

ST. CLAIR CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Monday, September 24, 2007 at 7:00 p.m.

Catholic Education Centre, Wallaceburg – St. Louis Conference Room

Please contact Niki Ritchie at 1-866-336-6139 ext. 388
if you are unable to attend this meeting

MINUTES

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Community Living, Chatham-Kent	Sue McMath
Community Living, Sarnia-Lambton	Cyndi Brumaroff
Community Living, Wallaceburg	Dr. Veronica Vaughan
Down Syndrome Association of Lambton County	Michele LaLonge-Davey
Fetal Alcohol Syndrome and Effect Group	Martha Fracalanza
Lambton County Developmental Services Group	Adrian Vermeiren
Learning Disabilities Association of Chatham-Kent	Fabrizia Romano
Learning Disabilities Association of Lambton County	Annie Sheehan
VOICE for Hearing Impaired Children	Kathy Arcuri-Arnott
Trustees	Carol Bryden Brenda Rumble
Principals Representatives	Maureen Cecile Americo Todino
Board Advisors	Martin Forster Dr. Frank Leddy Lisa Demers Brenda Roby Lisa Thompson Renée Zarebski

Regrets: Cyndi Brumaroff, Maureen Cecile, Michele LaLonge-Davey, Annie Sheehan, Adrien Vermeiren

Carol Bryden
SEAC Chairperson

Dr. Frank Leddy
Board Advisor

A. CALL TO ORDER

1. Prayer

Introductions and welcome back was extended. Lisa Demers was introduced as the new Consultant – Program Resource for the Special Education Department. Renée Zarebski has been acknowledged for her leadership and expertise in the area of special education and has been seconded to a provincial commission on autism.

2. Adoption of Agenda

MOTION BY: Sue McMath and seconded by Martha Fracalanza to adopt the agenda.
CARRIED

3. Review of Minutes from June 18, 2007

MOTION BY: Kathy Arcuri-Arnott and seconded by Fabrizia Romano to accept the minutes from the June 18, 2007 SEAC meeting.
CARRIED

B. PRESENTATIONS

1. Assistive Technology

Sebastien Bisson, a student from St. Christopher Catholic Secondary School, provided a demonstration on assistive technology. Sebastien attended Amethyst Provincial School which is a provincial school for students who have a learning disability. Sebastien outlined his educational experiences and he reviewed the process he went through for acceptance at Amethyst. After Amethyst, Sebastien attended St. Christopher. He began taking academic classes by grade 10. Sebastien outlined a number of software programs he uses including Dragon, Kurzweil, Inspiration, Word Q, Read & Write, Premier, Power Talk, etc,. Sebastien experienced a number of positive changes in his life once he learned to use technology to support his learning.

C. ASSOCIATION REPORTS

1. Community Living, Chatham-Kent S. McMath

The association experienced a strike in July and August. The strike has been settled and things are back to normal. Some of the clients had difficulties adjusting to the staff coming back to work. It was a difficult time for parents. Community Living is building a new facility on Sass Side Road for day programs.

2. Learning Disabilities Association of Chatham-Kent F. Romano

Fall tutoring and social skills program are beginning. Pamphlets were shared which contained times and dates. Homework clubs are held in schools in a number of communities.

3. Community Living, Wallaceburg V. Vaughan

The agency did not have a strike and will work hard to avoid one. The first meeting is at the end of this week. The organization is now in their new building.

4. Fetal Alcohol Syndrome and Effect Group

M. Fracalanza

Martha shared an article on preventing FAS.

D. UNFINISHED BUSINESS AND BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES

1. SEAC Parent Information Forum

R. Zarebski

The agenda for the information forum was reviewed with SEAC. A list of responsibilities was compiled and will be e-mailed to SEAC members. Information flyers were sent to the schools for distribution and samples of the flyers were shared with SEAC. Principals will be asked to post information in their school newsletters for October.

2. Parent Guide to Special Education

B. Roby

The Parent Guide to Special Education was distributed to SEAC members. The response by committee members was very favourable. Brenda Roby was thanked for her efforts in creating the layout for the Parent Guide to Special Education. SEAC was recognized as the driving force behind the move towards the creation of the new guide.

E. NEW BUSINESS

1. Personal Care Protocol

R. Zarebski

The Draft Personal Care Protocol and Personal Care Plan were reviewed with SEAC. Feedback from SEAC members on these documents is welcome. Please provide any suggestions/feedback at our next meeting.

