



**SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Tuesday, February 14, 2017 – 10:00 a.m.
Boardroom**

- Present:** Teresa Westergaard-Hager (Acting Chair), Keith Anderson, Catherine Custodio, Carmen McDermid, Bonnie McKinnon, Christine Pearce, Leslie Telfer
- Regrets:** Jill Esposto (Chair), Krista Emmerson, Paul Sanderson, Heather Shisler, Lisa Stockmans, Tracey Taylor
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1. Opening Prayer

Carmen McDermid led the group in the opening prayer

2. Welcome and Opening Comments

Teresa Westergaard-Hager (Acting Chair) welcomed the group.

3. Approval of Agenda

Moved by: Catherine Custodio

Seconded by: Bonnie McKinnon

THAT the SEAC Committee approves the agenda of the February 14, 2017 meeting.

Carried

4. Approval of Minutes – January 24, 2017

Moved by: Catherine Custodio

Seconded by: Bonnie McKinnon

THAT the SEAC Committee approves the minutes of the meeting of the January 24, 2017 meeting.

Carried

5. Presentation- Tools to Help Students Visualize Math

The Committee welcomed System Student Achievement Teacher Sue Defreyne, and Special Education Resource Teachers Jennifer Bergsma and Debbie Dignan, to discuss new tools and approaches that are being used to teach Math. A video entitled "Everyone Can!" was shared, and reference was made to Jo Boaler's extensive math research and resources. Sue demonstrated the Rekenrek tool and discussed how it has proven useful in helping students to understand number sense, to process math equations, and to be able to explain different thinking patterns. Other useful math tool demonstrations included the ten frame tool (composing and decomposing numbers), and linking cubes (adding and subtracting numbers, and using the cubes to illustrate money values). The team discussed subitizing, which is the ability to see a number of objects and know how many there are without counting. Experience in subitizing gives students the opportunity to begin developing skills in looking at larger numbers, grouping within large numbers, and being more efficient in counting. Debbie shared that many schools are hosting Family Games Nights. She highlighted an upcoming event at Jean Vanier School on May 9, which will focus on engaging students and their families with mathematics. Jennifer shared a list of resources which all Special Education Resource Teachers have received and are been trained on. Materials include those used in this presentation, and were chosen for their usefulness in making math learning more meaningful. Debbie provided the group with an overview of a workshop that she and Jennifer hosted at the recent Working Together Symposium. The session



provided parents and educators with simple and cost effective ways to engage children in math thinking and games, by using everyday household items such as ice cube trays and clothes hangers.

6. Correspondence

6.1 Letter from Nipissing-Parry Sound Catholic District School Board

Superintendent Telfer shared a letter from the Nipissing-Parry Sound Catholic District School Board to the Ministry of Education addressing the reduction to the Special Education High Needs Amount (HNA), which affects all school boards differently.

7. Community Agency Updates

Christine Pearce - Program Manager, Woodview Mental Health & Autism Services

Christine shared how Woodview, working in conjunction with the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), are working towards raising awareness on mental health during Mental Health Week, which is the first week in May. Suggestions for the use of hash tags and advertising in key locations within our cities were offered as ways to increase engagement for mental health.

Teresa Westergaard-Hager - Supervisor, Community Outreach, Norfolk Association for Community Living

Teresa provided updates on how Norfolk Association for Community Living is currently working on strategic planning and focusing on individualized supports. The organization is seeking to fill the position of Passport Coordinator. It continues to concentrate on employment and the phasing out of sheltered workshops. They are continuing to meet with families and offer more individualized planning to connect them to specific resources within the community.

Michelle Shypula - Superintendent of Education, BHNCD SB

Superintendent Shypula thanked the SEAC committee for being welcomed to the group and the opportunity to learn more about special education. She expressed excitement to see the progress we are making and looking forward to more opportunities in the future.

8. Reports

8.1 Student Achievement Lead: Special Education

Carmen McDermid shared information about the collaborative working session held at the Community of Practice (COP) meeting on January 19 with SERTs, System Special Education staff and Jackie Whiting, the French as a Second Language (FSL) Consultant. As a group, they discussed the shared goals and vision of an FSL classroom, including a brief overview of the Ministry document, *French as a Second Language for All*.

Carmen also updated the group on the first of two training sessions between the Special Education Department and FSL teachers. In a feedback survey given to FSL teachers by the Special Education Department, specific areas of concern, support and/or training were identified. Based on this feedback, a half-day workshop was held on February 9, 2017 with a focus on topics considered to be a priority by the FSL teachers including self-regulation, zones of regulation, behaviour management strategies, fidget items and calming strategies for all students. The meeting included FSL teachers from all elementary schools working with



Sandra DeDominicis, school Special Education Resource Teacher, who provided training on the zones of regulations, the use of fidget items and other sensory items. A second professional development session with FSL teachers and Special Education is booked for April 4. This session will include further training/discussion on topics such as autism, writing Individual Education Plans (IEPs), as well as assessment and technology, as requested by the FSL teachers.

8.2 Superintendent of Education

Superintendent Telfer discussed the Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) meetings which have been taking place as we prepare for the 2017-18 school year. IPRCs have been held at Holy Trinity Catholic High School, St. John's College and Assumption College School for students transitioning to self-contained classes at Notre Dame (Brantford) and St. Joseph's (Simcoe).

9. Closing Remarks/ Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11:35 am.