



SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday, October 1, 2014

4:00 pm

Education Centre, Seaforth

Committee

Members Present: Greg Haber, Lynette Geddes, Katie Fox, Ted Doherty, Dave Higgins, Carol Bennewies, Terri Sparling, Connie Seaton, Marty Krebs, Emma Bannerman.

Regrets: Michael Bannerman, Trevor McGregor.

Admin. Liaison: Peggy Blair, Cheryl Peach.

Student Senators:

Staff Resource: Connie Trotter (recorder)

1.0 **Routine Matters**

1.1 **Approval of Agenda**

Motion to approve the agenda: Carol Bennewies seconded by Terri Sparling

Add: 3.5: Student Symposium

CARRIED

1.2 **Approval of SEAC Minutes – September 10, 2014.**

Motion to accept the September 10, 2014 minutes by Lynette Geddes seconded by Carol Bennewies

CARRIED

2.0 **Business Arising from Minutes**

Question: can we still send in further thoughts or consideration for the Definition of Inclusion? Superintendent Blair noted, yes, before the end of October, please send in to Connie.

3.0 **New Business**

3.1 **Strategic Plan – Director Doherty**

Superintendent Blair noted she asked Director Doherty to speak to us, as we are move forward with the plan, and where we are in terms of the plan. Director Doherty noted this is the fourth year and it will be the consultation year. When we started, we spoke to all different groups to get input into the development of the plan. This has drastically changed the work in our schools. Positive, Inclusive Learning Environments, has made an impact on our work. Maximize student outcomes has lots of overlap, and trying to find ways to integrate these two initiatives. Director Doherty spoke about his visit to Elma P.S. They have a robotics club, which also has research component to it. There are twelve students in the club, one of whom has spent a time in a Self-Contained Class. The students have arrived at a project that will help a student who is low vision, and will help him get around the school. This is not inclusion for the sake of inclusion, or make

ourselves feel better, but these students are thinking about the challenges another student has and how can they make it better. That's where we would like to see the strategic plan go, working to see how we can make it better for everyone. Looking for suggestions for the plan. We've also heard that the word curiosity is not in the plan, and it may have a place. It may just be the spark that we need to move forward. Discussion followed.
Marty thanked Director Doherty for his presentation.

3.2 Educational Assistants (EA), Allocation Process – Dave Higgins

Superintendent Blair noted we asked Dave explain how the EA allocation process works. EAs used to work with students in their academics and there have been some changes over the years. Dave's role includes: leading the allocation process, conducting comprehensive school visits, performing school reviews, monitoring staffing and school information, conducting an EA survey, looking after Administrative Procedures, monitor before and after school hours work, Performance Appraisal Process, Training and Professional Development, and also Behaviour Management System (BMS) Trainer.

Dave will visit every school during the year, and visit with the student who has EA support and keeps an eye on EA allocation to stay within budget. Last year had to adjust the allocation. We conducted a survey a few years ago to get a picture of what it means to be an EA, to make sure we were heading in the right direction.

Performance Appraisal: Every EA is on now 5 year cycle, this is a supportive process for helping someone who may be struggling in their role.

We are now at a place where we consult with the Special Education Consultants, who are in the schools on a regular basis, met with staff who work with students, Learning for All Coordinators, This EA allocation is for the school, not for a specific student. Now that we are up and running, schools are asking for a review of their individual situations. The reason could be that needs have become greater, or a new student has come in or left. We do put in temporary assignment for a short term to help with a temporary circumstances. We do review on a regular basis to make sure we have the proper supports in place.

Numbers of EAs in the system:

- 2009-2010: 210 positions
- 2013-2014: 230 positions.

Part of the reason for the increase is Full Day Kindergarten (FDK), and the Strive program. Students come in and leave over the course of the year. We may have more students coming in who have needs to be addressed, than those who are leaving.

Question: When does this start in the year? Answer: The Special Education Consultants start visiting daycares in February/March, with meetings to start in March/April. This year the process started earlier because finance needed the information for budgeting. Emergent needs come up and support needs to be in place the next day, until we can review the support that is in a school. Superintendent Blair noted that supports do need to be faded. EAs should be the last support a student needs. Administrators are great at encouraging their staff to fade supports.

Question: As we move to a more inclusive model, have we done Professional Development (PD) with EAs and how do they see their role? Superintendent Blair noted that we haven't done broad based training. Steven Katz talks about PD in the 'ballroom' because people can't model this behaviour, but it's better to have it modelled. We going to roll out iPads for EAs, in the next few months.

3.3 SEAC Updates – Superintendent Blair

Superintendent Blair spoke about the Special Needs Strategy and connections to outside agencies such as Preschool Speech & Language. Discussions to be held in October. Example: Because Full Day Kindergarten (FDK) has happened, students are in school full days, how do we maneuver, so that Speech Language Pathologists (SLP) can work with the students when they are in school full time? Conversations will be happening soon with partners.

