



**SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
Tuesday, June 18, 2019 – 9:00 a.m. – Boardroom**

- Present:** Jennifer Chapman, Christine Dragojlovich (*Co-Chair*), Jill Esposto, Lauren Freeborn
- Resources:** Debbie Fullerton (*Principal and Principal Lead: Special Education Staffing*), Carmen McDermid (*Student Achievement Lead: Special Education*), Patti Mitchell (*Parent, County of Brant*), Michelle Shypula (*Superintendent of Education*)
- Regrets:** Bill Chopp (*Trustee*), Susan Battin, Laura Bergeron (*ad hoc*), Tracey Taylor, Teresa Westergaard-Hager (*Co-Chair*), Nil Woodcroft
- Guests:** Susan Fitzgerald (System Special Education Resource Teacher (SERT)), Sandra De Dominicis (System Special Education Resource Teacher (SERT)), Debbie Dignan (Itinerant SERT), Joanne Freund (System SERT), Barb Hannam (Educational Assistant (EA)), Stephen MacNeil (Special Education Classroom Teacher), John Silvestri (Information Technology SERT)
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**1. Opening Prayer**

Carmen McDermid led the group in the opening prayer.

**2. Welcome and Opening Comments**

Superintendent Shypula welcomed guests and members and a round of introductions were led for the benefit of all guests in attendance.

**3. Approval of Agenda**

Moved by: Lauren Freeborn

Seconded by: Jennifer Chapman

THAT the SEAC approves the agenda of the June 18, 2019 meeting.

**Carried**

**4. Approval of Minutes – May 21, 2019**

Moved by: Jennifer Chapman

Seconded by: Lauren Freeborn

THAT the SEAC approves the minutes of the May 21, 2019 meeting.

**Carried**

**5. Presentations**

**5.1 Lexia Core5 Reading**

Susan Fitzgerald, System SERT, described Lexia Core5 Reading as an online reading intervention program for students in grades K-5. Activities focus on six components of reading-- Phonological Awareness, Phonics, Structural Analysis, Automaticity/Fluency, Vocabulary, and Comprehension. Students work independently and at their own pace/rate, with intervention from the school SERT when it is indicated, through web-based reports, that a student is struggling in a specific reading/literacy skill. The one-to-one intervention that is delivered by the SERT



provides explicit instruction on concepts and rules of a skill, allowing the student to demonstrate proficiency and then return to standard-level activities.

The Special Education department learned about Lexia Core5 during a presentation delivered by teachers from Amethyst Demonstration School. Lexia Core5 is an integral part of the programming provided to students at Amethyst who have been identified with a severe learning disability.

The criteria is listed as follows:

- students in grades 3-6
- identified as LD or on a non-identified IEP with 'needs' in the area of reading
- not identified (no IEP), but with a current diagnostic reading assessment that confirms the student is reading at least 2 levels below his/her current grade

The Pre/Post Assessment is described as follows:

Assessment data included in the results from the administration of four WJ-IV Achievement sub-tests\* (Letter-Word Identification, Passage Comprehension, Sentence Reading Fluency and Spelling) and current reading level data for each of their student candidates. This data collection was for the purpose of tracking student progress in the areas of decoding/word reading, reading comprehension, reading fluency and spelling.

Susan updated that the training of SERTs took place in October 2018. SERTS reaffirmed the selection of their candidates with the system team and a parent letter went home with consent for the administration of the WJ-IV assessment.

Susan shared a video to the group about Lexia Core5 Reading that included activities students have performed.

Best practices of Lexia implementation were shared including following the minimum number of 20 minutes/day, committing to a schedule for Lexia time every day, intervening with struggling students, reinforcing online learning using Lexia Skill Builders and celebrating student progress with achievement certificates. This was followed by a question and answer session from the group.

SEAC inquired for a pilot for those non-engaged, non-attenders to trial.

## **5.2 Learning Upgrade**

John Silvestri, Information Technology SERT updated on the Learning Upgrade, which consists of a series of online courses in Math and Literacy that can be used as a diagnostic and intervention tool. The Learning Upgrade courses include Math kindergarten to grade eight, reading, English grades one to four and comprehension. Each course consists of approximately 60 levels that the student works through and must achieve a score of 75% or greater to move onto the next level. Each student enrolled in the program was assigned one course which was selected by the school team and based on the student's needs. Students were expected to be on the program a minimum of three times a week for 20 minutes each session per five-day cycle. The school SERT was responsible for implementing the program with their students and providing any necessary intervention. Intervention was provided when a student did not achieve a minimum of 75% in a level after three consecutive attempts. Student progress was tracked through detailed web-based assessment reports, which were shared with the classroom teacher. This year we had 67 students enrolled in the program, of which 57 were from the elementary panel and 10 were from high school.



