



**SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
Tuesday, April 20, 2021 – 1:00 p.m.  
Teams Meeting**

**Members:** Kevin Greco (*Superintendent of Education*), Bill Chopp (Trustee), Lauren Freeborn (Co-Chair), Laura Bergeron (*ad hoc*), Tara Buchanan, Brook Gardner, Annmarie Krauss, Sophie Podfigurna, Nil Woodcroft, Terri-Lynn Zakrzewski

**Regrets:** Jennifer Chapman (Co-Chair), Sarah Robertson

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

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**1. Opening Prayer**

Carmen McDermid led the opening prayer.

**2. Welcome and Opening Comments**

Superintendent Greco welcomed the group.

**3. Approval of Agenda**

Moved: Patti Michell

Seconded: Lauren Freeborn

THAT the Special Education Advisory Committee approves the agenda of the February 20, 2021 meeting.

**Carried**

**4. Approval of the Minutes**

Moved: Bill Chopp

Seconded: Patti Mitchell

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

**Carried**

**5. Correspondence**

Trustees Bill Chop and Kevin Greco brought SEACs letter to the Board of Trustees that was to go to the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Health regarding staff vaccinations for those working closely with student in special education. The letter was approved, but then we received the agreement from local PHU to vaccinate our spec ed staff. Staff names from our Board were put forth, and most of the requests were approved. The vaccinations have been taking place.

**6. Presentation – Autism Supports & Services**

- What does ABA Program Lead do?



- Available to consult and collaborate with all school staff (principals, SERTS, classroom teachers, ECEs and EAs) in the use of Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) strategies in the classroom (face-to-face and online) for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
  - Students do not need to be formally Identified through the Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) process but must have a confirmed diagnosis of ASD for our involvement.
  - We attend meetings/conferences with school teams, families, community partners to share and gather information and collaborate to ensure consistency between environments and aid in student success (these include: Entry-to-School Conferences, Transition Planning meetings, IEP consultation meetings, joint visits with Speech Language staff, team meetings to problem-solve/trouble shoot if a student is struggling, or Connections for Students meetings)
  - Provide formal and informal (in-the-moment) training to staff on ASD and ABA, support staff who are accessing Sonderly training (independent online modules – formerly Geneva Centre)
  - Develop and provide resources to staff, students, and families on ASD and ABA
  - Support teams in IEP development, transition planning, and assist families in accessing Ontario Autism Program
  - Assist in student skill development planning in areas of functional independence, self-regulation, life skills and social communication
  - Planning, implementing, and reporting on Ministry initiatives related to ASD (After School Skills Development Program, Connections for Students)
  - We work in an itinerant capacity, visiting all our schools regularly, and prioritize as needed
- What does Autism Spectrum Disorder look like in our Board?
    - Collected data from Power School Spec Ed early in March 2021. This includes students who have a Ministry Identification of Communication: Autism
    - At the time the data was pulled from PSSE, we had 210 students identified with ASD
    - This in a steady increase (as you can imagine) over time. In March of 2016 there were 140 students identified, an increase of 50% in five years. When I joined the Board in 2009 there were under 100 students identified.
    - Share screen here
      - Board Wide – 210 including 120 elementary and 90 secondary
      - Breakdown by grade – to note: highest percentage of students in elementary in grade 6 – consider for upcoming secondary planning and lowest percentage in JK
      - Haldimand – all 5 schools have students with ASD (19 total)
      - Brant County – all 4 schools have students with ASD (16 total)
      - Brantford – 13 of 15 school have students with ASD (118 total) – this includes SMCLC
      - Norfolk County – 5 of 9 schools have students with ASD (40 total) – this includes SMCLC Satellite Campus
      - Remote Schools – both schools (elementary and secondary) have students with ASD (17 total)
  - Briefly, wanted to mention – there have been many changes to **Ontario Autism Program** over recent years. This sometimes makes it difficult for some families to navigate and for our staff to understand what services are available and what our families may be accessing.
  - Our ABA Team was able to have representatives from Lansdowne Children’s Centre and Haldimand Norfolk REACH speak at a recent Community of Practice Meeting.



