



**SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
Tuesday, February 11, 2020 – 1:30 p.m.  
Boardroom**

- Members:** Kevin Greco (*Superintendent of Education*), Bill Chopp (*Trustee*), Jennifer Chapman, Mischa Dinsmore, Lauren Freeborn, Laura Bergeron (*ad hoc*), Christine Dragojloivch, Terri-Lynn Zakrzewski
- Regrets:** Patti Mitchell (*Parent, County of Brant*), Jill Esposto, Nil Woodcroft, Tara Buchanan, Shannon Mason (*Principal Lead: Special Education Staffing*), Teresa Westergaard-Hager
- Resources:** Carmen McDermid (*Student Achievement Lead: Special Education*)
- Guests:** Kathy Haong (*Pathways Student*)
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**1. Opening Prayer**

Kevin led the opening prayer.

**2. Welcome and Opening Comments**

Kevin welcomed everyone to the meeting and a round of introductions were done.

**3. Approval of Agenda**

Motion: Lauren Freeborn

Approved: Mischa Dinsmore

THAT the SEAC approves the agenda of January 21, 2020.

**Carried**

**4. Approval of the Minutes**

Mischa Dinsmore, Lansdowne Children's Centre, requested a minor edit to the minutes as follows under 7.1:

**“The board** has also reached out to a number of boards who piloted this initiative in 2016.”

Motion: Mischa Dinsmore

Approved: Lauren Freeborn

THAT the SEAC approves the minutes of February 11, 2020 as amended.

**Carried**



## **5. Correspondence**

### **5.1 Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board**

A letter was shared from the Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board addressed to Stephen Lecce. It was proposed that we also write a letter from our committee. Bill Chopp proposed that we send a joint letter from the trustees and the SEAC committee. Bill would like to inquire if the e-learning is made mandatory, what parameters would they hold for students with special needs? The committee was asked to send any ideas to Terri-Lynn and Kevin will draft a letter.

## **6. Community Agency Updates**

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

Lauren Freeborn reported that there is an FASD professional development event on February 28, 2020 with Dr. Louise Scott. The presentation is at the Best Western from 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. There are 100 spots available and the registration fee is \$25.

### ***Jennifer Chapman - Child Welfare Supervision, The Children's Aid Society of HN***

Jennifer Chapman reported that the Brant and Haldimand CAS agencies will be amalgamating. There are lots of unanswered questions as to the specifics. Jennifer's guest student Kathy shared information about her social work program (Bachelor of Social Work).

### ***Mischa Dinsmore – Lansdowne***

Staff who work with children registered for kindergarten for the 2020-21 school year are gathering information and preparing the "All About Me" forms that will be shared with school boards.

This year's Great Northern ride will take place on February 23, 2020 to February 29, 2020. Ninety snowmobilers will participate in a ride in Northern Quebec to raise funds for Lansdowne's non-funded programs such as Recreation and Every Kid Counts. These programs offer one on one support to allow children with special needs to have fun, participate in recreational activities, meet new friends, gain self-esteem and give parents some respite.

The date for the 16<sup>th</sup> annual Motorcycle ride is Saturday, May 9, 2020.

### ***Christine Dragojlovich – Clinical Manager, Woodview Mental Health & Autism Services***

Christine reported that the mental health walk in clinics are now 6 days a week. A Mental Health flyer was handed out. Drop in counselling is also available. Woodview's Harmony Square has many programs including homework help, drop in counselling and the SNAP Program is facilitated out of there. Food is also available for some of the programming and attached is the February flyer. Woodview's Elementary Day Treatment Class at James Hillier will be at capacity by May 2020. The Woodview's Adolescent Day Treatment Class at Pauline Johnson is in the process of accepting new students.



***Bill Chopp – Trustee***

Bill Chopp discussed the minutes from the Mohawk College Advisory Committee that both he and Carmen sit on as representatives of the Board. Mohawk is aware of the increased demand and ongoing struggles that boards are facing related to Educational Assistant shortages. Additionally, mock interviews occurred in early February for Mohawk College students enrolled in the Educational Support Program. BHNCDSB participated in those mock interviews as interviewees to support the learning/experiences of these students.

