



**SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
Tuesday, March 19, 2019 – 9:30 a.m. – Boardroom**

- Present:** Bill Chopp (*Trustee*), Susan Battin, Lauren Freeborn, Tracey Taylor, Teresa Westergaard-Hager (*Co-Chair*),
- Resources:** Debbie Fullerton (*Principal and Principal Lead: Special Education Staffing*), Carmen McDermid (*Student Achievement Lead: Special Education*), Patti Mitchell (*Parent, County of Brant*), Michelle Shypula (*Superintendent of Education*)
- Regrets:** Laura Bergeron (*ad hoc*), Jennifer Chapman, Christine Dragojlovich (*Co-Chair*), Jill Esposto, Nil Woodcroft
- Guest:** Jennifer Bergsma (System SERT),  
David Szuty (Student Achievement Consultant: eLearning K-12)
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**1. Opening Prayer**

Carmen McDermid led the group in the opening prayer.

**2. Welcome and Opening Comments**

Superintendent Shypula welcomed Trustee Bill Chopp to SEAC and Chair Teresa Westergaard-Hager welcomed the group and led a round of introductions for the benefit of the guests.

**3. Approval of Agenda**

Moved by: Tracey Taylor

Seconded by: Lauren Freeborn

THAT the SEAC approves the agenda of the March 19, 2019 meeting.

**Carried**

**4. Approval of Minutes – February 26, 2019**

Moved by: Susan Battin

Seconded by: Lauren Freeborn

THAT the SEAC approves the minutes of the February 26, 2019 meeting.

**Carried**

**5. Presentation – PowerSchool SpecEd**

Carmen McDermid introduced Jennifer Bergsma, one of four System Special Education Resource Teachers (SERT) and David Szuty, Student Achievement Consultant for eLearning K-12. Jennifer, David and John Silvestri (Information Technology SERT) were the leads on the development, teaching and roll out of the new PowerSchool SpecEd program. David provided a historical overview of the program previously used and the reason for looking at a new system that would be compatible in meeting the needs of the Board. PowerSchool SpecEd is an Internet based program designed to develop and manage special education documents including Individual Education Plans (IEPs). Multiple training sessions have been provided to School SERTs and principals will receive training at the monthly Academic Administrators Council (AAC) meeting on Thursday, March 21, 2019. Jennifer



displayed the structure of the IEP within the new program and reviewed the various sections of the IEP. Starting fresh with a new program allowed the team the opportunity to quality check existing student information and ensure all sections of documents are in line with updated Ministry requirements. Jennifer reviewed the benefits of the new program providing a more clear and concise print out of the IEP form. Discussions ensued and members were able to ask questions on what the program has to offer. Superintendent Shypula thanked the presenters for all their hard work and dedication and providing their presentation to SEAC. Trustee Chopp congratulated the team on their selection of a new IEP engine and suggested the presentation be made at a future Board meeting.

## **6. Community Agency Updates**

### ***Susan Battin – Senior Therapist and Parent Representative, Lansdowne Children’s Centre***

Susan updated on the funding cuts made by the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services to Autism and how it is directly affecting Lansdowne Children’s Centre. Funding will be honoured up until March 31 and due to the uncertainties, the agency is working to navigate through staff resignations and dealing with confused parents. The agency supports approximately 350 children on their autism registration list and they are working to create a survey that will be sent out to all the families for input on the services parents are looking for and what they project they will need in six to nine months.

### ***Tracey Taylor – Developmental Services Worker, Haldimand-Norfolk REACH***

Further to Susan’s update, Tracey also shared how the funding change by the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services is also having an impact on their agency. Autism and Behaviour Services Manager, Joan Costigan has been avidly attending all the meetings and advocating on behalf of families supported by HN REACH. She has been diligent in keeping staff and parents up to date on changes and the agency continues to provide a quality service and ensuring that client’s needs are being met.

Tracey shared that HN REACH currently has spaces available in their children’s Bramble Retreat program. Bramble Retreat is a respite home designed for children under the age of 18 who are diagnosed with a physical or developmental handicap, medically fragile and/or technology dependent requiring nursing supports.

### ***Patti Mitchell – Parent and Community Resource, County of Brant***

Patti updated on the continued successes of the Canadian Special Olympics team.

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

Lauren updated on the Service Coordination program at Contact Brant and how her caseload is increasing with referrals coming in from school staff. The agency is anticipating change due to the new direction of the Ontario Autism Program (OAP) and anticipate service coordination increases. Lauren provided an update on the increase of working with children and families who have English as a second language.



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

Teresa updated that the Norfolk Association for Community Living is growing due to increases with the number of adults they are working with and with the expansion with the Passport program. With an increase in funding for the program, the agency has increased their support in front line staff as well as for planner positions. Discussions ensued about the waitlists for Developmental Services Ontario.

**7. Reports**

**7.1 Student Achievement Leader: Special Education**

Carmen updated that schools will be administering the Canadian Cognitive Abilities Tests (CCAT) from April 1 to April 11 to all grade two students in the Board. Due to the assessment for grade three students administered by the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO), it was decided to have CCAT testing completed in grade two. It was also the hope that by administering CCAT in grade two that student needs could be identified sooner so earlier intervention could be implemented.

Carmen updated that the Special Education Board audit that was completed this year went very well. The Board received two low priority recommendations as a result of the audit. Carmen shared that the new PowerSchool SpecEd program has provided the opportunity to review the plans. Further, Carmen shared that the special education department will be completing a grade eight audit and copies of the template being used for the audit were passed out to members (See Appendix A). The audit will be completed through the months of April to June 2019 to approximately 150 grade eight students in the Board. The special education system team are planning to complete a grade nine audit in the fall of 2019. An elementary IEP audit will also be implemented in the 2019-20 school year. The specific area of focus is yet to be determined.

**7.2 Superintendent of Education**

Superintendent Shypula updated that beginning April 1, 2019; the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) will implement significant changes to autism services in Ontario. According to the MCCSS, childhood budgets will provide more families with access to a broader range of eligible services. These budgets will be available until the child is 18 years of age. The amount of the budget will be contingent on the length of time the child will be in the program and the household income up to \$140000 (for therapy commencing at two years of age). For children receiving services beginning at seven years of age, families will receive \$55 000 until age 18. Under the current system, many students receive intensive therapy from an outside agency several days a week and attend school the remaining day. The province has provided little communication as to how districts will successfully integrate and support these students beginning April 1, 2019. It remains unclear what additional resources will be available to ensure a safe, meaningful and well-supervised learning environment will look like in schools across the province and boards continue to wait for further direction.

Superintendent Shypula informed members on upcoming Educational Assistant (EA) Allocation/ support meetings that are scheduled with key team members such as, Principals, SERTs, Teachers, Social Workers, Child and Youth Workers (CYWs) etc. These face to face meeting happen in all three counties at a variety of locations where system staff travel to meet with school teams to review and discuss student/school needs. The second IEP audit



recommendation was to create a template to provide monthly updates to the senior management team following monthly EA allocation meetings to increase communication and understanding of school needs.

**8. Closing Remarks/ Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 11:30 am and Superintendent Shypula thanked members for their contributions to the meeting.