



**SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Tuesday, December 12, 2017 – 10:00 a.m. - Boardroom**

- Present:** Bonnie McKinnon (Trustee), Jennifer Chapman, Jill Esposto, Mischa Jansink, Carmen McDermid, Paul Sanderson, Michelle Shypula, Teresa Westergaard-Hager, Nil Woodcroft
- Guests:** Sharon Norrington, Chris Roehrig, Holy Trinity Catholic High School Students
- Regrets:** Krista Emmerson, Christine Pearce, Tracey Taylor,
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1. Opening Prayer

Carmen McDermid led the group in the opening prayer.

2. Welcome and Opening Comments

Superintendent Shypula welcomed the group and Jill Esposto led a round of introductions for the benefit of the Holy Trinity Students and SEAC members in attendance.

3. Approval of Agenda

Moved by: Teresa Westergaard-Hager

Seconded by: Paul Sanderson

THAT the SEAC Committee approves the agenda of the December 12, 2017 meeting.

Carried

4. Approval of Minutes – November 28, 2017

Moved by: Bonnie McKinnon

Seconded by: Mischa Jansink

THAT the SEAC Committee approves the minutes of the November 28, 2017 meeting.

Carried

5. Presentation

5.1 Fusion for Inclusion

Sharon Norrington, project Coordinator for the Fusion for Inclusion Project, provided a brief overview on Action4Inclusion which is a province wide youth engagement initiative of Community Living Ontario and funded by the Trillium Foundation that empowers youth to explore how they can influence the way society views and treats individuals with developmental disabilities.

Building on collaborative working relationships that exist between four developmental service agencies within Haldimand and Norfolk, in 2016, Community Living Access, Community Living Haldimand, Haldimand-Norfolk REACH and Norfolk Association for Community Living joined together to support this initiative within the communities.

They began by identifying four high schools within the communities, Holy Trinity Catholic High School, Cayuga Secondary School, Simcoe Composite School and Waterford District High School that each agency took a lead on in working with.

Six students from Holy Trinity Catholic High School presented the video. The goal of the video is to “start the conversation about inclusion”. The video was designed, composed and edited by students, to engage and empower youth and show the power of their voices. The video featured students with and



without disabilities, from across the four high schools, introducing themselves, sharing aspirations, giving their input on what needs to change with how the world views people with disabilities and how people can support one another.

Jill Esposto inquired if a similar program has been created in Brant/Brantford. The program currently has only been created in Haldimand and Norfolk counties.

6. Community Agency Updates

Mischa Jansink- Family Service Coordinator- Lansdowne Children's Centre

Mischa updated on an announcement released December 7, 2017 by the Ministry of Child and Youth Services regarding enhancements to the new Ontario Autism Program (OAP).

To ensure a consistent and thorough response, Hamilton Health Sciences has identified the following people as contacts if community partners and/or families have questions related to the announcement as follows:

- Lansdowne: Bev Matheson 519-753-3153 Ext. 262
- Bethesda: Alyson Wilson
- REACH: Joan Costigan
- Hamilton: Amy Phillips

The vision of the new OAP is to provide children and youth with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) with access to timely and effective services. Ontario is introducing enhancements to the OAP beginning in January 2018. These enhancements build on those already announced earlier this year including:

- Introducing flexible, individualized services based on need;
- Changing eligibility so that all children and youth with a diagnosis of ASD from a qualified professional will be eligible for services until the age of 18;
- Offering a single point of access, including a telephone number for parents to call, in nine areas across Ontario to make it easier for families to access autism services; and
- Implementing Family Support Workers and the OAP Family Team to better support families and the central role they play in their child or youth's services.

Enhancements beginning in January 2018:

1. A new direct funding option for evidence-based behavioural services will be available to families in the OAP.

What this means for families:

- Families entering the OAP will be given the choice of receiving services from a Regional provider or receiving direct funding to purchase behavioural services through a qualified provider when a spot becomes available.
- Ontario's goal is one waitlist, regardless of choice and that both of the above options are available. The province will work with providers to monitor and assess progress on the availability and equity of service options for families.
- The maximum hourly rate for evidence based behavioural services will increase from \$39 per hour to a maximum of up to \$55 per hour for families who choose the direct funding option.



2. Communicate new qualifications for Clinical Supervisors.

What this means for families:

- Information about new qualification requirements will be released by mid-January 2018. For Clinical Supervisors who may not meet the qualifications, compliance with the requirements will be phased in over time. This will not disrupt services for families.

