



CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD OF EASTERN ONTARIO

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

October 10, 2006

Board Office, Kemptville

Present:

SEAC Members:

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

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

Regrets:

Denis Sabourin, Trustee

Guests:

Derek Haime, Principal, Sacred Heart, Lanark
Irene Tweddle, Education Assistant (CUPE)
Ruby Mekker, Teacher, St. Mary, Chesterville
Patty-Jo Wilson, Parent & School Council Chair,
Sacred Heart, Lanark
Patty Madigan, Parent, St. Mary-St. Cecilia,
Morrisburg

Meeting Called to Order

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

Sue asked us to keep in our prayers a student from St. Francis Xavier Catholic High School, in Hammond, who was seriously injured in an accident, the Amish families, and the families in Vankleek Hill that were affected by the recent gas explosion.

I. Opening Prayer

Tom Jordan led the group in "A Thanksgiving Blessing".

II. Approval of Agenda

Moved by: Suzanne Whitney
Seconded by: Fran Brauneisen

III. Approval of Minutes

Moved by: Rose-Marie Martin
Seconded by: Fran Brauneisen

IV. Association Updates

Rose-Marie Martin, Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario

- a question was raised regarding the suspension and expulsion of special needs students
- Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario has been working on providing online training that will be available to educators, parents and students at:
www.ldao/who_helps/Courses_Workshops.php
- an educational advocate online course will be starting in January, 2007 (see above website)

Suzanne Whitney, Integration Action for Inclusion of Leeds and Grenville

- Integration Action for Inclusion in Education and Community & London Family Network are presenting a one day workshop on “High School with Marilyn Dolmage; this takes place on Saturday, October 14, 2006, in London; the local chapter of Integration Action for Inclusion is hoping to provide the same workshop locally in December, 2006
- Coaching to Inclusion is also hosting a conference on Wednesday, November 29, 2006, from 6:45 – 9:00 p.m.; and Thursday, November 30, 2006, from 8:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m., at the Best Western Lamplighter Inn & Conference Centre, in London.

Fran Brauneisen, Association for Community Living

- Provincial Conference in Sioux Lookout was well organized and attended.
 - * the number of volunteers (of all ages) was noted, and credited for some of the success
 - * one of the sessions was on Inclusive School Culture; there is now a “tool” available to school personnel and parents to determine how inclusive each school is; members of the Special Education Advisory Committee wondered if this tool was The Education for All document
- a new program was announced on October 4, 2006, that will certify Special Education mediators to help mitigate conflict between parents and School Boards; this will take effect in the Fall, 2007

Christina Edge, Autism Society of Ontario

- Autism Society has changed their name to Autism Ontario with “See the Potential” as a motto
- Autism Ontario has produced a booklet entitled “Bullying and Proactive Inclusion of Youth with Autism Spectrum Disorder: A Guide for Educators” – copies were shared with all members. The booklet features some of the work by Carol Gray, who presented at the Geneva Centre in the summer, who has formulated an anti-bullying program (No Fishing Allowed). It will soon be available to purchase. Some of the important information is as follows:
 - * most bullying attempts completed in six (6) seconds, or less
 - * ignoring it does not solve problem
 - * most children are bullied because they are different
- Autism Ontario Annual General Meeting (Kids Grow Up: Teen and Adults on the Autism Spectrum) took place in June, 2006
- Autism Ontario has released a resource manual called “Living with ASD: Adolescence and Beyond” – available for \$25.00 per copy

V. Special Education Department Update

We are hosting a Fetal Alcohol Syndrome workshop on November 14, 2006, at St. John Bosco School, in Brockville, from 4:00-6:00 p.m., Sue Shannon will be the keynote speaker. All Special Education Advisory Committee members, please contact Shelley Strickland, at the Smiths Falls Board Office, if you are interested in attending (800) 267-7945, ext. 205.

We are participating in the Autism Spectrum Disorder and Geneva Conferences scheduled for the end of the month.

