



**SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Tuesday, May 24, 2016 – 10:00 a.m.
Boardroom**

Present: Jill Esposto (Chair), Catherine Custodio, Carmen McDermid, Bonnie McKinnon, Christine Pearce, Paul Sanderson, Heather Shisler, Leslie Telfer, Teresa Westergaard-Hager

Regrets: Colleen Demarest, Krista Emmerson, Tracey Taylor, Lisa Stockmans

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 Rachel Moreau, Orientation & Mobility Educational Assistant, who was in attendance.

3. Approval of Agenda

Moved by: Catherine Custodio

Seconded by: Heather Shisler

THAT the SEAC Committee approves the agenda of the May 24, 2016 meeting.

Carried

4. Approval of Minutes – April 26, 2016

Minor edits were made to the Community Agency Updates section of the minutes, as follows:

Jill Esposto – Those individuals who have reached 18 years of age but have not completed high school ***may choose to*** sign an agreement to remain in the care of their foster family, and they are requesting that the foster family be compensated for this arrangement.

Christine Pearce – Christine also shared that Woodview has gone through the accreditation process and received a score of ***99%***.

Teresa Westergaard-Hager – Community Outreach Norfolk Association for Community Living has a new collaboration with R.E.A.C.H. *Their annual fundraiser was not associated with the new collaboration.*

Guo Wu – Itinerant Teacher of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. Provides program support for students who have a significant bilateral **and unilateral** hearing loss and who require amplification or specialized communication supports.

Moved by: Christine Pearce

Seconded by: Paul Sanderson

THAT the SEAC Committee approves the minutes of the meeting of April 26, 2016, as amended.

Carried



5. Presentation

Rachel Moreau, Educational Assistant - Orientation & Mobility, provided the Committee with an overview of her role within the Board which includes helping students travel safely and independently in any environment with or without the use of a mobility device such as a white cane. Rachel works one on one with students, school teams and parents. In addition, referrals can be made to CNIB and W. Ross MacDonald School through Rachel as she works closely with both organizations.

Rachel also completes environmental analysis reports which recommend changes in schools to ensure that they are accessible. Rachel suggests an Environmental Checklist for the schools (a guide is presented to schools to aid them in identifying problem areas). Some suggestions might be:

- Taping of stairs
- Reviewing all school signage
- Tree trimming (white cane only protects the student from the waist down)
- Any obstacles above the waist is a hazard and needs to be identifiable by the student's white cane (i.e., blue box placed on ground level)

Rachel currently has 30 students on her case load and five students identified as blind/low vision. It was explained that a person diagnosed to be legally blind would have eye exam results of 20/200, while a person diagnosed as visually impaired would have results of 20/70. It is always measured with best corrected vision. Rachel described the various visual impairment diagnosis of students including Retinitis Pigmentosa, Cortical Vision Impairment, Glaucoma, Nystagmus, Lazy Eye, Cataracts, and Traumatic Brain Injury.

Rachel introduced the Committee to a game called Goal Ball, a hearing game that she has introduced to two elementary schools and that she plans on introducing into secondary schools next year. This game helps to create a greater awareness amongst students about what it means to have a visual impairment.

Rachel finished her presentation with an experimental exercise for all attendees with the use of blindfolds. She explained the best method in staying connected to your guide when moving through a crowd. She shared the following helpful rules when in contact with a vision impaired person:

- Give a student an anchor before leaving their side
- Do not walk away from the student if they are still talking
- Announce your presence as you walk up to a student
- Introduce yourself to a student
- Inform the student an additional person has entered the room
- Do not push the person from the back through a crowd; guiding them feels more safe

6. Community Agency Updates

Christine Pearce – Woodview Mental Health & Autism Services

Mental Health Week went well, with the kickoff event taking place at the Accelerator Building which received lots of community support. The Dance Challenge continued on Facebook. A community garden was started with Woodview and Contact Brant. They are gearing up for summer camps,



including Camp Unity at St. Peter School, which is a program through the Ministry's Focus on Youth initiative. They hope to hire students at risk proving they have the capabilities to be mentors at the camps (10 children and two supervisors). A new initiative, a Summer Social, is being organized in partnership with our Board.

