



SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, April 21, 2020 – 1:30 p.m.

Teams Meeting

Members: Laura Bergeron (ad hoc), Jennifer Chapman, Christine Dragojlovich, Jill Esposto, Lauren Freeborn, Kevin Greco (Superintendent of Education), Patti Mitchell (Parent, County of Brant), Nil Woodcroft

Regrets: Tara Buchanan, Bill Chopp (Trustee), Mischa Dinsmore, Shannon Mason (Principal Lead: Special Education Staffing), Teresa Westergaard-Hager

Resources: Carmen McDermid (Student Achievement Lead: Special Education)

1. Opening Prayer

Carmen McDermid led the opening prayer.

2. Welcome and Opening Comments

Superintendent Greco provided a short tutorial on participating in a Teams Meeting.

3. Approval of Agenda

Moved by: Lauren Freeborn

Seconded by: Christine Dragojlovich

THAT the Special Education Advisory Committee approves the agenda of the February 11, 2020 meeting.

Carried

4. Approval of the Minutes

Carmen requested a minor edit to the minutes as follows under 7.1

“Our ABA Leads in collaboration with community partners have had a very successful launch of the After- School Skills Development Program (ASSDP) in all three counties to date.”

Moved by: Christine Dragojlovich

Seconded by: Lauren Freeborn

THAT the Special Education Advisory Committee approves the minutes of February 11, 2020 as amended.

Carried

5. Correspondence

None



6. Community Agency Updates

Lauren Freeborn – Service Planning Coordinator, Contact Brant

Lauren reported they have been serving clients virtually or over the phone. They have been having video chat meetings with families. All staff have been working from home.

Jennifer Chapman - Child Welfare Supervision, The Children's Aid Society of Haldimand-Norfolk

Jennifer reported they are open, and staff is working from home.

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

Christine reported that Woodview is still providing services, in a non-traditional way, using a virtual platform and continuing to provide face to face service for high needs clients. Drop-In Clinics are still being offered and can be accessed through texting or calling to set up an appointment. Mental Health Awareness Week will be virtual on social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. An Instagram and Twitter account have been mobilized for Mental Health Awareness Week (May 4 - 9, 2020).

Nil Woodcroft – Haldimand-Norfolk REACH

Nil reported that when the Province of Ontario declared a state of emergency, in response to Covid-19 Haldimand-Norfolk REACH moved to providing service from home beginning on March 25, 2020. Two weeks prior to this home visiting services were stopped and social distancing and cleaning measures were put in place to ensure a safe working environment. Programs implemented procedures for working from home by providing telephone and virtual conferencing supports in order to be able to service participants. Employees and service participants have adapted well to this new working environment.

Jill Esposto - Director of Services, Brant Family and Children's Services (FACS)

Jill reported that Brant FACS are providing an essential service which makes their employees eligible for subsidized daycare. There have been calls regarding violence, poverty, and food needs. Most of the staff have been working from home. When the need arises for support in the community, staff try to visit outside or on the porch. Supervised access programs are not running, but they are trying virtual visits. Phones and internet have been purchased to facilitate this. Brant FACS and Children's Aid Society of Haldimand-Norfolk continue to discuss the possible unification of their agencies. No firm timelines are available for these discussions as planning for the pandemic has taken priority at this time. The Director of Brant FACS, Jacque Scatcherd is retiring. A virtual Zoom celebration will be planned in her honour.

Patti Mitchell – Parent (County of Brant)

Patti reported on the Special Olympics in Brantford. They are providing tips for wellness for the athletes and reaching out to make sure they are ok. There is a coast to coast challenge being offered to the athletes.



7. Reports

7.1 Student Achievement Leader: Special Education

Carmen reported that there is a priority is to host virtual intake IPRCs for students/families requesting a placement in one of our elementary Transition Classrooms for the 2020-21 school year. Most IPRC intakes for secondary special classrooms have already taken place. Additionally, virtual Entry to School Case Conferences meetings will be scheduled for new kindergarten students with special needs who will be entering school next year. These meetings are critical for the successful transition of our students into school. SERT and EA allocations meetings will be taking place shortly to start planning for system needs for the 2020-21 school year. Lexia Core5 reading program currently being piloted by the Special Education Department was offered to support students struggling with reading. There was tremendous interest expressed by schools in having students trial this program during learning at home.

7.2 Superintendent of Education

Superintendent Greco reported that the Board office, facilities, and schools are all closed, and staff members are working from home. During the first two weeks of closure, teachers spent time familiarizing themselves with how to navigate D2L/Brightspace (online learning platform), create a virtual classroom and prepare for the transition to teacher led distance learning. Some families are struggling to juggle the demands of work while supporting their children's learning while at home. Staff are trying to make learning flexible to meet parents' and students' needs. Devices and special education equipment have been rolled out to support student learning at home.

Kevin presented a Service Dog information video showcasing the success of a service dog in our Board. Currently we have two dogs assisting students in our schools. The students are thriving with the support of their dogs.

8. Closing Remarks/Adjournment

Kevin thanked everyone for attending the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 3:09 p.m.