



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

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

Voting Members/

Alternates Present: R. Hunking, T. McGregor, L. Geddes, C. Bennewies, S. Lee, D. Barkley, K. Fox, K. Morrison, T. Sparling

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

Staff Present: M. Pfaff

Member Regrets: D. Pratley, P. Blair, M. Krebs

Presenters: S. Kunkel, S. Wiffen

Recorder: C. Trotter

1.0 Routine Matters

1.1 Approval of the October 4, 2017 Agenda

Moved by L. Geddes seconded by C. Bennewies

That the agenda be approved as presented.

CARRIED

1.2 Approval of the September 13, 2017 SEAC Minutes

Moved by D. Barkley seconded by K. Morrison

- Correction: Last line in Section 3.7: Update on training for staff. Change to: Dr. Jackie Specht (psychologist and professor from the Faculty of Education) asked if she could do research on first year teachers; their attitude/vision on inclusion.

That the minutes be approved as presented as amended.

CARRIED

2.0 Business Arising from the Minutes

2.1

3.0 New Business

3.1 Our Schools – S. Kunkel, Managing Information for Student Achievement (MISA) Lead

S. Kunkel explained the new “Tell them from Me Survey”. Previously, a Ministry (MoE) survey was mandated to be completed every 2 years. S. Kunkel gave background on the survey and reasons why the board has switched from the MoE survey. Student survey is anonymous, participation is voluntary, but all students are encouraged to participate. Time is given in class for students to complete the survey. It is broken into grades 4-6 and 7-12. Students are given 45 minutes to complete. The parent survey is also voluntary, but encouraged for more participation. It takes approximately 20 minutes, examines safe and inclusive learning environments. From the data we are

focussing on positive sense of belonging and student engagement. There is lots of great data to study. Discussion followed.

3.2 Social Thinking – S. Wiffen, ABA Lead

S. Wiffen explained she's had an opportunity to attend Social Thinking training. What does being social mean? What are social interactions and how complex they can be. [Video link.](#)

Social Cognition: (thinking process)

- What we do before we act;
- The thinking behind the doing;
- Thinking about what people are thinking, even if we are not planning to talk to them.

Michelle Garcia Winner: [Social Thinking website](#)

Book: Incredible Flexible You

Why is Social Cognition so important?

- Children with poor social cognition show problems in many areas:
- Conflict and communication problems
- Lower acceptance among peers
- Lower social skills
- More behaviour problems
- Less sophisticated academic skills
- Poor theory of mind is considered a core deficit in children with autism (Baron-Cohen et al., 1985)

What is Social Thinking; [Video link](#)

There are classroom teachers who are implementing the program in their classrooms. We have purchased the resources which are available in the media centre for teacher to check out. The resources are very user friendly.

3.3 Special Education Research Protocols; Board Report – S. Kunkel

This information was shared at the September 26 Board meeting. Motion approved last spring to conduct research on inclusion, with groups that not previously surveyed. Questions are very open and generic, to allow respondents to openly share their own experiences and views. Interviewers will be looking for academic, social, and extra curricular. We have a list of 132 students with a developmental disability (DD), from that 20 students will be randomly selected. If someone does not wish to participate more names will be randomly selected. The same process will be used for parents. We have the names of 200 teachers who have students with a DD in their class. In addition, we are looking at elementary EAs only, as secondary EAs had previously been surveyed. We are in the process of identifying all of these people. Administration will also be surveyed. We also received a list of 15 adult service providers from K. Fox. From there we are looking for 6 to survey. Hoping to start in the next few weeks, and also to have a report back in April.

S. Kunkel noted that we are looking for strategies to improve inclusive education.

4.0 Trustee Board Report

Trustee Geddes: we are reviewing the EQAO results. At the last meeting Trustee Pratley, noted enrollment numbers were up. The board has hired teachers as a result.

5.0 Association Reports

Huron Perth Centre: T. Sparling handed out the Dr. Ungar brochures and book marks for people to pick up and share. The parent event with Dr. Ungar is on October 17.

Autism Ontario: D. Barkley noted 10th Annual Walk for Autism in Stratford on Sept. 17 and a fundraiser at Monforte Sept. 17 was very successful. We announced funding of \$400 for each child & adult with ASD to be used for 1 to 1 support for social learning opportunities, and respite care. The Huron Perth Health Care Alliance (HPHA) asked for information on ASD for their ER staff and crisis team. D. Barkley presented a one-hour in-service on ASD awareness and care of a client with ASD in hospital to the Seaforth and Clinton hospitals. She will present at the Stratford and St. Mary's hospitals this Friday. It will be videotaped for future use.

