



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

**Wednesday, February 1, 2017
4:00 pm – Maitland Room
Avon Maitland Education Centre**

Voting Members/

Alternates Present: M. Krebs, C. Bennewies, L. Geddes, D. Pratley, T. Sparling,
D. Barkley, P. Huettlin, T. McGregor

Non-Voting Members: H. Finch, R. Lovell

Staff Present: P. Blair, M. Pfaff, L. Hoffman

Member Regrets: J. Costello, L. Harper, K. Fox

Presenters: C. Carter, E. Moore, S. Bennett, T. Gallagher

Recording Secretary: C. Trotter

Meeting chaired by M. Krebs, Vice Chair

1.0 Routine Matters

1.1 Approval of the Agenda

Motion to approve the agenda: T. Sparling seconded by D. Barkley
CARRIED

1.2 Approval of the January 11, 2017 SEAC Minutes

Motion to accept the minutes D. Pratley seconded by C. Bennewies
CARRIED

2.0 Business Arising from the Minutes

2.1 None

3.0 New Business

3.1 SEAC Members received Dr. Bennett & Dr. Gallagher re: Inclusive Education

Dr. Bennett is a professor & Associate Dean, Professional Undergraduate & Student Services at Brock University. She has worked as a classroom teacher, special education teacher, and board resource and faculty member.

Dr. Gallagher is an Associate Professor in the Department of Teacher Education at Brock University. She was a teacher & administrator in private practice for over a decade. Currently she teaches courses in cognition & the exceptional learner and English language arts methods.

Dr. Bennett reported that extensive literature review has been completed, and noted there are thousands of different types of literature available. Dr. Bennett encouraged members to continue to look at the broader picture

and referenced viewing several articles when possible. Inclusion in the research literature, is defined in multiple ways.

Literature

Literature on the benefits of inclusion has been published for the last 30 years. In the last decade, research literature has focused on primarily embracing inclusion. Some results are anecdotal, but research conclusions on inclusion are overwhelmingly consistent with respect to the enhanced experiences of students. There is no recent research literature publishing support for segregation within special education from the last 15 years.

Benefits

Inclusion is a moral choice. It has academic and social benefits. Inclusion opens up the conversation. It improves students' independence and confidence and broadens the perspectives of educators & peers.

Accommodations and modifications benefits the whole class. Inclusive education builds on social capital and creates a shift from charity-based inclusion to rights-based inclusion.

Students

The evidence strongly suggests that students in an inclusive setting do not suffer academically as a result of inclusion. Scores of social affect show increased capacity and engagement. Evidence suggests that bullying is reduced overall when students are consistently included. (Research shows that students who are segregated, experience bullying more than in the regular classroom.) PALS study findings state that in high inclusion settings students:

- Healthier
- Attend school more regularly
- Report being happier

Peers

Inclusion does not have a negative impact on the achievement of students in the class. Measures of peers' attitudes generally note a positive attitude related to inclusion. The experience of an inclusive classroom increases advocacy and more tolerant attitudes

Teachers

Teachers overall express a positive attitude towards inclusion. Attitude is affected by underlying believe that all students can achieve. Self-efficacy on the part of the teachers (feeling that they can make a difference) increases.

Leaders

Leaders have a direct impact on inclusive culture. They are pivotal in fostering inclusion. Positive experiences and knowledge are contributing factors to successful inclusion.

Examining the results of Inclusion Survey

Educator Attitudes:

A questionnaire sent out via email twice to all educators in AMDSB with 700 responding the first time, 600 the second time.

Some of the results noted a significant difference in planning the learning environment:

- Planning ahead for all students
- Opportunities for all students to learn and practise their skills
- Regularly recording progress on student learning
- Creating materials to help engage students

These trends reported are trends from educators who had worked with a coach.

M. Krebs thanked Dr. Bennett & Dr. Gallagher for their presentation.

3.2 Budget Presentation – Associate Superintendent C. Carter, Finance Manager E. Moore

C. Carter introduced E. Moore, who will be taking more of a lead role in the Special Education budget in future months. The budget process was reviewed. Today we are talking about the 2016/17 revised estimates.

Trustees have approved the revised estimates. Special Education budget is approximately 96% staffing. Questions can be sent to Connie, who will pass along to address at a future meeting.

