

Sue Wilson welcomed all members and guests.

III. Approval of Amended Agenda

Moved by: Suzanne Whitney

Seconded by: Christina Nichols

IV. Approval of Amended Minutes

Moved by: Joe Sparling

Seconded by: Fran Brauneisen

V. Association Updates

Fran Brauneisen, Association for Community Living

Fran began her report by sharing two letters that reflected discussion on the values of inclusion as opposed to segregation of special needs students.

She also outlined a series of responses that the Community Living Associations in the Board perimeters will undertake.

In conclusion, Fran shared a comment from Keith Powell, Executive Director of Community Living Ontario on the values of inclusion.

Rose-Marie Martin, Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario

- Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario continues to work on the IEP Resource Project for Parents and Students. There are currently ten (10) units of content prepared. The final product will be an online workshop accessible to everyone, in the spring of 2009.
- Workshop was held on November 19th, 2008, at the Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario, Ottawa Carleton Chapter, facilitated by Dr. John Meisner and Post Secondary Transitions. Dr. Meisner provided good information on transitioning from high school to post secondary schools. He recommends that parents should be aware that proper transition plans are established to ensure that the student is ready for the post secondary experience. At this time, the parent becomes more of a coach rather than an advocate.
- Discussions on the ARC Program (Regional Assessment and Resource Centres) were also initiated. The ARC provide assessments at a modest fee, with a sliding fee scale based on financial need. The ARC allow students to get appropriate, comprehensive and reasonably priced assessments that identify their strengths and make specific and relevant recommendations for accommodations and supports.

- Cheryl Duquette, Professor, at the University of Ottawa, is recruiting parents of adolescents in high school or young adults with a primary diagnosis of learning disabilities to tell about their experiences advocating for the educational needs of their sons or daughters. If you would like to participate in this research project, please contact Cheryl at cduquett@uottawa.ca or by telephone at 613-562-5800, ext. 4040.
- Youth 2 Youth website – this website funded by LDA-Canada, will be FOR Youth with LD and will be developed BY Youth with LD. It will provide access to information and support, to ease the transition from home to post-secondary and from post-secondary to the workplace. Students are being consulted about every aspect of the design of the new website. The anticipated launch date for the website is March, 2009.

Jason Edge, Autism Ontario

No report at this time.

Joe Sparling, Easter Seals – Ontario

On November 20th, 2008, Joe attended the Easter Seals meeting. The main topic of discussion was the Bowl-a-thon which raised over \$4,000. Also discussed, were the upcoming Snow-a-Rama and the Easter Seals Egg Campaign. The next meeting will be in early January, 2009.

Ruby Mekker, Member-at-Large

Ruby reported that she has been asked to present on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome at a February PD Day in Ottawa sponsored by OSSTF. She looks forward to the opportunity to talk with Education Assistants and other support staff in the Ottawa area.

Rebecca McEvoy, Student Trustee

Rebecca indicated that the Student Senate has arranged for Ron Flaro, an actor with an intellectual disability, to come to our region in February, 2009. Ron presents a one person dramatization with a powerful message.

VI. CODE Wrap Up

Dr. Hawes shared the power point presentation that our Special Education Board Team presented at the CODE Summit which was held in Toronto on November 17th and 18th, 2008. The presentation described the CODE initiative implemented by our Board for each of the three years of CODE funding including HAWK, STOMP and the creation of DI support teachers. Highlights of the CODE Summit were shared, as well as the next steps that our Board will be taking to build on the successes and meeting the challenges ahead.

A copy of the new folder entitled, Building Partnerships for the Future: engaging parents of students with special needs, was shared with the Special Education Advisory Committee members. The folder provides a partnership matrix identifying key elements and steps to promote the sharing of knowledge, ethos and practice between parents and schools.

VII. CDSBEO Specialized Programs

Brian Peters distributed a handout which listed the Specialized Programs offered by the Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario. Dr. Hawes spoke about the Board's aim to provide meaningful programs for students in the inclusive classroom environment. However, she reiterated that Boards are required to provide a range of programs and services. She emphasized that specialized programs are only offered to families through the I.P.R.C. process and with parent request/consent.

VIII. Department Updates

Autism Training – on the next Professional Activity Day, November 28th, 2008, there will be training for our Educational Assistants and Student Support Workers again this year with the Geneva Centre. The focus will be ABA in the Classroom.

Individual Education Plans (IEP) – Judy Dallas, Special Education Consultant, has nearly completed an IEP Resource Guide. In the new year, Judy and Rod McLeod will be organizing P.L.C. gatherings at each school, where classroom teachers and support staff will meet to focus on the IEP.