3. Implementation of a family-initiated independent Clinical Review Process (ICR).

4. Changing accountability and clinical oversight of direct funding providers by direct service providers

Enhancements for spring 2018 and beyond will include an OAP provider list posted online.

What this means for families:

- An OAP provider list will also be made public in 2018 to support families in selecting a qualified OAP service provider.
- The list will include a formal process to verify the qualifications of practitioners who wish to provide behavioural services in the OAP.

Additional information can be found on the Ministry website at:

<https://news.ontario.ca/mcys/en/2017/12/ontario-autism-program-oap.html>

7. Reports

7.1 Student Achievement Leader: Special Education

A system team from BHNCD SB participated in the Ministry's Planning Together: Regional Dialogue Session held in London, Ontario on December 6, 2017. Superintendent Shypula and Carmen McDermid attended the Special Education/Success for All Engagement/Conversation Stream. The focus of the session was to provide information/highlights of recently released and upcoming Ministry special education resources and to provide opportunities for dialogue regarding special education processes and practices from the view of learners and school environments.

Louise Sirisko, Director, Special Education/Success for All for the Ministry of Education, reported on next steps for the Special Needs Strategy, which was launched in 2014. She stated, "The Ministry of Education and Children and Youth Services are establishing a Provincial Advisory Group (PAG) to provide advice to government on key issues related to implementing Integrated Rehabilitation. Feedback through the PAG will inform provincial decision-making towards continued provincial implementation of Integrated Rehabilitation, particularly with respect to putting in place a tiered, family centered service delivery model across school and community settings". The first meeting will take place in December with further discussions to follow in the New Year.

The draft Special Education in Ontario- Kindergarten to Grade 12 Policy and Resource Guide 2017 was reviewed with participants. This new document supersedes: Special Education: A Guide for Educators (2001), Standards for School Board's Special Education Plans (2000), Individual Education Plans: Standards for Development, Program Planning and Implementation (2000), Transition Planning: A Resource Guide (2002) and the Individual Education Plan (IEP): A Resource Guide (2004). The new guide reflects policy updates and is NOT new policy. Boards were encouraged to share this resource with their SEAC members. The guide can be



found on the Ministry website at: <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/speced.html> and a hard copy of the drafted guide can also be requested.

Carmen shared information on the development of the new Facilitator's Guide to support the Learning for All K-12 guide. The new guide has been piloted in five school boards and divided into modules. The first module is about "Knowing the Learner" and focuses on how to create robust learner profiles for students with learning disabilities. The overview of the module includes; *Understanding Learning Differences*, *Examining Sources that Inform a Learner Profile*, *Recognizing and Capturing Patterns* and *Consolidating the Learning*. Special Education Resource Teachers (SERTs), Special Education Classroom Teachers (SECTs) and Special Education Department Heads will participate in Module One facilitated by Carmen and system staff in early 2018.

7.2 Superintendent of Education

Superintendent Shypula updated on the Provincial Assessment Consultation. As the Ministry begins its work to refresh the curriculum, it is necessary to review assessment practices at the classroom, school, school board and provincial level (EQAO), national and international levels. The Education Advisors to the Premier and Minister of Education have been asked to conduct an independent review of education assessment in Ontario. The goal of the Advisors is to engage as many people as possible, with diverse experiences and perspectives, in a province-wide conversation about current approaches to assessment, reporting and proposed concerns and suggestions to support future practices.

For education stakeholders, including SEACs, this is a timely opportunity to ensure all voices are heard. It is the Ministry's hope that SEAC members will avail themselves to provide their comments and advice on how to improve student assessment. SEAC members are encouraged to complete an online survey at <https://OntarioALearningProvince.ca/participate>.

Further to the update provided by Mischa, Michelle provided an update on the Ontario Autism Program (OAP). The Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS) began implementation of the OAP in June 2017. Children and youth with a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) from a qualified professional are eligible for the OAP until the age of 18. The OAP provides families with more flexible and individualized services at varying levels of intensity based on their children's specific needs. On December 7, 2017, MCYS released an announcement introducing some elements of the OAP that will begin in January 2018. Some of these include access for families to a new Direct Funding Option for evidence-based behavioural services, changed accountability and clinical oversights and implementation of a family-initiated Independent Clinical Review Process. A direct funding option will provide all families in the OAP with the option to receive funding to purchase evidence-based behavioural services for their child or youth, or direct service, offered through one of Ontario's regional OAP providers. Additional information is available on the MCYS website <http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/specialneeds/autism/index.aspx>.

8. Closing Remarks/ Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11:30 am.