



**SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Tuesday, February 23, 2016 – 2:30 p.m.
Haldimand Room**

Present: Jill Esposto (Chair), Catherine Custodio, Krista Emmerson, Carmen McDermid, Bonnie McKinnon, Paul Sanderson, Heather Shisler, Leslie Telfer

Regrets: Colleen Demarest, Christine Pearce, Lisa Stockmans, Tracey Taylor, Teresa Westergaard-Hager

1. Opening Prayer

Carmen McDermid led the group in the opening prayer.

2. Welcome and Opening Comments

Jill Esposto, SEAC Chair, welcomed the group and led a round of introductions for the benefit of Corina Woods, Temporary Secretary to the Superintendents.

3. Approval of Agenda

Moved by: Heather Shisler

Seconded by: Bonnie McKinnon

THAT the SEAC Committee approves the agenda of the February 23, 2016 meeting.

Carried

4. Approval of Minutes – January 26, 2016

Moved by: Bonnie McKinnon

Seconded by: Jill Esposto

THAT the SEAC Committee approves the minutes of the meeting of January 26, 2016.

Carried

5. Community Agency Updates

Heather Shisler – Lansdowne Children's Centre

Lansdowne Children's Centre continues to focus on their Special Needs Strategy and recently had their Entry to School Transition Meetings with both school Boards in preparation for September 2016.

Catherine Custodio – Haldimand-Norfolk Children's Aid Society

The agency is undergoing their Crown Ward audit at this time.

Paul Sanderson – Contact Brant

Contact Brant received an email from the Ministry regarding Transitional Age Youth (TAY) Planning. A survey is currently being prepared to receive feedback from its users. Also, a meeting regarding the Child and Parent Resource Institute (CPRI) will be scheduled in April for families who have participated in residential and day programs looking for their feedback on topics such as resource availability. This feedback will assist in recognizing the best uses of the services and resources that are available.



Jill Esposto suggested that a late diagnosis creates a problem as access to more than one waiting list at one time is not possible. There can be a 10-15 year waitlist for residence placements. Crown Ward children are typically the first to be placed as their situations are critical. Host foster families help out during these transitional periods. She continued to explain that there are more complex needs at an older age, partially due to a change in services.

Paul spoke about those individuals who may have two disabilities; for example, a physical and mild intellectual disability. These young adults (18 years of age or older) are unsure which system should be contacted for assistance as there are different adult services based on an individual's needs. Regarding IEP planning, Paul suggested there should be some form of transitional planning in place where parents should be responsible to ensure certain actions are taken at the correct time. Jill Esposto added that there is a 'safety net' in place within the school board as identified students can remain in school until the age of 21.

Jill Esposto – Brant Family and Children's Services (FACS)

Jill advised that Sharon Baker will discuss DSO scoring/testing and parent awareness on March 4, 2016. An individual's complex needs are difficult to decipher in many cases and this assessment problem continues to be an issue.

Carmen McDermid gave an explanation of the cognitive reports completed by the Board, how the reports are shared with families/students, and that the reports have been revised this year and are being written in more 'parent friendly' language.

Krista Emmerson – Parents for Children's Mental Health

Co-facilitated the Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT) sessions for parents whose children have been receiving services. Child care was provided for the six sessions and they are planning on running another program in the future.

6. Reports

6.1 Student Achievement Leader: Special Education

- The AAC meeting held on Friday, February 19, 2016 had a Special Education focus for half of the day. Topics included SERT Allocation for 2016-17, introduction of a new resource for Principals/Vice-Principals, specialized transportation, and Grade 2 Canadian Cognitive Ability Testing. Following the meeting, principals received a guided tour of the Snoezelen Room at Woodview as an information piece on how to further support children with Autism Spectrum Disorder, as well as how to support students struggling with sensory needs.
- Any Principal/Vice-Principal interested in attending a conference on high poverty/high performance were asked to submit their names to Leslie Telfer. Three school teams consisting of the Principal, Special Education Resource Teacher and a classroom teacher from Christ the King, Holy Cross and Jean Vanier attended the 'Turning High Poverty Schools Into High Performing Schools' conference offered by the District School Board of Niagara on Wednesday, February 17, 2016. Guest speakers were William Parrott and Kathleen Budge, authors of the book, 'Turning High-Poverty Schools into High-Performing Schools'. A few of the topics covered included the importance of relationships, trust and respect, fees, homework policies, etc. As well, various articles regarding parent engagement were distributed and discussed.



- At the upcoming Professional Development day on February 26, 2016, the Special Education Team will be working with the core French (FSL) teachers at the Catholic Education Centre. The focus of the day will be on Ministry identifications, ASD, self-regulation and sharing of best practices. Future PD sessions are being planned for this school year to support French teachers with the rollout of the new Ministry document, 'Including Students with Special Needs in French as a Second Language Programs'.

6.2 Superintendent of Education

- Superintendent Telfer described sample case studies presented by the Special Education Team at the AAC meeting on February 19, 2016. A resource binder was created by the Special Education Team for each principal to aid them in various key situations. Principals also participated in an interactive and informative activity regarding SERT allocation for 2016-17. Future SERT allocation will be reviewed on a yearly basis. Previous SERT allocations, as well as feedback gathered from the school SERTs this year, were shared with the principals. Consistent feedback received dealt with supporting students who do not have an identification or diagnosis, but who require substantial support for self-regulation, behaviour and mental health concerns.
- At the Special Needs Strategy Proposal Meeting, the team presented the Haldimand Norfolk Proposal to four partners. The presentation went well, but the proposal has not yet been approved. An advisable next step would be to review the work completed over this last year. (The Brant proposal was being presented the following day.) The challenge remains with those parents who resist support and do not want coordinated service planning to assist in their child's success.
- Entry to School Transition Meetings took place on February 16, 2016 with Lansdowne Children's Centre and on February 18 with Haldimand Norfolk REACH. Preparations are starting for these students' entry into school in September 2016.

7. Closing Remarks/Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:45 p.m.