



SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday, November 5, 2014

4:00 pm

Education Centre, Seaforth

Committee

Members Present: Trevor McGregor, Colleen Schenk, Carol Bennewies, Greg Haber, Connie Seaton, Katie Fox, Robert Hunking, Cheri Carter, Missy Pfaff, Terri Sparling, Emma Bannerman.

Regrets: Lynette Geddes,

Admin. Liaison: Peggy Blair, Cheryl Peach,

Student Senators: None

Staff Resource: Connie Trotter (recorder)

1.0 Routine Matters

Trustee Hunking chaired the meeting.

1.1 Approval of Agenda

Motion to approve the agenda: Trevor McGregor seconded by Carol Bennewies
CARRIED

1.2 Approval of SEAC Minutes – October 1, 2014.

Motion to accept the October 1, 2014 minutes by Katie Fox seconded by Carol Bennewies.
CARRIED

2.0 Business Arising from Minutes

None

3.0 New Business

3.1 **Review 2013-2014 year end budget – Cheri Carter**

We are still finalizing the 2013-2014 financial year end. This has been signed off by external auditors and this will go to the Board on November 11. Cheri reviewed the terms and outlined the Special Education budget, and focused on the 2013-2014 Draft (Actuals) and compared this to the 2014-2015 Draft Estimates. Cheri explained the details of the estimates compared to the actuals. We are pleased, overall. Deficit is lower than expected.

Section 23: We had some savings in terms of expenses compared to income.

Question in regards to deficits: Is this an AMDSB problem or is the across the province?

Answer: This is not just an AMDSB issue. As a small Board due to declining enrollment, we should see a decrease of expenses, but that's not the case.

Question: Will there be reductions or cutbacks with services for students?

Answer: Each department will work on needs of their department. All needs for all departments

goes to Senior Staff and they go through it with a fine tooth comb and find cost cutting measures. At the end of the year, there is a balanced budget overall, but one department may run a deficit. This is at the discretion of the Trustees. Superintendent Blair noted that very few Boards don't have a deficit in their Special Education budget. We try to have efficiencies, will assign an EA for a short time, and then review the situation. If it's not needed, then we fade the support. We have a group home provider in the area, with students with extremely high needs. 35 of these kids are in our system and a significant number of them need an EA.

Carol noted she has been with the board as a Trustee or SEAC member for a number of years and she only remembers one year that we didn't have a deficit, but rather had a surplus. The next year, the Ministry clawed back the surplus funds.

Trustee Schenk noted the Trustees have never said no to Special Education as they try to make sure EAs and supports are in place.

3.2 Special Equipment Allotment (SEA) – Missy Pfaff, Learning for All/SEA Coordinator

Missy spoke about the Special Education Amount (SEA). These funds are provided from the Ministry of Education (MoE) to provide funds for students that can't be covered under regular funds. A qualified professional must recommend the equipment. These costs are usually over and above what a school board will provide for a student.

There are two types of claims:

1. Claims based: This includes sensory, hearing, personal care, physical and personal care supports and vision support. All these items have an \$800 deductible for each student's claim in a one year period. Some of the equipment can cost upwards of thousands of dollars. A few years ago, the MoE changed how they allotted funds.
2. Technology based. We now get one lump sum from the MoE instead of waiting for funding. This process allows us to bulk order, to better use funds, and then have the equipment on the shelf, ready for the student.

It is the Board's responsibility to comply with the SEA guidelines, to meet the needs of the students with special needs, provide equitable and timely support, an internal process maintain records and documentation, be fiscally responsible and seek efficiencies. The SEA committee reviews claims, check surplus equipment before purchasing new equipment. All SEA surplus equipment is stored at Maitland River ES.

School responsibilities are to meet the needs of student with special needs, collaborate with qualified professionals who support students, ensure compliance with SEA guidelines, maintain an IEP that reflects relevant programming. If the student doesn't have an IEP, they won't have SEA equipment. The school will communicate with parents for consent, ensure portability of equipment in a school move and also must ensure safe storage. They will ensure effective use of the equipment. If student has equipment and moves to another board, their equipment will follow to the new board.

Missy talked about the SEA process and the language provided in the claim. (Proper wording is needed: required compared to will benefit).

