

ST. CLAIR CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Monday, November 16, 2009 at 7:00 p.m.

Catholic Education Centre, Wallaceburg – St. Louis Conference Room

MINUTES

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Community Living, Wallaceburg	Dr. Veronica Vaughan
Epilepsy Support Centre	Lianne McDowell
Fetal Alcohol Syndrome and Effect Group	Martha Fracalanza
Lambton County Developmental Services Group	Adrian Vermeiren
Learning Disabilities Association of Lambton County	Annie Sheehan
Down Syndrome Association of Lambton County	Annette Berkers
VOICE for Hearing Impaired Children	Kathy Arcuri-Arnott
Trustees	Carol Bryden Linda Ward
Principals Representatives	Maureen Cecile Shirley Churchill
Board Advisors	Ann Sutton Lisa Demers Janet Boyle Brenda Roby Lisa Thompson-Power Renée Zarebski

Regrets: Kathy Arcuri-Arnott, Lianne McDowell, Adrian Vermeiren, Linda Ward

Absent:

Carol Bryden
SEAC Chairperson

Ann Sutton
Board Advisor

A. CALL TO ORDER

1. Prayer

The meeting was called to order and led in prayer by Chair, Carol Bryden.

2. Adoption of Agenda

MOTION BY: Annette Berkers and seconded by Annie Sheehan to adopt the agenda.

CARRIED

3. Review of Minutes from October 19, 2009

MOTION BY: Dr. Veronica Vaughan and seconded by Annie Sheehan to accept the Minutes from the October 19, 2009 SEAC meeting.

CARRIED

B. PRESENTATIONS

ABASS Presentation

Jill DeMaeyer & Laurie McCarthy

The Ministry has provided funding over the past year to assist students with the transition process from IBI to ABA. Jill DeMaeyer (ABA Support Specialist) and Laurie McCarthy (ABA Specialist) work collaboratively with both St. Clair Catholic and the LKDSB as well as community partners to provide support for schools, staff and students in various areas.

At the school level, support is provided in a variety of ways, including the transitioning process (e.g., classroom set-up, making visuals, and training), provision of resources (e.g., Tasks Galore), IEP development, and coaching staff with the effective use of ABA strategies. Training and workshops are also provided in such areas of the HELP assessment tool, structured learning (independent work systems), the use and implementation of universal supports and PBS. PBS (Positive Behaviour Supports) is an intensive school-wide program which looks at enhancing positive behaviour in children using the ABA strategies of motivation and positive reinforcement.

Jill and Laurie work very closely with Thames Valley Children's Centre, especially with the Connections program which supports students and families transitioning from IBI to ABA. Presently, St. Clair Catholic does not have any students in the Connections program. Students with Autism coming into our Board who have not been receiving IBI have the support from our District Autism Team if required.

A copy of the PowerPoint presentation was distributed to all present.

Referral for Behaviour Support Team

Lisa Thompson-Power

A new Behaviour Support Team Services referral form has been developed. This form is available to schools through the School Support Services Team (Social Worker and Child and Youth Worker) and is used to access support for a student when all resources have been exhausted at the school level.

A copy of the referral form was distributed. Lisa Thompson-Power explained each section. This new package will be shared with the Program Resource Teachers at their upcoming meeting on November 25th. The form is currently available to the School Support Services Team electronically. The School Support Team will be following up with each school by e-mail, telephone or by a visit to the school. The entire form would not necessarily need to be completed again as part of follow-up.

C. ASSOCIATION REPORTS

There was nothing to report from any of the associations present this evening.

D. UNFINISHED BUSINESS AND BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES

There was no unfinished business from the previous meeting.

E. NEW BUSINESS

Ann Sutton reported that a SEAC from another board has written a letter to Minister Wynne indicating that funding to Special Education is inadequate. Ann Sutton will share this letter at the next meeting.

F. INFORMATION ITEMS

1. Secondary PD Day

Lisa Demers

The day was divided into two sessions. Dr. Duncan MacKinlay gave a wonderful presentation on “Leaky Brakes” to the Chatham/Kent teachers at UCC in the morning. Brenda Courey (Curriculum) and Lisa Demers (Special Education) partnered for the afternoon presentation regarding the “Learning for All K – 12” document. It is important that the message comes from both Special Education and Curriculum, as this is not strictly a Special Education document. The session was introduced with reflection and small group discussion centred around “A Tale of a Good Samaritan Teacher”. The Learning for All Belief Statements were reviewed, again in a small group activity with the teachers reflecting on their own personal school experiences. Differentiated instruction, student profiles, and accommodations and modifications were topics of discussion involving interactive activities. The session closed with a motivating video entitled “Team Hoyt”, which captured the moving story of a father and his son with special needs. The theme which evolved was “How can we be there for our students?”

The reverse schedule was followed for the Sarnia/Lambton teachers at St. Christopher. There were 80 teachers in attendance at UCC and 100 at St. Christopher. The overall response to both Dr. McKinley and the “Learning for All K – 12” sessions was extremely positive.

2. EA PD Day

Janet Boyle

The November 13th EA PD Day, which was hosted jointly by St. Clair Catholic and our co-terminus Board, Lambton-Kent District School Board was a notable success. The morning began with greetings from both Ann Sutton and Dave Doey (Superintendent from LKDSB).

