



**SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
Tuesday, June 13, 2017 – 10:00 a.m. - Boardroom**

- Present:** Jill Esposto (Chair), Catherine Custodio, Carmen McDermid, Bonnie McKinnon, Christine Pearce, Paul Sanderson, Heather Shisler, Michelle Shypula, Teresa Westergaard-Hager
- Regrets:** Keith Anderson, Krista Emmerson, Lisa Stockmans, Tracey Taylor
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**1. Opening Prayer**

Carmen McDermid led the group in the opening prayer.

**2. Welcome and Opening Comments**

Jill Esposto (Chair) welcomed the group and led a round of introductions for the benefit of Patti Mitchell, System SERT, in attendance.

**3. Approval of Agenda**

Moved by: Bonnie McKinnon

Seconded by: Heather Shisler

THAT the SEAC Committee approves the agenda of the June 13, 2017 meeting.

**Carried**

**4. Approval of Minutes – May 16, 2017**

Christine Pearce noted a revision to her Community Agency Update.

Moved by: Catherine Custodio

Seconded by: Christine Pearce

THAT the SEAC Committee approves the minutes of the May 16, 2017 meeting, as amended.

**Carried**

**5. Correspondence**

**5.1 Proposed 2017-18 SEAC Dates**

Michelle reviewed the upcoming proposed meeting dates with the group. Carmen McDermid noted that the election for the committee chair would be taking place at the first 2017-18 committee meeting on September 19, 2017.

**6. Presentation- Gifted Overview by Patti Mitchell**

Patti Mitchell, System SERT, provided for the Committee an overview of the District's Gifted Program. Her power point presentation highlighted the positive impact the supplementary modules offered to all students identified as gifted. Ninety-eight students participated during the 2016-17 program and each module was developed to enrich classroom curriculum. Each grade has a different focus based on children's interest and needs. Participation in the modules promoted higher-level thinking, problem solving, collaboration, leadership and creativity. Additionally, Patti provided a brief synopsis of some of the key learnings from this year, including grade 6 students attending the Stratford Festival to view "The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe". This group demonstrated a key interest in the Arts in that age which resulted in the creation of this experience. Additional slides featured excursions to the Ontario Science Centre and to the University of Waterloo Science and Computer Program. During this school year, two teams represented the Board at Provincials for the Skills Ontario Competitions. Patti shared a video



depicting various events that took place at Have-A-Go on Wednesday, June 7, 2017 where elementary students assembled for their track and field meet at Assumption College School.

## **7. Community Agency Updates**

*Christine Pearce- Program Manager, Woodview Mental Health & Autism Services*

Christine updated that Woodview is working in collaboration with St. Leonard's in providing immediate crisis support and/ or counselling services for individuals experiencing a mental health or situational crisis. As the lead mental health agency, Woodview is developing the pathways to care for crisis and respite services in Brantford and Brant County. The agency will also be looking at Professional Activity Day camps, summer programming as well as weekend and evening options for families for children 0 to 18 years.

*Heather Shisler - Physiotherapist, Lansdowne Children's Centre*

Heather updated how Lansdowne's space is currently beyond capacity and has outsourced office space in separate locations in order to accommodate the growth within the agency. The agency is focusing on ongoing development with solution-focused coaching when working with families, peers and teams and tools on redirecting conversations in an appropriate manner. Heather announced her resignation with SEAC as well as her hours of employment with Lansdowne. Lansdowne will be announcing their newest member with the committee in September 2017. Heather thanked the group and described how it has a pleasure to work alongside the team and watch it grow.

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

Jill handed out a flyer (Appendix A) on behalf of Brant Family & Children Services (Brant FACS) detailing benefits to becoming a member with the agency and described their interest to expand their membership within education, legal and technology services. Membership offers the opportunity to participate on a continuum and includes receiving newsletters or attending the annual meeting right up to becoming a member of the Board. Jill also distributed copies of the agency's Annual Report to members. She shared that more than half of all child welfare agencies in Ontario are now utilizing the Child Protection Information Network (CPIN), which will eventually offer a network for all Child Protection agencies so that child safety can be maintained and supported even if a family moves to another area of the province. Brant FACS is working on determining the number of Crown Wards within each of the local Boards and will share this information once available.

*Bonnie McKinnon- Trustee Representative, Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board*

Bonnie updated how it is currently a busy time for the Board with finalizing budgets and reporting to the Ministry as the end of the school year approaches. She informed the group that the Board does not meet during the summer months.

*Paul Sanderson- Resource Coordinator, Contact Brant*

Paul updated how intake with Contact Brant is currently up forty percent and the agency is thankful to other agencies for their assistance in bridging some of the gaps. The agency is introducing counseling services to families and offering the service in their respective homes, which will also help manage wait lists. Paul shared how this is a busy time for the agency and they are examining creative and effective ways to manage these wait lists.



*Teresa Westergaard-Hager- Supervisor - Community Outreach, Norfolk Association for Community Living*

Teresa shared that Norfolk Association for Community Living (NACL) will be holding their Annual General meeting on June 21, 2017. On July 30, the agency will be holding their Summertime Friends and Family Picnic in Simcoe. The agency is changing their traditional group living model, offering a more individualized one to better accommodate individuals and give them more flexibility and choice in their living arrangements. The change will promote independence and decision-making in an ideal living situation of their choosing. NACL is growing and making improvements to the Passport program as the Ministry continues to implement changes. Teresa updated on upcoming variations that will be taking place over the next 18 months to the employment services and sheltered workshops and how they continue to evolve based on the needs of the individuals they serve.

*Catherine Custodio- Child Welfare Supervisor, Haldimand-Norfolk Children's Aid Society*

Catherine updated that Haldimand-Norfolk Children's Aid Society will be holding their Annual General Meeting on Thursday, June 22, 2017. She shared on the success and positive feedback of the agency's foster care licensing review with the Ministry. She also shared that the Ministry is considering extending their protection services and offering assistance to youth up to the age of 18. This is currently before legislature.

## **8. Reports**

### **8.1 Student Achievement Lead: Special Education**

Carmen updated on the success of the Have-A-Go event and the excitement and enthusiasm shared by all. In celebration of Canada's 150 birthday, the committee purchased red T-shirts all participants. Carmen shared that the final Community of Practice (COP) meeting would take place on Friday, June 16, 2017 and three retirees would receive recognition for their years of service. The team will be working with the St. Leonard's Society to review how to best support youth at risk during the summer months. Annual Educational Assistant allocations for the 2017-18 school year will be completed by June 15<sup>th</sup> as per the Collective Agreement.

### **8.2 Superintendent of Education**

Superintendent Shypula was pleased to announce the hiring of Debbie Dignan in a new Itinerant Special Education Resource Teacher role to the Board. One of the responsibilities of this position is support the elementary transition classrooms at Notre Dame in Brantford and St. Joseph's in Simcoe as well as all the special education classrooms in the three secondary schools. Elementary schools requiring more SERT support received additional SERT minutes and a 0.4 SERT was hired to support all schools with self-regulation needs. Two new Itinerant Educational Assistants (EA) will be hired and directed to provide targeted support to schools across the District.

## **9. Closing Remarks/ Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 11:10 am.