Mohawk College is also offering a new program – The Learning Disabilities Specialist Graduate Certificate Program. The focus is on students gaining specialized skills to support individuals of all ages with learning disabilities. The new program will launch in April 2020.

**7. Reports**

**7.1 Student Achievement Leader: Special Education**

Our ABA Leads in collaboration with community partners have had a very successful launch of the After-School Skills Development Program (ASSDP) in all two counties to date. Currently the program is up and running at St. Michael's School in Dunnville, Notre Dame School in Caledonia and at the St. Mary Catholic Learning Centre in Brantford. Parent feedback has been positive to date and students are enjoying and practicing appropriate social skills alongside of their peers. Future sessions will be starting in Norfolk in late February.

Carmen shared that the Entry to School Case Conferences will again take place in April with parents, agency partners, school and system personnel all in attendance. At these case conferences, parents will be provided an opportunity to share relevant information about their child to assist with the transitioning into school process. The BHNCDSB's Special Education Guide for Parents will be mailed to families in advance of these meetings so that parents will know what to expect in the meeting regarding such things as the purpose of the meeting, who will be in attendance and what information may be asked of them to share about their child. This has been a highly successful practice in the past as per positive parent feedback.

Grade 8 to 9 Identification Placement Review Committee (IPRC) meetings are happening in February and March for identified students enrolling in one of our high schools. The IPRC meetings are hosted at the assigned high school allowing for students and families to have the opportunity to visit the school and to meet members of the administration team, special education and guidance departments. The Special Education Department is also currently in the process of hosting secondary special class IPRC intakes for students requiring specialized placements. This essential process ensures student programming is collaborative, transparent and well thought out to best meet student needs as they transition into high school.

There are two unique opportunities offered to grade 8 students prior to them entering high school. 'Ready, Set, Go' is an opportunity for students to attend a non-credit, three-day, transition program at the high school. This program focuses on literacy/numeracy strategies, school orientation, organizational skills and study skills.



'REACH AHEAD' provides grade 8 students the opportunity to potentially acquire a grade 9 credit prior to entering secondary school. This is a four-week, credit bearing course which provides face to face instruction and attendance is mandatory.

Students interested in either of these opportunities should contact their school SERT for more information on how to register.

## **7.2 Superintendent of Education**

Kevin reported that the after-school skills development classes are on the way. Reiterated the success that Carmen spoke about. He spoke to the process for SEAC minute-taking and vetting. Kevin asked if members are not in attendance, please feel free to send in a report in your absence. Minutes will be a summary of what was discussed; not necessarily verbatim. The policy committee has looked at a concussion policy. Kevin invited members to look at the policy on our website and provide feedback if they like. He discussed that brain injuries can directly affect learning and students may need specific plans.

Our board is currently recruiting Educational Assistants and looking at how to support them in remaining healthy and effective. As a board, we are looking at how to market, recruit, train and retain EA staff. The mental and physical health of all our staff is paramount to be effective for our students.

Kevin shared a good news story that he was presenting at an upcoming OASBO conference. Some of our students have the use of service dogs as an accommodation to access the curriculum. He will share the story of one grade 9 student who has a service dog for anxiety and other challenges. The dog assists her to stay in school and she is flourishing in grade 9. This presentation will be brought to the next meeting to share with the group.

Christine and Kevin will put together a draft letter to send to the Ministry regarding proposed changes to the education system and send it to the group to vet, then share with senior team and then to the trustees to consider for communication.

Kevin addressed the job action throughout the school board. He gave kudos to the staff for trying their best and being respectful. We are trying to support the students as best we can.

## **8. Closing Remarks/Adjournment**

Kevin thanked everyone for coming today.

The meeting adjourned at 2:35 p.m.

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**Next meeting date, time, location: TBD**