- Information was provided to the SERTS and principals by the agencies directly (through their Family Service Coordinators) about the current process for families to access the OAP, and some examples of services/resources available.
- As school teams are often the first point of contact after receiving a diagnosis of ASD, we wanted to provide information to help increase understanding so school teams could help families, as needed.
- ABA Team provides regular information to school SERTS using the TEAMS channel, and during COP meetings, about current and upcoming services/resources and contact information for the OAP and Autism Services provided by Lansdowne and REACH.

## **7. Community Agency Updates**

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

No report.

### **Sophie Podfigurna – Lansdowne**

Thank you for having me part of the SEAC Committee. Although it was a short term, I am grateful to have had this experience and learn about the wonderful work you do for our community and clients. I would like to welcome Annemarie Krauss, Service Coordinator who will be the new representative from Lansdowne until Mischa comes back from maternity leave.

Lansdowne continues to support our clients and families. Those who are not able to participate in virtual service are prioritized to be seen in-person across all departments. All of our programs are actively running but staff are primarily working from home. In-person recreation programs have been put on hold, some are being offered virtually. We are currently planning for summer camps options. One to one in-person respite continues to be available on a priority basis. Our Autism Program is offering fee for service ABA and free Foundational Services, please review our website for more information.

### **Shannon Mason – Principal Lead**

No report.

### **Bill Chopp – Trustee**

Trustees want to thank the senior team in their efforts to get the spec ed staff vaccinated.

### **Brook Gardner – Woodview**

Last Friday we decided to put a pause on most office-based activities. Our agency is only open for highest priority clients. Adult resident priority services are provided as needed. Mental health services are still available virtually, walk-ins are available by appointment only if needed. Clients will be seen face to face based upon need and risk level.

### **Patti Mitchell – Parent, County of Brant**

Community feedback has been positive about the supports our Board has been providing. It is nice to share good news.



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

Staff continue to work virtually to support client needs but have the flexibility to provide services in person through porch/outside visits if needed. There has been a significant increase in mental health referrals this past year which is expected based on the global pandemic we are experiencing.

**Nil Woodcroft – Haldimand-Norfolk REACH**

Employees at REACH continue to work at home during the current Stay at Home order. In-person visits with participants do continue with discussion focusing on need and risk assessment. These visits require approval. The Crisis line and walk in service continue to provide supports. Bramble Retreat is currently closed during the stay-at-home order. Joan Costigan, Manager of Autism Services will be retiring at the end of April. Kate Misale has been hired as the new manager and will begin at the end of April.

**Sarah Robertson – Brant Family & Children’s Services**

No report.

**Tara Buchanan – Community Living Brant**

Most services are being offered virtually, in person only when essential. Job search assistance is running virtually.

**8. Reports**

**8.1 Superintendent of Education**

**Kevin Greco**

Superintendent Greco shared that our Board is back to remote learning. Some Spec Ed staff are in person for students in special education who cannot be accommodated remotely. Our special education staff are getting priority vaccinations. Families can request the school team to look at the needs to support their child in the remote learning environment. Staff can then offer a variety of accommodations to assist those students. We are mandated to follow the stay-at-home order, so our first options are to try and help them with supports at home, barring that we can accommodate in person at school. Currently approximately 25 students are in need of in person learning. We do not have a timeline yet as to when all will return to in person learning.

For our May meeting, we will discuss planning to see how our meetings will look next year. Superintendent Greco will send out a template to get ideas for meetings, and we can discuss it at the May meeting. Attached will be the education act which will outline what we have do. PACC on SEAC recommendations will also be included to assist with our planning.

**8.2 Student Achievement Leader: Special Education**

**Carmen McDermid**

Entry to School Case Conferences are currently being held for any new Kindergarten students who have special education needs and must be discussed to support their transition into school in September 2021. Community agencies are key partners at these meetings as they assist the families in sharing important information about the needs of the students. Along with parents, they create and



**Brant Haldimand Norfolk  
Catholic District School Board**

**Minutes**

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share a comprehensive 'All About Me' document which focuses on these areas: Function, Family, Fitness/Fun, Friends and Future.

Annually the Board hosts an event called 'Have A Go' (a modified track and field event) for students with special needs. Due to school closure, it was cancelled last year. The team is working on an alternate plan should we return to in-person learning, so that students can still participate in activities at their own home school.

**9. Closing Remarks/Adjournment**

Superintendent Greco thanked everyone for coming. The meeting adjourned at 2:12 p.m.

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**Next meeting:** Tuesday, May 18, 2021, 1:00 p.m. – Microsoft Teams