



**SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
Tuesday, May 16, 2017 – 10:00 a.m. - Boardroom**

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

Carmen McDermid led the group in the opening prayer.

**2. Welcome and Opening Comments**

Jill Esposto (Chair) welcomed the group. Superintendent of Education, Michelle Shypula provided a brief summary of her 26 years' experience within the Education sector and 3 years within our Board. As new Superintendent to the Special Education portfolio, she shared in her excitement to be part of and collaborate with the Committee and its members.

**3. Approval of Agenda**

Moved by: Heather Shisler

Seconded by: Catherine Custodio

THAT the SEAC Committee approves the agenda of the May 16, 2017 meeting.

**Carried**

**4. Approval of Minutes – April 11, 2017**

Moved by: Christine Pearce

Seconded by: Bonnie McKinnon

THAT the SEAC Committee approves the minutes of the April 11, 2017 meeting.

**Carried**

**5. Community Agency Updates**

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

Christine shared Woodview's success for mental health week with approximately 250 people in attendance and over \$2,000 in funds being raised. Christine updated that all camp unity referrals are now being accepted through Contact Brant as the single point of access to community agencies.

*Heather Shisler - Physiotherapist, Lansdowne Children's Centre*

Heather shared that the 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Charity Motorcycle Ride took place on Saturday, May 13, 2017 and is a fully police escorted ride through the city and country settings. With a focus on how to improve working with families, Lansdowne has recently undertaken some agency wide solution focused coaching with Susan Baldwin. Camp Unity planning is nearly completed and Lansdowne is meeting with teams and parents on children's school transitions and there are other various upcoming spring activities.



*Jill Esposto - Director of Services, Brant Family & Children Services*

Jill updated on Brant FACS upcoming 122<sup>nd</sup> Annual Meeting on Monday, June 12, 2017 from 5:00 to 7:00 pm at the Brantford Golf and Country Club. The meeting will include guest speaker Inspector Rudy Jambrosic, who has served with the Brantford Police Services for 28 years. He will speak about true life stories of some of our community's citizens and offer ways that we can help those in need. Jill provided a flyer (Appendix A) for additional information.

Jill shared that Tuesday, October 24, 2017 has been designated "Go Purple" Day (Appendix B) and they are looking forward to working with the Board again this year and tying into our spiritual theme, *Love Tenderly*. The day is intended to raise awareness around Child Abuse Prevention and the role everyone plays in keeping children safe. She expressed a desire to have additional personnel visit our schools on this date.

Jill shared that Brant FACS will be hosting a "Youth in Care" Day where they will have a barbeque for individuals aged 0 to 120 years to recognize the work they do with all ages within our community.

*Bonnie McKinnon- Trustee Representative, Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board*

Trustee McKinnon updated that Catholic Education Week from April 30 to May 5, 2017 had just finished and that the focus of this week was to celebrate the unique contributions of our Catholic school communities.

*Tracey Taylor- Developmental Services Manager, Haldimand- Norfolk REACH*

Tracey shared that HN Reach is currently experiencing many changes within the agency including the retirement announcement of Deb Young, Director of Services- Child, Family and Adult Intervention. Deb has been with the agency for over 17 years and has received many awards for her contributions to the mental health field. The agency welcomes Susan Wells as the new Director in her place.

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

Teresa updated on the fundraising events that took place over the past weekend for the Norfolk Association for Community Living (NACL). The agency is holding a large recruitment day today, May 16, 2017 to fill several positions that have recently become available and is currently providing comprehensive training to staff within the agency.

*Catherine Custodio- Child Welfare Supervisor, Haldimand-Norfolk Children's Aid Society*

Catherine shared that it is a busy time at Haldimand-Norfolk Children's Aid Society which includes some changes in staff. On Thursday May 11, 2017 the agency celebrated Youth in Care Day and a barbeque was provided to their youth in care. Catherine updated that the agency is currently completing their annual renewal of foster care licensing which includes interviewing of foster care parents.



## **6. Reports**

### **6.1 Student Achievement Lead: Special Education**

Carmen discussed that they are in the initial discussion stage of identifying key areas of focus for next year. There will continue to be a focus on self-regulation and math. A number of SERTs and System personnel attended the Ontario School Based Mental Health conference to learn more about how to further support students with behavioural challenges and complex learning needs. Keynote speakers included Dr. Ross Greene, Lisa Ferentz, Adele Lafrance, Lynn Lyons, Steven Feifer, Lynn Miller and Judy Willis. Key Note Speakers addressed the following topics:

- Impact of Trauma on Children
- Anxious kids, Anxious families
- The Neuroplasticity of Emotional Disorders
- Mental Health Matters
- Neurology Strategies for Building Students' Emotional Self-Management, Motivation and Perseverance
- Collaborative & Proactive Solutions

Board staff attended all of the workshops provided to enable further discussion when looking at possible areas to focus on for next year. There were also a number of resources purchased at the conference including, child development books, activity books, fidget items, etc. to share with schools.

### **6.2 Superintendent of Education**

Superintendent Shypula provided an overview of the Regional Parent Reaching Out (PRO) Grant process that resulted in the Raising Awesome Responsible Kids Symposium. This symposium took place in April 2017. Initial planning began in November 2015 and consisted of all parent councils providing feedback that reflected topics they wanted to learn more about. Following the analysis of this feedback, it was determined parents/guardians were interested in learning more about mental health and how to support the development of resilience in their children. Once this topic of interest was decided, the RCPIC executive began the PRO grant application process in February 2016 and grant approval was received in June 2016. In September 2016, intensive planning began and included members of the RCPIC and Mental Health Team. A comprehensive search for a keynote speaker resulted in the selection of Gary Drenfeld MSW.

Additionally, to further highlight the importance of making connections between home and school, it was determined that Mr. Drenfeld would speak to Grade 11 and 12 students across the district prior to the parent/guardian speaking engagement and would also be the keynote speaker during the system-wide mental health professional activity day for teachers and support staff.

As a next step, this survey data will be utilized to assist in the planning of future Regional PRO grant applications and identifying professional learning needs of staff.

## **7. Closing Remarks/ Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 10:45 am.