Question: In terms of staff development, it looks like costs have increased. Why? Answer: The actual from last year was less because of job sanctions.

Question: Why is there a deficit and does that get picked up by other departments in the board? Answer: Trustee Pratley, noted that other departments do pick up these costs. The Ministry knows they are consistently underfunding school boards and are aware that some departments (especially Special Education) run at a deficit. C. Carter noted this can also mean that we are underfunded. As of yet, we have not been uncompliant with the overall board budget. C. Carter also noted that for the first time in a long time, our enrollment increased this year.

May 10 is the next meeting for finance. We will be discussing the 2017-2018 budget at the May 31 SEAC meeting.

3.3 SEAC Parent Workshop – P. Blair, Superintendent

To consider this format: joint opportunity, Student Success department and Learning Services to host a post-secondary institution fair. Have different colleges or universities showcase their programs & supports for students with learning needs. Parents may not be aware of the programs that are available. T. McGregor noted this will be very helpful, not just for parents/students, also local service providers. D. Barkley noted that are so many more post-secondary schools who have programs available.

Superintendent Blair we will follow up with the Student Success Department.

4.0 **Trustee Board Report**

Trustee Geddes reported that at the January 24th board meeting, Trustees received a parent delegation about inclusion. The Trustees determine how to respond. Trustees Geddes & Pratley asked SEAC members if they would be comfortable if Trustees referred it to the committee. If yes, the document would be brought to SEAC for feedback. The delegation is asking us to review the current model.

- 1.) Look at the documents determine what the parents are looking for.
- 2.) Trustees will discuss this at the February 14 board meeting and will decide direction. T. McGregor noted we would welcome giving feedback, but asked how much of a response is needed. Trustee Geddes noted having a response from outside of the board would be helpful. This item will be on the agenda for the next SEAC meeting on March 1. SEAC member Bennewies inquired if a motion was necessary. Members agreed to wait on additional information from the February 14 Board meeting.

Trustee Pratley also noted the process of securing a new Director continues.

5.0 **Association Reports**

Autism Ontario: Stratford Library and Autism Ontario are working together. Opening the library 30 minutes before for children with autism, with a program to introduce them to the library. Autism Ontario will be providing each child with a book that the librarian will be featuring during their visits.

Community Living – Stratford & Area: T. McGregor introduced P. Huettlin who will be an alternate. We have a very strong support of the inclusive education model, as this has to continue outside of the school. To help kids stay connected with peers, and then service clubs, etc., we all need different programs, but it's the connectedness that is so important. Some talk of the school to work program information coming to SEAC, with new initiatives coming out. Having the conversation on how we can continue to get kids into the workplace, where their skills can be utilized.

Huron Perth Centre: updating two plans, a role that community resources play in the delivery of child and youth mental health. Have strategies for youth voice, but can introduce parent voice as well. Doing a survey which will go out to parents. Looking to the board and SEAC to help get the message out.

6.0 **Future Agenda Items**

- Exceptional student numbers.
- Safe Schools data
- Provincial data
- Inclusion motion
- Article from the UN
- Partners in Employment (PIE)

- Orientation for SEAC members
- Calendar/plan of what's happening in schools
- Definition of Inclusion
- Budget – Cheri Carter (May, June)
- Parent Workshop

7.0 Date of Next Meeting

- March 1, 2017

Future Meetings:

- April 5, 2017
- May 10, 2017 **(Note: this is the second Wednesday of the month.)**
- May 31, 2017
- June 7, 2017

Agendas for these dates will be posted on the Board website.

8.0 Adjournment

Moved by D. Barkley to adjourn.

The Special Education Advisory Committee meeting is adjourned at 6:05 pm

**Committee Members
2016 – 2017**

Voting Members	Non-Voting Members	Alternate Members
Katie Fox – Chair <i>Foundations Huron</i>	Ruth Lovell <i>Elementary Principal Rep</i>	
Marty Krebs – Vice Chair <i>Member at Large</i>	Helena Finch <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>	Robert Hunking <i>Trustee</i>
Doug Pratley <i>Trustee</i>	Missy Pfaff <i>Vice Principal</i>	Nancy Rothwell <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>		Peg Huettlin <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>		