Dr. Hawes followed up on two issues that were raised since the last meeting;

- Association for Bright Children of Ontario (ABC) has produced and released a document called “Developing Individual Education Plans for Gifted Students: Information for Parents”. While not a Ministry document, this is an excellent resource that will be shared with our schools. This document is available through the Association for Bright Children website abcinfo@abcontario.ca
- Question of ‘What do we do in terms of Safe Schools and Anti-Bullying issues?’ (especially with respect to special needs students) – parents and students will be able to choose whether or not they wish to participate. Participating students will be guided through the process. Individual results will not be shared. Research has shown that the peer influence is huge (it can be positive or negative depending on how peers react). We are hoping that a large number of students will choose to participate. Results of the study will be shared in the future.

Two excellent resources already exist in our schools; “Mirror Image” and “Cyber Dogs” which are aimed at students in Gr. 7&8 to help deal with bullying and other ways in which students can put themselves at risk on the internet.

- Parental Workshops will be held throughout our regions to involve parents in this important issue
- School Administrators are following up when they become aware of these types of incidents

In terms of suspension and expulsion of students, we do partner with the Upper Canada District School Board in a Strict Discipline Program, which has been in operation for approximately eight (8) years.

- it looks like Ministry funding may run out next year
- we do operate an Alternative Behaviour Learning Environment (ABLE) program which is in partnership with Laurencrest and the Upper Canada District School Board (housed in Cornwall) – program is an alternative to suspension
- we are also looking at extending the ABLE program into the Western Region of our Board (possibly in Prescott, hopefully to open this school year)
- next year we may be looking at other regions of our Board for this type of innovative program

CODE Update

S.T.O.M.P. = Success Through Optimizing My Potential (for students), and Strategies That Optimize Modality Processing (for teachers)

- the proposal has been submitted and we should soon hear about the success of this proposal
- we have received \$50,000 already, and we have applied for the maximum amount of additional funding (an additional \$200,000)
- the focus will be on critical thinking skills in Gr. 7&8 levels
- the use of assistive technology will be enhanced in this proposal
- we will be providing a systematic framework for instruction
- the principles of Education for All, will be included in this project
- it will be piloted in some schools and then rolled out to all of our schools
- assessment and data collection will be vital components

VI. Tools for Learning Symposium

Paula Perrault and Rod McLeod provided an update from the recent Ministry of Education assistive technology symposium, in Toronto.

- the Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario sent a six (6) member team
- a large variety of examples of how technology can help students were highlighted
- the next step is to continue to work with teachers and support staff to increase the awareness and use of assistive technology

VII. Correspondence Received

We received a letter from Vida Vaitonis, Director, Home Care and Community Support Branch.

- in May, 2006 a concern was expressed at our Special Education Advisory Committee meeting at Pope John Paul II, about the lack of qualified Speech-Language Pathologists - this resulted in our Special Education Advisory Committee writing a letter of concern to the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care
- in the letter, Ms. Vaitonis thanked us for sending our letter
- she indicated that Health Force Ontario is a recently introduced strategy designed to help meet the needs
- other recruitment initiatives such as Inter-professional Mentoring and the Allied Health Education Fund, are also designed to help with the problem
- the Professional Association of Interns and Residents of Ontario is also hosting a health professions recruitment tour throughout Ontario.

VIII. Business

A question was asked about an item on Page 53, of the 2006 Annual Report which states, “the first newsletter of every school should include an insert about the Special Education Advisory Committee, and information around how parents can access the Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario Parental Guide to Special Education”.

- it appears that this occurred in the newsletter of some schools, but not all – a reminder will be send out

IX. Topics for Future Meetings

- Gifted Website
- Anti-Bullying Guideline Draft Policy
- Transitions – Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario

X. Good News Sharing

Members shared good news stories from across our counties.

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

- Tuesday, November 14th, 2006, at St. John Bosco School, in Brockville
 - * **Directions** = from the 401 (east or west) take Exit 696 toward Brockville/Smiths Falls
 - * turn right onto Stewart Blvd. (Provincial Route 29/CR-29)

- * turn right onto Parkedale Avenue, West
- * turn left onto Windsor Drive
- * turn left onto Durham Street
- * end at St. John Bosco School, 12 Durham Street, in Brockville

XII. Closing Prayer

Tom Jordan led the group in the “Board Prayer”.

XIII. Motion to Adjourn the Meeting

Moved by: Suzanne Whitney

Seconded by: Ann 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!