As this is an election for Trustees, there is a form for SEAC members to fill out this form, and also be posted on the website, to formalize the process. Must have a designate, if you don't know, it can be left blank.

3.4 AODA Update – Cheryl Peach

In 2012, we moved from having to do an annual report, to a 5 year plan. Have a list of items of what we have to work on. Started with Customer Service, this is not just students, but everyone coming into our building, including people coming into the school to use it after hours. Helped focus the work, to think about the potential needs of everyone. Got into academics, then moved to transportation. Needed to broaden the plan, to bring in bus drivers. If the day is set up to start out well, the day can run well and students can get home safely and on time. We formalized the medical plan that parents sign off on. This helps supply bus drivers, teachers and support staff. By 2020, we must have all libraries accessible. Lots of options to get libraries accessible, including resources. Also working on webpages. By 2015, we must be AA standard compliant. By 2020 we must be AAA standard compliant. There are programs out there that your website can be put through to tell you what areas of the website need to be worked on. This is not just facilities, accessibility is across the board. Superintendent Blair noted that Superintendent Baird Jackson is aware that they need to make all our buildings accessible. There is no funding for this, so funds must come out of school budget.

3.5 Student Symposium – Superintendent Blair

The Symposium was held on Monday, September 29, at the Rotary Centre in Stratford. 10 students, one administrator, 1 teacher and 1 EA from each secondary school attended this day. Amy Kipfer, Missy Pfaff and L4All Coaches put the day together. Lynette noted that the Student Trustee did a wonderful job. Emma talked about the pieces of the puzzle that each school had to work on. Staff sat back and let the student work on their piece of the puzzle. Felt like they were getting one message inside, but outside the school, they get some push back with inclusion and tolerance. Cheryl Peach noted that watching all the work come together, she was impressed with what they found in magazines, to help their message along.

Video is on the board's website: <http://yourschools.ca/2014/10/01/amdsb-is-choosin-inclusion/>
It was as a great day and we will have to do it again.

4.0 Trustee Report:

Trustee Geddes: Have 4 Trustees that are running in the election, that have opponents, 2 acclaimed and 2 stepping down. Symposium was wonderful.

5.0 Association Reports

Community Living St. Marys & Area: Connie noted they would like to bring back Amy and Missy's presentation at the Community Living conference. Response was extremely positive and people are talking about the work Avon Maitland is doing.

Conference: Kids can spend two days at a conference, hear guest speakers. This might be a good conference to send someone from the Student Symposium. Connie to send information. Students come back very inspired, come back to do presentations within the school and the community.

Foundations Huron: Katie noted that the Foundation Voices workshop will be held in October. It is open to Foundation participants, but anyone from 16 year old and older, who are looking to have a voice in the community can attend. Katie will post information to the SEAC conference.

Huron Perth Centre: Terri noted there have been lots have changes. System has been under a transformation. Been no time as CEO, that there has been a spot for mental health until now. The Province has made a commitment to define areas and has been broken up into 34 entities, of which Huron/Perth is one and Huron Perth Centre has been chosen. Terri will send information via email.

6.0 Student Senator Report

Nil

7.0 Future Agenda Items/Information Items

- Terri Sparlings' information
- Statistics from Superintendent Blair
- SEAC parent conference (tentative date in April). If you have suggestions for topic, please bring them forward.

8.0 Date of Next Meeting – November 5, 2014

- **Future Meetings:**
 - December 3, 2014
 - January 7, 2015
 - February 4, 2015
 - March 4, 2015
 - April 1, 2015
 - May 6, 2015
 - June 3, 2015
 - June 10, 2015 (if needed for budget discussions)

10.0 Adjournment

Moved by Terri Sparling seconded by Carol Bennewies

The Special Education Advisory Committee meeting is adjourned at 5:25 pm.

Committee Members 2014 - 2015		
Voting Members	Non-Voting Members	Alternate Members
Marty Krebs – Chair <i>Parents for Gifted Education</i>	Greg Haber <i>Elementary Principal Rep</i>	Mary Lynn MacDonald <i>Member at Large</i>
Lynette Geddes – Vice Chair <i>Trustee</i>	Emma Bannerman <i>Secondary Principal Rep</i>	Jenny Versteeg <i>Trustee</i>
Michael Bannerman <i>Trustee</i>	Cheryl Peach <i>System Principal</i>	Robert Hunking <i>Trustee</i>
Carol Bennewies <i>Member at Large</i>	Peggy Blair <i>Superintendent of Education</i>	
Lisa O'Reilly <i>Autism Ontario</i>	Jane Morris <i>Superintendent of Education</i>	
Connie Seaton <i>Community Living – St. Marys & Area</i>		
Trevor McGregor <i>Community Living – Stratford & Area</i>		
Katie Fox <i>Foundations Huron</i>		Sharon Allison <i>Community Living Central Huron</i>
Terri Sparling <i>Huron Perth Centre</i>		

AMDSB Website: www.yourschools.ca