



**SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Tuesday, March 23, 2021 – 1:00 p.m.
Teams Meeting**

Members: Kevin Greco (*Superintendent of Education*), Bill Chopp (Trustee), Lauren Freeborn (Co-Chair), Laura Bergeron (*ad hoc*), Brook Gardner, Sophie Podfigurna, Sarah Robertson, Terri-Lynn Zakrzewski

Regrets: Jennifer Chapman (Co-Chair), Tara Buchanan, Nil Woodcroft

Resources: Shannon Mason (*Principal Lead: Special Education Staffing*), Carmen McDermid (*Student Achievement Lead: Special Education*), Patti-Mitchell (*Parent, County of Brant*)

1. Opening Prayer

Carmen McDermid led the opening prayer.

2. Welcome and Opening Comments

Superintendent Greco welcomed the group.

3. Approval of Agenda

Moved: Bill Chopp

Seconded: Brook Gardner

THAT the Special Education Advisory Committee approves the agenda of the March 23, 2021 meeting.

Carried

4. Approval of the Minutes

Moved: Brook Gardner

Seconded: Bill Chopp

THAT the Special Education Advisory Committee approves the minutes of February 16, 2021.

Carried

5. Correspondence

PAAC - Provincial Parent Association Advisory Committee

Superintendent Greco shared highlights of the results of the survey. There are over 170 SEAC Chairs representing this group. Recommendations from the survey included encouraging as much participation as possible and be involved in priority areas such as budget, calendars, education and supports. They shared there are inconsistencies in the information that is shared out to the different board communities. More transparency in sharing is important. Information should be readily available and easy to find. New member orientation and annual information was suggested. Developing strategies and communicating to the public, including calendars could help improve best practices.

A letter from Prince Edward Hastings School Board letter was received, it was sent to the Minister of Education, Minister of Health and their Public Health Units and other officials asking them to prioritize



special education workers and students with significant special education needs for vaccinations. Trustee Chopp requested this goes to Board to support a letter on our behalf.

6. Presentation – Kids Help Phone

Dianne Wdowczyk, Mental Health Lead, and Lisa Maskell, CYW shared a *Tier 1 Universal- Good for All* mental health initiative that was implemented by the CYW team in our Grade 6, 7, 8 classes in and around the Christmas break. Dianne shared the impetus of the initiative was driven by local context which included an increased concern of suicidal ideation among our students in Grade 6-8 and a need to ensure understanding of pathways to internal and external mental health resources given the upcoming extended Christmas break due to the pandemic, and Ministry expectations of the Mental Health and Well-being strategy which include:

- Promoting wellness during challenging times
- Supporting student mental health learning
- Encouraging early help-seeking when mental health problems arise

Students were presented with a live demonstration of the Kids Help Phone website either in class or remotely by the school CYW. Educators were present for the session and parents were notified of the resource via educator communique. Additionally, information on local mental health resources was posted on every student's D2L page for reference over the holidays.

The implementation of this initiative received provincial recognition as our board was asked to share our resource with over 800 support staff at the *Rising to the Challenge Workshop* hosted by School Mental Health Ontario.

7. Community Agency Updates

Jennifer Chapman - Child Welfare Supervision, The Children's Aid Society of Haldimand-Norfolk

No report.

Sophie Podfigurna – Lansdowne

Lansdowne is planning on providing recreation camp during the April break and well as the summer with limited numbers, following all ministry and health unit COVID protocols. Respite continues to be provided in the home and community as it becomes available, and the weather gets warmer. Lansdowne Children's Centre is open daily, clients whose needs are not met through virtual service are being seen face to face in all departments. Please continue to contact us!

Shannon Mason – Principal Lead

No report.

Bill Chopp – Trustee

Trustees are currently looking at Spec Ed budgets and will share soon.

Brook Gardner - Woodview

Woodview has been very busy, and a lot of referrals have been coming in. In person visits are being done as needed. A Dunsdon Road location is now available for respite services.



Patti Mitchell – Parent, County of Brant

No report.

Lauren Freeborn – Service Planning Coordinator, Contact Brant

Contact Brant is continuing to serve of our clients both virtually and over the phone, depending on their preference. Any in person visits are currently done as porch or outside visits while respecting the COVID protocols that are in place.

Nil Woodcroft – Haldimand-Norfolk REACH

No report.

Sarah Robertson – Brant Family & Children’s Services

We are very busy, and there is a lot of fatigue in the community. Families are experiencing more complex needs with significant issues, this is concerning. CAS has been going through changes, including moving forward with amalgamation with Haldimand Norfolk CAS. This process will take some time and more changes will be forthcoming as this process is worked through. Service continues as usual with in-person contact.

Tara Buchanan – Community Living Brant

No report.

8. Reports

8.1 Superintendent of Education

Kevin Greco

Superintendent Greco shared that covid tracing protocol that been enhanced, makes for staff shortages from time to time. Thursday, we are doing a refresher on protocols and safety for safe schools and documentation and processes around using strategies with students who can potentially be violent. PPM440/20, no discretionary suspensions for students k-3 has changed some of our processes.

Director’s office has emailed out our Equity and Inclusive Education policy to this group to have an opportunity to provide feedback. Please review if you are able and share any feedback you may have.

Our school Board will have to have some planning and options for next year, depending on how covid will affect the next school year. Superintendent Greco will share these plans in coming meetings to ask for input from this committee.

At our May meeting we will look at the structure for our meetings and do some action planning for the 2021-2022 SEAC meetings.



8.2 Student Achievement Leader: Special Education

Carmen McDermid

On March 2nd, Special Education Department hosted a mini one hour, information session with LCC (Ely MacDonald) and HN REACH (Sue Bailey) as presenters. SERTs & Principals were invited to the virtual meeting to gain a better understanding about the Ontario Autism Program (OAP), eligibility, how funding can be spent and about the Family Foundational Services. Then on March 16th, a full online Community of Practice (COP) meeting was held. The focus for that meeting included a variety of topics pertaining to special education responsibilities to be completed in the next few months. Superintendent Greco provided updates in areas such as COVID, Attendance Policy Review and self-regulation focus. Additional topics covered by the System Special Education Services Team include: Grade 3 CCAT, specialized transportation data base, virtual school IPRCs discussion, Phonological Awareness Pilot Project Results & next steps, March 31st ONSIS reporting, Entry to School Case Conferences, Educational Assistant Allocation Application Process, Elementary Transition Class intakes and school visits, Ontario Autism Program (OAP) follow up, TIPS resource #9, SEA and Lexia. Our next COP meeting is scheduled for April 30th. All secondary schools (including the virtual school) are in the process of updating Term 2 IEPs and Transition Plans for students to be sent home on March 25th.

April is Autism Awareness Month, and we ask that everyone wear blue on April 1st on this day and consider ways to show kindness and bring awareness to others about autism.

9. Closing Remarks/Adjournment

Superintendent Greco thanked everyone for coming. The meeting adjourned at 2:32 p.m.

Next meeting: Tuesday, April 20, 2021, 1:00 p.m. – Microsoft Teams