Community Living Stratford & Area: T. McGregor spoke about the Transitions and Connections with Students initiative, which was funded by the Trillium grant. We are struggling to fund this program. This program has changed so many young people's lives, we need to intentionally bring this into our schools. We are in the fourth year with same person running the program. T. McGregor shared experiences of some of the students in the program. One was of a student who attended a prom party in June. The student's mother was very happy that their child was able to attend the party and truly feel included. The other was about solid friendships that have developed. A young person's family member was ill, other students noticed the student wasn't in school as much. They made a meal, delivered and shared it together. Friends also went to the visitation. This is an opportunity for us to influence and invest resources for the connections with students. How do we move this forward without funding? We want to ensure that students are included, really included. Not just in classrooms, but still being connected as adults.

Discussion. This calls us to view what we are doing now; we are trying to equip them for life. Not just the board's responsibility to do this. Are their partnership opportunities? Vice Principal Pfaff reported that for the last two years, we've been running a summer experience program , run by a social inclusion facilitator, which has been very successful. Access external funds, which are not part of the regular budget.

Question: Is there a way to connect some of the projects? T. McGregor noted there are ways to do this. Talked about working during their reading week, to start making the connections earlier in the year. How do we start the program earlier, so the person has the time to make a connection with students? The program is driven mostly by students and their needs.

T. McGregor asked that this be added to the November agenda.

Community Living St. Marys & Area: Annual walkathon was held in October, raising over \$14,000. Voices Perth offering workshops on PA days and leadership training. Hosting 2 events; Oct 25 information session and Nov 3.

[Link to Voices Perth brochure for more information.](#)

Oct 20-22: student inclusion workshop. Invitation for more students to attend. Three students from our board are attending. Busing is being provided for students who would like to attend.

[Together we are Better Contest](#) Video from classrooms or individuals are being accepted.

LDAO: October is Learning Disabilities awareness month. K. Morrison asked if we could look at an event in the spring, to develop an activity or mini lesson that would line up with the curriculum, that teachers could do in October, which could be posted online. Information will be sent to VP Pfaff. Next year, we can look at this sooner and have an event ready for October. LDAO drafted a response to the guidelines for accessible education through the Human Rights Commission. One of the problems they saw in what has been drafted, don't align. Can't

provide medical assessment, giving official diagnosis. Concerned about having medical confirmation of LD. One of the big comments, in the guidelines, that organizations are required to balance the rights should be viewed as a means to education, not special education. Want to level the playing field. LD is the only disability that is not covered by OHIP, which creates a 2 tiered system, and long waiting lists. Some parents have benefits which will pay for assessments, but others don't. These students will still receive supports, but the assessment report provides much more information. [Link to response letter from LDAO.](#)

K. Fox asked if K. Morrison will present to SEAC on what LDAO does for their clients. What are the challenges, struggles and changes? (Possibly November.)

Foundations Huron: IPM went very well, with over 8000 students attending. Committee getting back together in a couple of weeks to review and forward information to the next venue. Received great feedback from people who were able to attend. The Dream Big event is scheduled for May 10, 2018. Celebration of reaching goals, power of inclusion. Hopes that we can inspire everyone to share their dreams and successes. Community Living Kincardine is on board this year.

7.0 Future Agenda Items

- Orientation for SEAC members
- Calendar/plan of what's happening in schools
- LDAO Presentation
- Progress report from research team
- Transitions & Connections program

8.0 Date of Next Meeting

- November 1, 2017

Future Meetings:

- December 6, 2017
- January 10, 2018 (**Second Wednesday of the month.**)
- February 7, 2018
- March 7, 2018
- April 4, 2018
- May 9, 2018 (**Second Wednesday of the month.**)
- June 6, 2018
- June 13, 2018 (**May be required for budget approval.**)

These dates will be posted on the Board website.

9.0 Adjournment

Moved by T. Sparling to adjourn.

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

**Committee Members
2017 – 2018**

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>	Nancy Rothwell <i>Trustee</i>
Doug Pratley <i>Trustee</i>	Missy Pfaff <i>Vice Principal</i>	Robert Hunking <i>Trustee</i>
Terri Sparling <i>Huron Perth Centre</i>	Jane Morris <i>Superintendent of Education</i>	Val Milson <i>Huron Perth Centre</i>
Stephanie Lee <i>Community Living – St. Marys & Area</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>		
Karen Morrison <i>Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario</i>		