



**SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
**Tuesday, November 17, 2020 – 1:30 p.m.**  
**Teams Meeting**

**Members:** Kevin Greco (*Superintendent of Education*), Bill Chopp (*Trustee*), Jennifer Chapman (*Co-Chair*), Lauren Freeborn (*Co-Chair*), Laura Bergeron (*ad hoc*), Mischa Dinsmore, Jill Esposto, Brook Gardner, Nil Woodcroft, Terri-Lynn Zakrzewski

**Regrets:** Teresa Westergaard-Hager, Tara Buchanan

**Resources:** Shannon Mason (*Principal Lead: Special Education Staffing*), Carmen McDermid (*Student Achievement Lead: Special Education*), Patti-Mitchell (*Parent, County of Brant*)

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**1. Opening Prayer**

Carmen McDermid led the opening prayer.

**2. Welcome and Opening Comments**

Superintendent Greco welcomed the group and thanked Jen Chapman and Lauren Freeborn for sharing the Co-Chair role.

**3. Approval of Agenda**

Moved: Patti Mitchell

Seconded: Lauren Freeborn

THAT the Special Education Advisory Committee approves the agenda of the November 17, 2020 meeting.

**Carried**

**4. Approval of the Minutes**

Moved: Brook Gardner

Seconded: Lauren Freeborn

THAT the Special Education Advisory Committee approves the minutes of October 20, 2020.

**Carried**

**5. Correspondence**

No correspondence to share.

**6. Community Agency Updates**

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

We have been looking for a unique way to celebrate Christmas. Our agency will deliver care packages and dinner for Christmas. Most of the gifts will be in the form of gift cards. We are looking to make it special for the children who are involved in the agency. Adoption awareness month took place in November.

Caregiver recognition month was a success last month, some caregivers were celebrated with milestones. It has been challenging to meet in person with the growing numbers of covid. PPE is being used to assist



with necessary in person contact. There has been no update yet with unification between Brant, Haldimand and Norfolk.

**Mischa Dinsmore - Lansdowne**

Limited in-person service is being provided. We are prioritizing the most at need for in person assessments and all others are being completed over the telephone, or virtually over Zoom. Please find information about Ontario Autism Services being offered at Lansdowne through the Autism team's newsletter. (Newsletter attached to minutes.) While we cannot safely hold the traditional Christmas day-long celebration throughout our Centre, we are fortunate that Brantford's Glenhyrst Art Gallery has agreed to host us on December 6th from 6:30-8:30 p.m. The event will be a drive-thru format during the 1st Sunday of their Brantford Lights which runs from December 4<sup>th</sup> -January 1<sup>st</sup>. Glenhyrst cannot close down the site to exclude others but we will have Lansdowne staff near the gates to welcome and direct our LCC families to our Santa/Mrs. Clause and Rudolf/Elves stationed near the gallery.

**Shannon Mason – Principal Lead**

No report.

**Bill Chopp – Trustee**

No report.

**Brook Gardner - Woodview**

Woodview is continuing with in person and online visits. The new drop-in clinic is up and running. We are always looking for alternative ways to assist families in light of covid.

**Patti Mitchell – Parent, County of Brant**

Patti shared that the special Olympics are doing a Zoom Christmas dinner to try and keep the participants feeling connected.

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

We are continuing to serve most of our clients either online or by phone. Right now, any in person visits are done as porch visits outside while respecting the Covid protocols in place. We have updated our Service Coordination protocols for the Grand Erie District School Board, where communication goes through the Principal first in order to schedule meetings and to help identify which students are currently engaged in the Service Coordination program in the community. Contact Brant is currently connecting with the Catholic School Board to identify a similar Service Coordination protocol for their School Board as well.

**Nil Woodcroft – Haldimand-Norfolk REACH**

Bramble Retreat programs began providing overnight respite on October 16<sup>th</sup>. We have begun with one service participant at a time. Bramble still has children's vacancies. Individual's must be diagnosed with a developmental handicap, physical handicap and require nursing supported respite. Prior to a referral, families contact the Bramble Retreat Program Supervisor, she sets up a nursing assessment, if the individual meets the program requirements, a tour is scheduled and then referrals are made through Contact H-N. We are a regional program and support individuals who reside in Brant, Haldimand and Norfolk. REACH is currently providing in person inside and outside visits with service participants.



## **7. Reports**

### **7.1 Superintendent of Education**

**Kevin Greco**

Superintendent Greco shared that our EA's have received their devices (tablets to support learning in the classrooms). This is a great tool to assess and share information with the classroom teacher. Thanks to the support of our Trustees, every EA received a tablet. The pilot was a great success, and we expect this will make a tremendous impact on learning of our special needs students. EA's participated in a half day learning as they were rolled out, and ongoing support will be provided for the devices. There will be time to share best practices and to improve the experience.

The Spec Ed teams are beginning to look at transition plans for students for the next school year. Not sure if these will be virtual or face to face yet. HR is continuing to hire extra EA's to have the support throughout the system. EQAO assessments are not happening this year. We are waiting to hear if literacy tests will go forward.

We are still deploying Spec Ed assistive devices and providing training with them to the students and to staff working with them.

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

**Carmen McDermid**

Carmen McDermid further discussed the training session that Educational Assistants (EAs) received on their new tablet devices on the November Professional Development Day. All EAs learned about the devices' capabilities, associated apps and how it can be used to support their role in collecting evidence of learning to reflect IEP expectations. Throughout the training session, EAs were shown step by step how to personalize and utilize their device. Overall, EAs seemed at ease with understanding and manipulating the features of the new device. Follow up sessions will be planned for future PD Days. An answer sheet was provided in response to any additional questions that came out of the training day.

Virtual Community of Practice meetings are continuing to be held for the Special Education Department. Agenda items are generated from school and system personnel who make recommendations including requests for specific professional development in a variety of areas. Jim Little, Consulting Board Psychologist gave a presentation to members of the System Special Education team on 'Neurodevelopmental Perspectives on Learning – Fine Motor Issues'. This was to further support system staff in recognizing fine motor issues which may be impacting student achievement. A similar in-service will be shared with school SERTs at the next virtual Community of Practice Meeting being held on December 9<sup>th</sup>. Carmen offered SEAC members the opportunity to participate in this presentation if interested.

The Board's Speech-Language Pathologists launched their Phonological Screening Initiative on November 16<sup>th</sup>. This initiative focuses on assessing all grade one students' phonological skills by Christmas to provide feedback to teachers and families in support of literacy development. Grade one students in virtual school will be assessed in the new year.

Debbie Dignan, Itinerant SERT for the special classes has been visiting schools to observe potential student candidates who are considering making application to one of our special classes for September 2021. Additionally, there is currently a large grade eight cohort graduating from the Notre Dame Transition Class, who will be entering one of our secondary special classes next year. As there is such a large number of graduates, extra planning has been implemented to closely review



**Brant Haldimand Norfolk  
Catholic District School Board**

**Minutes**

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secondary class sizes, arranging virtual visits for students and parents and in providing information sessions to plan and support a successful transition for these students.

**8. Closing Remarks/Adjournment**

Superintendent Greco thanked everyone for coming. The meeting adjourned at 1:46 p.m.

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**Next meeting:** Tuesday, December 15, 2020, 1:00 p.m. – Microsoft Teams