SIP – Special Incident Portion claims are needed by the end of November, 2008. Our Special Education staff is working diligently with our Special Education Resource Teachers to meet the Ministry deadline and acquire additional funds for our most needy students.

Bill 212: Restorative Practices – our three pilot schools are up and running. The whole staff from St. Francis Xavier (Hammond), Bishop Macdonell (Cornwall), and St. Francis de Sales (Smiths Falls) participated in a one-day retreat in October, 2008. This month, students and parents were oriented to the philosophy and language of Restorative Practice. November 13th and 14th, 2008, school and support staff were trained to serve as facilitators of Restorative Conferences.

May 1st – Special Education Professional Activity Day – in May, 2009, there will be a system dedicated PD day for Special Education. The Ministry will be releasing “Education for All (K-12)”. This will be the focus for the day. We will have keynote speakers and workshops offered.

People Matters – we welcome Debbie Balog who will serve as a Teacher of the Deaf and Teacher of the Blind. We also welcome Lori Yates as a Communication Disorders Assistant who will be joining April Helmkey (Speech/Language) in the Cornwall region of our Board.

IX. Communication Strategy – Special Education Pamphlet

Brian Peters shared copies of the Department Draft Special Education Pamphlet. This pamphlet will be distributed to important partners (parents, staff, community agencies) to provide an overview of programs and services to help all exceptional pupils meet with success.

Through targeted assessments, Individual Education Plans (IEP) and transition plans are created to identify strengths, needs, expectations, necessary accommodations/modifications to **empower students to succeed**.

The pamphlet highlights the Department frameworks for success as all exceptional learners strive for **higher levels of achievements**.

- Facilitating Reading for Optimum Growth (FROG)
- Higher Achievement for Writers' Know-How (HAWK)
- Success Through Optimizing My Potential (STOMP)

The Department supports the use of assistive technology and adaptive equipment. Our students, when given the tools, are able to access the curriculum and communicate their learning effectively.

Through targeted assessments at the school level (PM Benchmarks, C.A.S.I. and Visual Assessment Portfolios) along with Board supported assessments from our Psychology and Speech Language Pathologists, our students with special needs have celebrated outstanding results and higher levels of achievement.

The emphasis on school communities learning together and working in partnerships, fosters a culture of collaboration and networks of support for our exceptional students.

The pamphlet highlights the important role of Differentiated Instruction Support Teachers (DI Teachers) and professional learning teams.

Finally, Mr. Peters highlighted the Department role in the Safe Schools Initiative and the steps taken in consultation with our valued partners to ensure policies, procedures and programs are in place to ensure development of the progressive discipline framework, creating anti-bullying plans and resources, and providing training in restorative justice. In this area, the Department provides many support staff to assist in the creation of healthy, safe schools (Students Support Workers, Crisis Workers, etc.), and specialized programs like A.B.L.E. (Alternative Behaviour Learning Environment) and Section 23 classrooms.

X. Planning Process for Orientation of New SEAC Member

Sue Wilson requested that this item be deferred to the next meeting so that James Borer, VOICE, (who was not present) could participate and provide input.

XI. Correspondence Received

No items received at this time.

XII. New Business

Public Consultation Opportunity

Rose-Marie Martin reported that the public is being asked to provide feedback on an Initial Proposed Standard for Accessible Information and Communication. It has been developed by the Ontario Government under the Accessibility for Ontario with Disabilities Act (AODA 2005). The process is about removing or preventing barriers that limit the participation of people with disabilities in the life of our communities.

Rose-Marie reported that further information and opportunities for feedback are provided by contacting the Ministry website at <http://www.mcsc.gov.on.ca/mcsc>.

Dr. Hawes will review the information to provide Principals and Catholic School Council Chairs an opportunity to respond.

XIII. Chair Update

Sue Wilson reported that she will be co-chairing the new Prescott-Russell Coalition Against Drugs along with Ken Hill, Mayor of Russell. With representatives from many agencies within the area, the committee will meet every second month. The committee will be preparing for a two-day conference commencing the evening of May 27th, 2009 with a meet and greet, with the conference beginning on May 28th and 29th, 2009, to address the issue of drugs and our young people. The conference will be held in Rockland. Mayor Hill will be sharing this news with wardens and mayors across Eastern Ontario. The next meeting of the committee is scheduled for January 28th, 2009.

XIV. Good News Sharing

Members and guests shared “Good News” stories/events.

XV. Next SEAC Meeting

- Wednesday, January 28th, 2009, at the Board Office, in Kemptonville

XVI. Closing Prayer

Brian Peters led the group in the “Board Prayer”.

XVII. Motion to Adjourn the Meeting

Moved by: Joe Sparling

Seconded by: Fran Brauneisen