By putting equipment in the hands of students with special needs, their equipment (iPads) are the same as their peers. It's all about making school and the curriculum accessible for all students. Superintendent Blair asked if a student can take home standing frame or any equipment. Missy noted that the SEA guidelines say equipment is used to access the curriculum, therefore it can't go home during the summer. For security and liability we don't allow this equipment to go home. Katie Fox asked about the app Proloquo2Go, which is a speech app: How do we look to carry that on after school? Missy noted that we can buy this and an iPad for under \$1000. If a family goes through outside support it could cost more. During the school year we allow this equipment to go home and encourage families to seek out sources for equipment over the summer. We have allowed students to purchase equipment after they leave school. We need to partner with other organizations to further this process. Superintendent Blair noted that before we had this funding, we were not able to give this level of support for our students. Technology has allowed students to access the curriculum, scores are on the rise because the students have access to the equipment.

3.3 Special Needs Strategy – Superintendent Blair

There are multiple ministries involved in realigning services. There will be greater integration of services, which has been tried multiple times before. Superintendent Blair referenced a video of a mom with a child with special needs. She talked about all the different agencies, and all the forms to fill out. There will be seamless service. Parents will only have to tell their story once and will be guided to the appropriate agencies. This is being directed at the provincial level. CCAC, hospitals, Small Talk, TVDSB, CSCN, Community Support for Families are all involved. Superintendent Blair noted that different agencies will be added as the process continues. Superintendent Blair noted we have to start somewhere and more agencies may be added. Shouldn't be education lead, should be someone from one of the other agencies who takes the lead. This will involve some reorganization. Discussion followed.

3.4 SEAC Terms – Superintendent Blair

Term is coming up at the end of November. What we would need from everyone is a willingness to continue to be part of the SEAC committee. Ad will be posted on the AMDSB website and will be tweeted out and put on Facebook for a call for new members.

3.5 Exceptional Pupil Review – Superintendent Blair

Superintendent Blair showed the breakdown of students with exceptionalities in Elementary (including 7\8 students) and Secondary. Students with mental health challenges are grouped into other categories since we don't have a specific category for mental health. We are seeing an increase of more students requiring supports and services. In some boards, they have 25% of their students receiving special education programs and services, which is a significant chunk of the population. This is to just take stock – does the student require these supports? Reality for the schools is that when we put a student on an IEP should be on it for a long time, they can't do it just for EQAO. Ultimate goal is to not have the student on an IEP. Discussion followed. Will bring this back next year, to compare.

3.6 Gifted Information Review – Superintendent Blair

Superintendent Blair noted we will be having a review of gifted education in the board. Because I sit on the Gifted Advisory Working Group, this is an opportunity to do a review. Look at different strategies and resources that are available. This review is an opportunity to take stock of current programs and see if there are aspects that we can improve. The person who will do the review will chat with students in the program. We will have a report to SEAC later in the year.

4.0 Trustee Report:

Trustee Schenk noted trustees are wrapping up their term. The inaugural meeting is on Monday, December 1. Rolling out iPads to students across the Board. Students are allowed to take iPads home as they will belong to the students, who are finding them very useful. Eventually all students will have their own iPad. Trustee election results: Judy Cairncross (new Trustee), Randy Wagler and Robert Hunking were all acclaimed. Lynette Geddes, Alyson Kent, Julie Moore, Doug Pratley, Nancy Rothwell and Colleen Schenk, all won their seats in the Municipal election. Former Trustees Michael Bannerman, Al Sygrove and Jenny Versteeg did not run.

5.0 Association Reports

Community Living, St. Marys & Area: Voices Perth is doing a Learning for All workshop, talks about transitions after school. Information on website.

Community Living, Stratford & Area: Ran a successful summer program, working with students with disabilities in school to outside of school, with 19 students. Lots of great responses from students who now have friends outside of school. Will start again in May, for another 2 years.

Great successes with students who are transitioning into work from school and not coming back for their 6th or 7th year. Looking to find out how we can move forward. Getting the connections that students need.

Foundations Huron, Katie Fox noted she will post information on the SEAC conference.

Terri Sparling, Huron Perth Centre: Working on a system transformation work, still providing mental health work.

6.0 Student Senator Report

None

7.0 Future Agenda Items/Information Items

- Terri Sparlings' information (wait until after inaugural meeting)
- Special Education Plan
- Definition of inclusion
- Parent workshop (Anne Robinson)

8.0 Date of Next Meeting – January 7, 2015

- **Future Meetings:**
 February 4, 2015
 March 4, 2015
 April 1, 2015
 May 6, 2015
 June 3, 2015
 June 10, 2015

10.0 Adjournment

Moved by Colleen Schenk seconded by Connie Seaton.

The Special Education Advisory Committee meeting is adjourned at 5:30 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