### **5.3 Elementary Supplementary Gifted Program Overview**

Sandra DeDominicis, System SERT, shared the overall outline of the Supplementary Gifted Program and provided an overview of the program for all students in grades four to eight enrolled in the program. She presented 33 modules via PowerPoint using photos and tweets taken from the enrichment experiences. A display was included that showcased various sample science bridges, young authors books and photos taken from the various modules. Two grade 2 students from St. Pius X school shared their autobiographical books that they created during the Young Authors Modules.

### **5.4 Assumption College Presentations**

Stephen MacNeil, Special Education Classroom Teacher, Barb Hannam, Educational Assistant (EA) and students presented the liturgy created by the Assumption College's Job Skills 2 class based on our Board's theme of *Hearts on Fire*. The students explored the story of the disciples walking with Jesus on the road to Emmaus. The students created a movie to depict this story that encompassed interviews with other students from the special education programs at Assumption College. The presentation was heart-warming and the students hoped that we all strive to let others see that our hearts are on fire.

A student from the Community Living Program at Assumption College was congratulated on his graduation and voice narration of two Raptors videos that has been recognized world-wide. The student's father thanked the Teachers and Educational Assistants throughout the Board for the exemplary inclusionary practices and dedication provided to his son since Junior Kindergarten.

### **5.5 Sacramental Retreats**

Joanne Freund, System SERT, provided an overview of three retreats offered at St Mary's Catholic Learning Centre as part of the 'Supporting our Faith Journey' program. The retreats were geared toward students with an intellectual disability (MID, DD), students with autism (who could make transitions easily) and/or students who could benefit from a simplified supplementary 'hands on' program that provided lots of review and repetition. This day was designed to help exceptional students increase their understanding as they prepared to receive the Sacraments of Reconciliation and First Communion. Due to a very small number of requests for Confirmation this year, 'hands on' activities, including a parent guide with instructions to support the understanding of the sacrament, were provided to the students rather than running the full day Retreat.

#### **Each retreat provided an opportunity for students to:**

- read and discuss the Scripture Reading related specifically to the sacrament
- learn about the sequence of events when receiving the sacrament
- tour the church and highlight key symbols in the church
- rehearse the steps involved in receiving the sacrament using visual representation and assistance from the priest
- highlight specific vocabulary relevant to the sacrament through vocabulary BINGO, concentration, fishing for important vocabulary, etc.
- engage in a modified 'hands on' learning opportunity, incorporating drama (making and using character puppets) to help students gain a better understanding of the sacrament



- take home a variety of 'hands on' activities, including a parent guide with instructions to further promote practice and repetition

The retreats were well received and enjoyed by all. The students gained a better understanding of the sacrament, increased their confidence to receive the sacrament, and experienced the opportunity to make new friends.

## **6. Correspondence**

### **6.1 Letter to the Minister of Education**

### **6.2 Letter from Peel District School Board**

Due to time constraints, the correspondence was not reviewed and will be included on a future SEAC Agenda.

## **7. Community Agency Updates**

### ***Christine Dragojlovich – Clinical Manager, Woodview Mental Health & Autism Services***

Christine shared that Woodview is gearing up for Camp Unity at St Pius X school. WrapAround for Complex Needs Summer Programming will be facilitated at Bethel Stone Church in Paris and that Woodview will be providing Summer Programming for Early Years and Intensive clients and families in the community. Christine updated that the partnership with Woodview's Early Years Program and the EarlyON's has been going very well. Woodview is providing support to various locations as well as providing Day Care Consultations to licensed Day Cares in Brantford and Brant County which has been very successful.

## **8. Reports – Special Education Plan Consultation**

Members were advised that a draft of the Special Education Plan would be forthcoming for their input.

## **9. Closing Remarks/ Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 12:00 pm and Superintendent Shypula thanked members for their contributions to the meeting and wished them all a good summer. Special thanks were given to Debbie Fullerton for her contributions and dedication to special education over the years.