



**SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Tuesday, June 28, 2016 – 10:00 a.m.
Boardroom**

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

Regrets: Colleen Demarest, Christine Pearce, Tracey Taylor

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 Patti Mitchell, System SERT, who was in attendance.

3. Approval of Agenda

Moved by: Paul Sanderson

Seconded by: Bonnie McKinnon

THAT the SEAC Committee approves the agenda of the June 28, 2016 meeting.

Carried

4. Approval of Minutes – April 26, 2016

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 – Supplementary Gifted Program Modules

Patti Mitchell, a System SERT, provided the Committee with an overview of the Gifted Program with the aid of a slideshow presentation. The presentation showcased the positive results of the supplementary modules offered to all students identified as Gifted. Focus was placed on enhancing the students' skills in team building, problem solving and extending the curriculum. The program promotes the importance of a team by recognizing the individual students' strengths, weaknesses and contributions made by each individual. It provides students the opportunity to work with other like ability students. Feedback on the modules is received throughout the year from the participants and their families. Patti gave a brief overview to the Committee about a few of the highlights from this year. Some of their opportunities included a program at the Ontario Science Centre (NASA Training Centre simulation), publishing literature, robotics, skills Ontario cardboard boat races and a theatre piece where students had the opportunity to attend a theatre production and then write and direct their own movies. As a trial, transportation was offered at no cost to students attending schools in the Haldimand and Norfolk area. This will be reviewed in September as to whether or not this additional service will continue next year.



6. Correspondence

a) A letter was received from the Toronto Catholic District School Board SEAC highlighting the increased budget cuts made to their High Needs Amount funding from the Ministry. BHNCDSB has received enhanced funding as a result of the adjustment changes to the High Needs Amount (HNA) formula and will continue to do so for another year. These allocated funds do not meet all the needs in Special Education, however the short term increase in funding does help.

b) A letter was received from District School Board of Niagara highlighting the concerns surrounding the announcement of changes to IBI. It is anticipated that this change will impact the Board's ability to allocate Educational Assistants. For those parents who have children on a waiting list, ABA will be offered, however they are not certain how this support will unfold. Parents have started petitioning to keep the current waiting list of all those students who have yet to receive IBI support. A letter to be written on behalf of BHNCDSB's SEAC stating that we have concerns about the recent decision to cutoff IBI from families who have been waitlisted and now their children are over the age of five and are now ineligible to receive IBI.

Motion to compose a letter to the government stating our concerns over the recent IBI government changes. (Jill Esposto to sign.)

Moved by: Catherine Custodio

Seconded by: Lisa Stockmans

Carried

c) Survey to be conducted to decide the most convenient SEAC monthly meeting day/time for the upcoming school year by all attending committee members. The Committee voiced their hopes for more parent representation in the 2016-17 school year.

7. Community Agency Updates

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

The organization has had some recent staff changes/movement and has hired on new employees due to new CPIN (Child Protection Information Network) data base being implemented. There will be training on the new provincial data system September through to December. This new database is an integration of 3 legacy bases used across the province that will unfold over the next four years. The decision to integrate the individual legacy bases was sparked by recent child death inquests and the Auditor General. Having one joint system province wide will allow all organizations access to the individual's family child protection history.

Paul Sanderson – Contact Brant

He has observed an increase of participants at the various events/functions over the past years; a good sign that the word is getting around in the communities.

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



Many changes to child welfare to be introduced in the upcoming year. There will be an announcement in the fall about the coming changes to the Child and Family Services Act (CFSA). Active conversations/changes coming at a very fast rate. There will be changes introduced for children/youth in group homes; attention around youth with mental health issues in jails instead of getting needed mental health treatment. All areas gaining much media attention. There is a possibility of extensive restructuring of the organization in the fall. Currently it is business as usual, one day at a time.

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

Conversations have been focused around pay equity and how this would affect the organization. Improvement is being sought in the area of passport funding delivery. There has been an increased interest with parents at evening meetings, creating better connections between parents and the organization.

Heather Shisler – Lansdowne Children’s Centre (LCC)

Attempts are being made at becoming more accountable. Gold Care is being implemented in stages. An integrated care plan to be used for all clients which will make reporting more standardized and family friendly. Focusing on IBI vs. ABA and the large implications this change will have on School Boards. This change will bring many transition problems, create huge challenges for families. Currently waiting for strategic plan to be introduced in the fall.

Krista Emmerson –

A support group is being offered throughout the summer to parents with children with mental health problems. A consistent group of parents and children attend providing them with a relaxing place to talk about their personal situations. The disability tax credit was reviewed last month with parents in order to help them file the paperwork with the government. The tax credit can be retroactive for up to four years.

7. Reports

7.1 Student Achievement Leader: Special Education

The annual SERT allocation process was completed for the 2016-17 school year only. Separate meetings were held with principals/vice-principals and SERTs to allow them an opportunity to provide input into the SERT allocation process. Their input was taken into consideration when the 2016-17 formula was created.

The annual EA allocation was also completed in June which included multiple meetings with the members of the EA allocation team starting in late May. Student/school needs and gains/struggles of students currently supported were all reviewed. All EAs were given their 2016-17 placement by the required collective agreement date (June 15th).

The Council for Exceptional Children Awards night was held at Jean Vanier Catholic School this year. Seven outstanding students, teachers and support staff were recognized from the BHNCDSD. The winners will also be recognized at the final Board Meeting.

7.2 Superintendent of Education

Mary Salem, our Behavioural SERT, has now retired; her SERT minutes have been allocated back into the overall school SERT complement. The annual EA allocation process was completed by June 15,



**Brant Haldimand Norfolk
Catholic District School Board**

Minutes

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2016 as per the collective agreement. All EAs are laid off as of July 1st and recalled for September. Additional postings will be posted in mid-August.

The Special Education Annual Report for 2015-16 was presented to the committee on behalf of Leslie, Carmen and the Special Education Services team.

Leslie thanked the Committee members for their commitment throughout the school year.

8. Closing Remarks/Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

Next Meeting: TBA