



**Minutes of the Special Education
Advisory Committee Meeting**

**Wednesday, January 6, 2016
4:00 pm – Festival Room
Avon Maitland Education Centre**

Voting Members/

Alternates Present: K. Fox, L. Geddes, D. Pratley, C. Bennewies, Lisa Harper, T. Sparling, J. Costello, T. McGregor, D. Barkley

Non-Voting Members: G. Haber

Staff Present: P. Blair

Member Regrets: E. Salmon, E. Bannerman

Guests Present: C. Carter, A. Gerber, Jenna, Caelyn, Breanna, Rachel

Recorder: C. Trotter

1.0 Routine Matters

1.1 Approval of the Agenda

Motion to approve the January 6, 2016 agenda: C. Bennewies seconded by L. Geddes

CARRIED

1.2 Approval of the December 2, 2015 SEAC Minutes

Motion to accept the minutes L. Harper seconded by D. Barkley

CARRIED

2.0 Business Arising from the Minutes

2.1 Parent conference: Michelle Garcia Winner is a Speech Language Pathologist. She teaches social skills, much more embedded in social thinking. Waiting to see if she is available.

3.0 New Business

3.1 Special Education Budget – Cheri Carter, Associate Superintendent of Finance.

As of November the 14-15 year has been finalized and audited. Just before Christmas break, we have submitted our revised estimates. Any questions can be sent to Connie, who will forward them to Cheri, to be talked about at the next meeting. Cheri explained the new line: Capital Allocations. This is for technology. Cheri noted that expenses look higher than revenue. This is because all employee groups have a provincial agreement, and have directed the board to add these expenses into their budget, and the Ministry will 'catch up' and provide revenue for these extra

expenses. This will not cover all expenses, but Cheri is confident it will be very close.

Katie thanked Cheri for her presentation.

3.2 ReAction Conference Presentation – Students from Stratford Northwestern S.S.

Andrea Gerber, teacher explained the conference in Orillia in November. The group wanted to find out what we can do not just for people with disabilities but for people of all abilities. Community Living was the host for this conference, encouraging action throughout the year. Students were sponsored by the Board to attend this conference.

Link to Community Living video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8pxEe0tq3k8>

Students gave their reasons and experiences that lead them to the conference and what they gained/learned from the conference.

Question: How do you carry this forward in your life? Answer: On the last day of the conference, the group was asked to think of how you are going to take all this great information back to school. Students have started a smaller campaign along the lines of the 'I Am Norm' campaign. It talks about how we include everyone – we are all normal. The school Husky mascot is named Norm. The plan is to kick it off in the school and then roll out to other schools in the board. Andrea noted that it's authentic inclusion. It's not just about people with disabilities feeling included, but for everyone to feel included. Norman Kuntz was one of the speakers who noted that having a disability, you are not broken, you are normal.

What's next: starting with the little everyday things, building a network of allies, building awareness in our school, putting the challenge out to other schools/groups. Comment: congratulate the group for taking a leadership position. Question: As educators, we are ahead of the curve, we take students and make them feel included, and then they hit the real world of employment. People outside of schools, don't see people the same. How do we help with this? Trevor noted he would like to connect with the group, with regard to the Community Living summer program, which starts around the beginning of May. How are students connecting over the summer? Natural relationships start at school and continue after school. Trevor would like to connect the person who looks after the program with the students at NWSS. Andrea noted People First would be a great connection.

Discussion on people with disabilities attending social events. Cooperative Education is a great opportunity for students, and also having a Job Coach with the student is a great help. They can help ease employers concerns. The group also talked about how to genuinely include/talk with a student with a disability. Viewpoints were changed after the conference. Quote from Nick Foley. 'If your why is big enough, your how will show up'.

Question: Will you go next year and would you recommend your friends to go? Answer: Yes!

Katie thanked the group for their presentation. Wish you the best of luck with the social media program.

3.3 Community Living Presentation – Trevor McGregor/Katie Fox

Trevor gave an overview of how Community Living came to be, 75 years ago. Came about because groups of parents we want more for their kids. Started to see support groups pop up for them to go when parents were working or for respite. As parents started to grow older, agencies started to grow. How we provide support has changed dramatically. We do very similar things as other agencies. All believe in everyone's value. There is no one who goes through life, without needing some sort of support. Operate residential programs. Might come into your home to help with your budget, meals, or you live with others in a group home. We understand what the person wants to accomplish and give them the skills to get there. Each agency may use different language, but the bottom line, their supports are the same. Respect who they are and support them in what they want to do. A lot of this movement has been dictated from clients and what they want to achieve. This service is voluntary – clients can say they do or do not want support. Employment is not for everyone with disabilities – it's not the first support they need. They have a lot of other skills to develop first. Katie noted that it is often difficult to reach everyone's needs in a group. There are gaps and holes, but the work is good. Referrals have changed, and can be more complex, not just the person with disabilities we are supporting. We are helping their families as well.