Catherine Custodio – Children's Aid Society of Haldimand and Norfolk

The Annual General Meeting is scheduled for June 14, 2016. The agency is currently going through a transition in worker and supervisory positions and undergoing training related to a new data base, CPIN, which will be province wide. Different agencies have been chosen for different stages of training and the CAS of Haldimand and Norfolk will most likely go live in the fall. Changes in staffing are being made to accommodate this.

Teresa Westergaard-Hager – Community Outreach, Norfolk Association for Community Living

The organization has undergone strategic planning with members and staff. The Annual General Meeting is scheduled for June 15, 2016, to be held at the Delhi German Hall. They have one person supported being recognized for 45 years of service and who will retire soon. There is a 'Friends and Family' picnic planned for July 17, 2016. Employment Services will be transitioning some of their participants, one person at a time. All medication processes have become electronic. A wonderful partnership has been initiated with Roulston Pharmacy in Simcoe.

Heather Shisler – Lansdowne Children's Centre (LCC)

The Annual General Meeting will be held the third week in June 2016. They will be running several summer camps that will be located within LCC and community-based facilities across the city, including a one-week teenager life skills camp.

Paul Sanderson – Contact Brant

The Children's Mental Health Week was successful. The Coffee House provided a venue for Youth Engagement. At the Eaton's Centre, the church provided music/sound system for children to participate in a mini concert by singing and performing. This event succeeded in bolstering the confidence of many children.

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

They have completed revising their pamphlets to reflect the full array of services and to be more accessible for families. They will be made available to the School Board. They are currently working with older youth in care to elevate their voice on topics meaningful to them. They recently completed a video on the subject of bullying in schools and experiences of youth in care. The video will be shown at the Annual General Meeting, which is scheduled for June 13, 2016.

7. Reports

7.1 Student Achievement Leader: Special Education

Elementary Transition Classes: There are currently two Elementary Transition Classes (maximum of 16 students) in the Board. For the 2016-17 school year, there will be an increase to 2.5 classrooms (2 classes at Notre Dame School, Brantford and .5 class at St. Joseph's School in Simcoe). The criteria to be considered for one of these transition classes is that a



student must have been IPRC'd with an intellectual disability (developmental disability or a mild intellectual disability) and entering Grades 6, 7 or 8 or be age appropriate for one of these grades. These Transition Classes prepare the students for the transition into secondary both academically and socially.

Self-Regulation Conference: A number of school SERTs and system personnel travelled to Toronto to participate in the 'Zones of Regulation' Conference with Leah Kuypers, Occupational Therapist and author of the book. Self-Regulation has been identified as a key area of focus for the 2016-17 school year. A number of other resources were introduced at the Conference and are being previewed as potential future resources.

Elementary and Secondary Have a Go: 'Have a Go' is a modified track and field meet for students with a physical, intellectual or communication disability. It has been held annually for the past nine years. The Secondary Have a Go will be held on Friday, May 27 at Assumption College. This year St. John's College leadership class, along with Lindsay Ronson, are hosting the event. The Elementary Have a Go will be held on Monday, June 12 at Assumption College. The main goal of both the Elementary and Secondary Have a Go events is to provide an opportunity for students to actively participate and socialize with peers while participating in some fun activities.

7.2 Superintendent of Education

Leslie Telfer updated members on the operational tasks presently being completed, including SERT allocations in elementary schools. She explained that a number of different criteria is reviewed during this process. The next task will be the Educational Assistant allocation process. The Board is still determining the number of students who will require an Educational Assistant next year. The protocol that is followed would be that all Educational Assistants are laid off and recalled by June 15, 2016. Leslie and Carmen, together with the Grand Erie District School Board and Lansdowne Children's Centre, are meeting to discuss the impact of the recent Intensive Behavioural Intervention (IBI) announcement and how it will affect the Educational Assistants' allocation process.

On April 22, 2016, there was a Board wide Professional Development day focused around Mental Health & Wellness. Dianne Wdowczyk and Chandra Portelli organized a full day of keynote speakers and workshops for the entire staff (1,000 employees) at Assumption College. Thirteen partner agencies, along with Board staff, facilitated various workshops. We believe we are the only Board in Ontario to have offered a Mental Health day to its entire work force.

8. Closing Remarks/Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m.