



**SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**Tuesday, June 16, 2020 – 1:30 p.m.**

**Teams Meeting**

- Members:** Kevin Greco (*Superintendent of Education*), Jennifer Chapman, Lauren Freeborn, Laura Bergeron (*ad hoc*), Bill Chopp (*Trustee*), Patti Mitchell (*Parent, County of Brant*), Tara Buchanan, Jill Esposto, Terri-Lynn Zakrzewski
- Regrets:** Shannon Mason (*Principal Lead: Special Education Staffing*), Teresa Westergaard-Hager, Nil Woodcroft, Mischa Dinsmore, Christine Dragojlovich
- Resources:** Carmen McDermid (*Student Achievement Lead: Special Education*), Dianne Wdowczyk (*Mental Health Lead*)
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**1. Opening Prayer**

Carmen led the opening prayer.

**2. Welcome and Opening Comments**

Kevin welcomed the group to the Teams Meeting.

**3. Approval of Agenda**

Motion: Jill Esposto

Approved: Lauren Freeborn

THAT the SEAC approves the agenda of June 16, 2020

**Carried**

**4. Approval of the Minutes**

**Jill requested a minor edit to the minutes as follows:**

~~The merger with Haldimand/Norfolk has been moving forward.~~

Brant FACS and HN Children's Aid Society 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.

Motion: Lauren Freeborn

Approved: Jennifer Chapman

THAT the SEAC approves the minutes of April 21, 2020 as amended.

**Carried**



## **5. Correspondence**

Kevin discussed the HCDSB letter. At this time, there has not been any response to this letter and the recommendations herein. Kevin will keep everyone updated.

## **6. Community Agency Updates**

### ***Lauren Freeborn – Service Planning Coordinator, Contact Brant***

Contact Brant has been operating from home in order to continue to support children and families with making referrals to community agencies and providing service co-ordination support. A plan will be formulated to determine the best method for a slow re-entry back to work in the office. They will continue to support families virtually until further notice.

### ***Jennifer Chapman - Child Welfare Supervision, The Children's Aid Society of HN***

The majority of our staff are still working from home. The building is still closed to the outside. Some workers are rotating at work. The workload is picking up after a brief lull.

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

Brant FACS is beginning to see families are calling for help again after a period of time at the beginning of Covid-19 when families reaching out had slowed. Most workers are still primarily working from home. In the case of visits that must be in person, they are taking precautions. They are looking at ways to allow access to the premises safely. They are following all advice by public health. Most access visits continue to be virtual, but we are actively working to support face to face visits when it is safe to do so. They are trying to ensure all families are served, and staff feel safe. Continuing their mandate as essential workers and figuring out how to adapt service while still ensuring safety of children. The education liaison position with both school boards was very helpful but funding stopped at the end of March. There has been some money set aside to reinstate that position to ensure children are being served. This position will continue to be a shared position with HNCAS and Brant FACS.

### ***Tara Buchanan – Community Living Brant***

Community living Brant employees are still working from home. It has been very busy. Those who are looking for jobs are being assisted virtually and are still being served.

### ***Patti Mitchell – Parent (County of Brant)***

No report at this time.

### ***Bill Chopp – Trustee***

No report at this time.



## **7. Reports**

### **7.1 Student Achievement Leader: Special Education**

The After-School Skills Development Program is funded by the Ministry, and during the Pandemic a virtual Kids Club Program was implemented. These program sessions were led by trained staff from Lansdowne Children's Centre and Haldimand-Norfolk REACH and included students from Grand Erie and the BHNCDSB. The focus of the program was to further develop appropriate social skills and sportsmanship.

The Summer Transition Program for students with special needs is in the planning stage with the intention of rolling it out during the last few weeks prior to school starting back pending Public Health approval. The program will be individualized to meet student needs and will focus on how best to support students in transitioning back to school. Teachers and support staff will be extended an invitation to participate in the two-week session to support students in their transition visits, connecting with families, completing assessments, etc.

Virtual IPRCs and Entry to School Case Conferences were completed with very positive feedback being received from families. Virtual meetings were quite successful, and families expressed their gratitude for the process which enabled them to share essential information about their child's specific needs. Holding these meetings was instrumental in building parent confidence as we were not able to meet in person but still had the opportunity to be introduced to families and their children.

The Special Education Annual Report was shared and a few highlights were discussed with the committee.

### **7.2 Superintendent of Education**

Kevin reported that the distant learning model has been a success. Everyone is working hard to keep this working well. Families are giving positive feedback for this. Brightspace is also going well, and EA's are engaged helping students. Our CYW's and Social Workers have also been able to engage with students. The Board had rolled out hundreds of special education devices for students. Devices and paper packages were given to any student who required them.

Looking forward to September, there may be an adaptive version of school. It is still up in the air as it must be done safely with precautions in place. Committees are looking into this planning. Summer supports will be in place for students. Special education needs have been looked at for September. Support for Students funding is expected for September, which provides more FTE for staff. This provides added supports to help serve students.

Self-regulation is being taught to a group in an online course.

Kevin requested that the Committee let us know what day and times are good for meetings next year.

### **7.3 Mental Health Lead: Transitional Support**

Dianne indicated files opened for students seeking school mental health supports through the school year are typically closed at the end of the school year and re-open in the following year if needed. For the summer months, students are equipped with an interim support plan that many times will include community supports.



Given COVID-19, the ministry recognizes the need for continued care for students already receiving support through school mental health professionals and has allocated funds to be used to retain staff over the summer so they can:

- Support students and their families throughout the summer who are already on pre-existing school-based case loads
- Avoid referring students to community based mental health services who may already have long wait times
- Support students and their families whose mental health needs would best be met by a school mental health professional (new referrals)
- Support students with mental health needs as they transition into the new school year.

Student support will be offered at the individual and family level, predominantly using telephone and virtual platforms. In person sessions are also permitted, while following board safety protocols. Additionally, support will be available to students and families participating in summer learning opportunities.

As the fall term approaches, students, their families, mental health support staff and school staff will collaborate in order to identify areas of need or concern with regards to school re-entry; and formulate plans of support in order to assist in a smooth transition back to school for students and their educators.

#### **8. Closing Remarks/Adjournment**

Kevin thanked everyone for coming today.

The meeting adjourned at 3:09 p.m.

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**Next meeting date, time, location: TBD**