



**SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
Tuesday, January 26, 2016 – 10:00 a.m.  
Boardroom**

**Present:** Jill Esposto (Chair), Carmen McDermid, Bonnie McKinnon, Christine Pearce, Leslie Telfer, Teresa Westergaard-Hager

**Regrets:** Catherine Custodio, Colleen Demarest, Krista Emmerson, Paul Sanderson, Heather Shisler, Lisa Stockmans, Tracey Taylor

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**1. Opening Prayer**

Leslie Telfer led the group in the opening prayer.

**2. Welcome and Opening Comments**

Jill Esposto, SEAC Chair, welcomed the group and led a round of introductions for the benefit of Chris Roehrig, Director of Education, and Crystal Donohue, ABA Program Lead.

**3. Approval of Agenda**

Moved by: Teresa Westergaard-Hager

Seconded by: Christine Pearce

THAT the SEAC Committee approves the agenda of the January 26, 2016 meeting.

**Carried**

**4. Approval of Minutes – December 15, 2015**

Moved by: Christine Pearce

Seconded by: Teresa Westergaard-Hager

THAT the SEAC Committee approves the minutes of the meeting of December 15, 2015.

**Carried**

**5. Presentation: Autism and ABA Strategies**

Crystal Donohue, ABA Program Lead for the Board, provided the group with her experience leading up to her current position with the Board, which she has held since June 2009. Ms. Donohue received her Bachelor of Science in Nursing, and after her youngest child was diagnosed with Autism in 2003, she took the Autism and Behavioural Science Program at Mohawk College. Ms. Donohue worked in Autism Intervention Therapy at the Thames Valley Board. Working and living with autism, Ms. Donohue understands the unique situations associated with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), which is helpful for parents.

Ms. Donohue's current role involves transitioning students from the one-on-one setting in Intensive Behavioural Therapy (IBI) to school. Eight students in our Board are currently attending IBI, with five more on a wait list. Supporting students in IBI and at school is a priority, as the students' needs are significant. "Connections for Students" are monthly meetings held with the classroom teacher, principal,



SERT, parent and a Hamilton Health Science ASD Consultant prior to the student's discharge from IBI, and every six months after discharge.

In our Board, 139 students are identified with ASD; this data was then presented by district, gender and grade. Ms. Donohue focuses on how best to build capacity, services and supports across our districts.

The Ministry of Education provides a grant specifically for Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) training purposes. Ms. Donohue and two system Special Education Resource Teachers (SERTs) provide a half-day of training in each of the three counties. Last spring, the training was completed by 147 teachers and Early Childhood Educators who were working with ASD students, or were projected to work with them in September. This fall, elementary and secondary staff participated in the training to ensure that any teacher with a student with ASD in their classroom has been trained. EAs received training during Professional Development days. Ms. Donohue is hopeful that the Ministry will continue with funding for this program.

The Geneva Centre for Autism site has an e-learning link with 13 modules that Ms. Donohue guides educators to. The Geneva Centre and the Ministry of Education work together to provide Summer Institute training, held in London in August, which a number of our staff have attended. This year a number of spots were offered for online modules, which were all filled. Part of Ms. Donohue's role is to ensure training is being completed as per P/PM 140 and P/PM 156. She also sits on the Provincial ABA Networking Group, which meets five to six times per year.

Ms. Donohue discussed classroom behaviours and strategies, as well as how to incorporate ABA in Individual Education Plans (IEPs).

As a 12-month employee, Ms. Donohue continues her training and attends conferences during the summer months. She spends time getting to know the JKs who are coming into our system by visiting their homes or daycares, and preparing materials for teachers for September. Ms. Donohue also makes herself available throughout the year for consults of other students not involved with Connections.

## **6. Community Agency Updates**

### *Jill Esposito – Brant Family and Children's Services (FACS)*

FACS is currently preparing for accreditations and audits. There is a lot of pressure on the system with recent stories in the media, with complex situations being taken out of context. FACS is looking at ways to increase transparency.

### *Christine Pearce – Woodview Mental Health & Autism Services*

Woodview is gearing up for Mental Health Week, which is the first week of May. Ms. Pearce said the agency wants to look "outside the box" in planning events, as they find the same people tend to attend each of the events, and they want to build awareness and partnerships. Six Nations and Woodview have partnered in "Stop Now And Plan" (SNAP), a program that teaches children with behavioural problems and their parents how to make better choices 'in the moment'. Ms. Pearce also discussed "Strongest Families", a telephone counselling partnership with Woodview.



*Theresa Westergaard-Hager – Norfolk Association for Community Living*

Community Living is planning their Winter Carnival. They are also planning an April fundraiser, “Can You Dig It”, which is in a game-show format. There has been a huge change with “Passport Dollars”, which is funding provided by the government to individuals with a disability. Passport Dollars has changed the format of day programming, requiring Community Living to do more hiring and to figure out how to accommodate the individuals able to “purchase” supports.

**7. Reports**

**7.1 Student Achievement Leader: Special Education**

- The January 18, 2016 PA day hosted by the Special Education Department brought in guest speaker Kim Barthel, an Occupational Therapist from British Columbia. 195 people from our Board, plus an additional 105 people from outside agencies, attended. Lansdowne Children’s Centre typically brings Ms. Barthel in for a week and partners with others for a day or two. She spends three days at Lansdowne, working with clients and therapists, offering suggestions.
- From November 16-20, 2015, 611 Grade 3 students wrote their CCATs. Results from CCAT provide excellent information for programming purposes. Results will be shared with families in the next two weeks.
- The Community of Practice meeting scheduled for January 27, 2016 will feature Brooke Gardiner from Woodview and Scott Cooper from REACH, who will speak to the Reaching Out to Kids (ROKs) referral process and services available within their agencies.

**7.2 Superintendent of Education**

- Superintendent Telfer shared the branding around the 2015-2018 Board Strategic Plan.
- On January 25, 2016, the Learning for All group involved in the Board Improvement Plan for Student Achievement (BIPSA) shared the BIPSA with Ministry colleagues, discussing what the plan looks like, the fundamental principle that all students can learn, and what the needs are for those supporting students, in addition to building capacity that can be used for all students.

**8. Closing Remarks/Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:25 a.m.