The morning keynote speaker, Rosita Hall (known as the “Motivation Sensation”) was extremely well received. The theme was “Me First for a Change”. Through personal stories and with amazing energy and humour, Rosita provided many self-care tips and thought-provoking anecdotes which proved to be very inspirational. Rosita, being a woman of great faith talked about our many God-given gifts and the importance of sharing these gifts with others.

For the afternoon session, the participants had pre-registered for one of fifteen workshops, such as Dealing With Difficult People, Yoga Fit/Stress Relief, Mental Health Awareness, Nutrition, Financial Planning, and Reflexology. The comments on the evaluation forms as well as verbal feedback at the end of the day were almost exclusively positive. Many of the approximately 400 participants said that they were leaving the day feeling very positive and energized.

3. Preschool Transition Parents Nights

Janet Boyle

The first of two Pre-School Transition Parent Information nights was held at Chatham-Kent Children Services in Chatham on November 4th from 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. The “Path to School Entry Information Session” gives parents of children with moderate and high needs the opportunity to meet with their Special Education Consultants. Renée Zarebski and Janet Boyle

attended from St. Clair Catholic and Debbie Seager attended from the LKDSB. The session also gives the parents the opportunity to learn more about the school transition process, as well as to ask questions and submit their completed "Tell Us About Your Child" forms to the appropriate School Board Consultant.

A PowerPoint explaining the transition process was presented by Debbie Seager, Renée Zarebski and Janet Boyle, as well as a representative from Chatham-Kent Children's Services and the Children's Treatment Centre of Chatham-Kent. The parents were then given the opportunity to meet with both Boards individually and ask specific questions. Of the 18 sets of parents in attendance, 3 came to meet individually with Renée Zarebski and Janet Boyle.

The Parent Information Night for the children who will be attending schools in the Sarnia-Lambton area is being held on November 18th from 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. at Pathways Health Centre for Children in Sarnia. The transition meetings for students identified with high needs will be held on February 25, 2010 for children who will be attending Chatham/Kent schools and March 1, 2010 for students who will be attending Sarnia/Lambton schools.

4. Premier Suites Training

Brenda Roby

Individual schools have been requesting training for staff and parents on Premier Suites technology. Training sessions have been scheduled in both Chatham/Kent and Sarnia/Lambton schools. Ann Sutton commented that the desired direction is to have all students using the technology to destigmatize its use. The fact that some teachers are requesting training from Brenda is a great step forward.

5. Discovery Conference

Brenda Roby

Today was Day 1 of the Discovery Conference at UCC for 15 Grade 6 students from schools in the Chatham/Kent area. The day consisted of working individually with the technology, specifically Talking Word Processor and Universal Reader (text-to-speech) as well as Dragon Naturally Speaking (voice-to-text). The students also learned their preferred learning style by completing a survey on the computer. A Grade 8 student also shared her positive experiences with the use of technology. Day 2 (November 17th), consists of the students using the technology to research a famous person with a learning disability. On Day 3 (November 30th), the classroom teachers will join the students to practise with the technology and to take part in activities where the students will demonstrate their practical understanding of the technology. Day 4 (December 1st), the Principal, Program Resource Teacher and the parents are invited for the afternoon when the students will showcase what they have learned at the conference.

This format will be repeated at St. Christopher in Sarnia for students from schools in the Sarnia/Lambton area. The dates are November 19th, 20th, December 3rd and 4th.

The participants are Grade 6 students with a learning disability. Each school was asked to make recommendations of students they feel would come back to their schools as leaders to share their knowledge gained with other students. There was room for 15 participants in total. A goal is to have a follow-up session later in the year or in a subsequent year.

6. ALSUP Checklist

Lisa Demers

A copy of the ALSUP (Assessment of Lagging Skills and Unsolved Problems) Checklist was distributed. It looks at "skill deficit" rather than looking at the child as being "lazy", "unmotivated", etc. The checklist has been incorporated into both the Behaviour Support Team Services and Autism Support Services Referral Forms. As well, we will be utilizing it with the Program Resource Teachers. This is a positive step with following through with Dr. Ross Greene's recommendations and strategies.

7. Equity & Inclusion

Ann Sutton

School Boards are required to have a draft equity and inclusive education policy which is designed to promote fundamental human rights (race, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, gender and class). The draft policy will be brought to SEAC at a later date.

Bill 157 (An Act to Amend the Education Act: Keeping Our Kids Safe at School Act) legislates that all board employees (not just teachers) who witness a student engaged in an incident must put the information in writing to the Principal. The Principal must call the parents of the perpetrator and will be required to reveal the setting, what happened and what action will be taken, without disclosing the name of the student or any mitigating factors. This process will have an impact on Principals. Ann Sutton is awaiting legal advice. Input is also being sought from the Deaneries, community venues and multi-cultural organizations.

F. REPORTS FROM THE BOARD

Carol Bryden assured the Committee that with regard to the upcoming decision on the consolidation of the two high schools in Sarnia, the Trustees are adamant about preserving Special Education programming and will continue to support it.

G. QUESTIONS ASKED BY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

There were no questions.

H. NEXT MEETING DATE

Monday, January 18, 2010 at 7:00 p.m. at the CEC in the St. Louis Conference Room.
Please contact Cathy Calvert at 1-866-336-6139 ext. 237 if you are unable to attend this meeting.

I. AGENDA ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

J. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION BY: Annette Berkers and seconded by Annie Sheenan to adjourn the meeting at 9:02 p.m.

CARRIED