Trevor noted there are many positives, regardless of the age of the disability, people are being included in regular social situations, church, etc. Developmental services works with many agencies. There are at least 8000, with estimates of up to 20,000 people waiting for service. Some are on the list for not just immediate service, but may need service 10-15 years down the road.

Peggy noted that once a person leaves school, then community agencies are supporting them as adults. As people live longer, the supports are very important. Trevor noted one client is 81 years old.

3.4 Community Living Day at the Legislature – Trevor McGregor

This is an advocacy day, which has been going on for 15 years. It was the first time for me to attend. The day is held during Community Living month, in May. Very well attended with more than 200 people. Recognition in the legislature. This is where we start to see leaders within communities, advocating for their friends/families. This will continue for some time to come.

3.5 Chosin Inclusion Conference – Superintendent Blair

Learning Together student symposium. Nick Foley will be the guest speaker. An invitation will be coming to SEAC members. Mixed group of students. Connie will send information to SEAC once System Memo comes out.

4.0 Trustee Board Report

Trustee Geddes: We have a new chair, Colleen Schenk and vice chair, Alyson Kent. An education symposium is coming up at the end of February.

5.0 Association Reports

Foundations Huron: Dream Big tickets will be on sale next week. Looking for volunteers for the night. Wingham, Goderich, Dashwood and Clinton will have tickets. The date is March 10, and will be held at the Libro Community Hall in Clinton. Joey Moss, locker room attendant for the Edmonton Oilers will be the guest speaker. Coming with a friend, Andy Hubbard, who has a disability, and is a motivational speaker. Ryan McTavish band from Tavistock – band leader has autism.

Community Living Stratford and Area: Safe Spaces: would be for someone who is dealing with aggression in the home, opportunity for supports and would transition back into their home community. Open House on January 7. Link to Stratford Beacon Herald news article: <http://www.stratfordbeaconherald.com/2015/12/22/community-living-stratford-and-area-to-host-open-house-next-month>

Spina Bifida & Hydrocephalus Association: Calendar draws have started. Once a month support meeting, for supper, and chat. The last meeting had 17 people. In the past, this has fallen by the wayside, but we are looking to resurrect this again. If you know of anyone who has a family member with Spina Bifida, please contact Lisa.

6.0 Additional items:

- J. Costello noted she has been approached by parents on how their parents are contacted by the school on how they update parents on their child's IEP. Concern because it was an automated message and sounded like there was a deadline and that changes can't be made after this deadline. Superintendent Blair noted that parents should know they can always ask, as this is a working document. She will check into this and if parents have concerns they can call Kristen Frank, Special Education Resource teacher at Stratford Northwestern S.S.
- T. Sparling noted they have 2 schools who partnered together to get a grant for safe schools.
- Mentally healthy schools.

7.0 Student Senator Reports

No report

8.0 Future Agenda Items

- School to Work Transition program. (Partners in Employment) February
- Employment for students who leave school for employment. (video: TVO, Autism)
- Orientation for SEAC members (ongoing)
- St. Marys video
- Calendar/plan of what's happening in schools
- Definition of Inclusion
- Budget – Cheri Carter (January, May, June)
- Parent Workshop
- Section(s) to be reviewed from the Special Education Plan

9.0 Date of Next Meeting

- February 3, 2016

Future Meetings:

- March 2, 2016
- April 6, 2016
- May 11, 2015 **(Note: this is the second Wednesday of the month.)**
- June 1, 2016
- June 15, 2015 **(Second meeting of the month is for budget.)**

These dates will be posted on the Board website.

10.0 Adjournment

Moved by Jennifer Costello to adjourn.

The Special Education Advisory Committee meeting is adjourned at 6:10 pm.

**Committee Members
2015 – 2016**

Voting Members	Non-Voting Members	Alternate Members
Katie Fox – Chair <i>Foundations Huron</i>	Greg Haber <i>Elementary Principal Rep</i>	
Marty Krebs – Vice Chair <i>Member at Large</i>	Emma Bannerman <i>Secondary Principal Rep</i>	Mary Lynn MacDonald <i>Member at Large</i>
Lynette Geddes <i>Trustee</i>	Peggy Blair <i>Superintendent of Education</i>	Nancy Rothwell <i>Trustee</i>
Doug Pratley <i>Trustee</i>	Eleanor Salmon <i>System Principal</i>	Randy Wagler <i>Trustee</i>
Terri Sparling <i>Huron Perth Centre</i>	Jane Morris <i>Superintendent of Education</i>	
Jennifer Costello <i>Community Living – St. Marys & Area</i>		
Trevor McGregor <i>Community Living – Stratford & Area</i>		
Doris Barkley <i>Perth District Health Unit Autism Ontario</i>		
Carol Bennewies <i>Member at Large</i>		
Lisa Harper <i>Spina Bifida & Hydrocephalus Association of Ontario</i>		