2. Applied Behaviour Analysis Summer Training

R. Zarebski

The Geneva Centre provided a Summer Training Session in August. This training focused on using the principles of applied behaviour analysis and a multidisciplinary perspective to enhance the school experience of children with ASD. Our board had eleven staff attending this four day session. Staff included educational assistants, program resource teachers and central office staff. The Geneva Centre also provided training for principals over the summer. Eight principals from our board attended a one day in-service.

3. OPA Initiative Update

M. Forster

This is year two of the OPA initiative. Last year the board was able to hire an additional Speech Pathologist to do assessments to reduce the wait list. This year, the focus will be on psycho educational assessments. The board will be contracting an additional 94 assessments for students in grades 3 and 4. Our Speech and Language Pathologists continue to work with our district literacy and numeracy teachers to implement a phonemic screening for all SK students in the system. The district literacy and numeracy teachers along with the speech pathologists review the screens and develop plans to support the student's acquisition of skills. The criteria for the OPA funding were examined closely and decisions were made to support early intervention.

4. Draft Departmental Mission Statement

F. Leddy

Dr. Leddy requested feedback from SEAC regarding the draft departmental mission statement. Dr. Leddy requests this feedback be provided by mid October. The Mission Statement will be finalized in November.

5. Budget and Staffing Update

F. Leddy

Special Education Envelope information was shared by Dr. Leddy. He highlighted the declining enrollment and its impact on our revenues. A moratorium on school closures has affected the board's flexibility. The board needs to become more efficient as money becomes scarcer. Special education revenues went up this year by approximately \$300,000. Program Resource Teacher staff has gradually been reduced. There was a reduction of one social worker.

6. Bill 212: An Act to amend the Education Act in respect of behaviour, discipline and safety
F. Leddy

This is an amendment to the Safe Schools Act. There were concerns that discrimination could occur for marginalized or special education students. Boards need to consider mitigating factors, whether there has been progressive discipline or alternative to suspension. There are now five mitigating factors. Alternatives to suspension must be considered and for students who cannot attend school, boards must provide an educational program. Boards will need to look at alternative sites.

Our principals have been advised to use 3 factor analyses (whole child, whole incident and consultation).

- Whole Child – individualized discipline
- Whole Incident – what happened and why it happened.
- Consultation – Superintendent, Special Education Consultants and Parents

Principals have been well prepared for this shift by Dr. Leddy and Martin. There needs to be an investigation – what happened before the incident and consultation with parents to provide information. Need to look at alternative responses – i.e. restitution, peer mediation, etc.,. Bill 212 replaces mandatory suspensions with a more discretionary model. Suspensions shall be considered when students are engaging in an activity that will have a negative impact on the school climate. Infractions were reviewed. The next steps for the Board were discussed – revision of board policies, updating of suspension forms, continued in-services, development of alternative education programs. Approximately \$200,000 has been provided by the Ministry for implementation. In-service sessions on Bill 212 are being held on October 17 at the Oak's Inn and on October 22 at the Holiday Inn in Sarnia. Please let Dr. Leddy know if you plan on attending one of these sessions.

F. INFORMATION ITEMS

1. SEAC Meeting Dates

The dates of the meetings were distributed. There will be no formal meeting in October due to the Parent Information Forums.

MOTION BY: Kathy Arcuri-Arnott and seconded by Sue McMath to cancel the December 17, 2007 meeting.

CARRIED

2. Administrators Meeting Report

The Administrators Meeting report was distributed.

3. Duncan McKinley Presentation

Dr. McKinley provides workshops on Tourette's and a number of other behavioural and mental health disorders. Dr. McKinley will be presenting a workshop at UCC on Thursday, October 18 from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. entitled Leaky Brakes – What they are and what they aren't.

4. Coaching to Inclusion

The 10th annual conference is scheduled in two sessions. The first session is on the evening of Thursday, November 15 at the Best Western Lamplighter Inn in London. The keynote speaker will be Dr. Roger Slee who will speak on the topic of inclusion. Dr. Roger Slee and Kathy Snow will be the speakers for the Friday, November 16 session. Both presenters will speak on inclusion for people with disabilities.

G. REPORTS FROM THE BOARD

Dr. Leddy stated that our Board will receive our EQAO results. In all categories the St. Clair CDSB was rated higher than the provincial results. Over the last 5 years there has been growth and improvement. Carol Bryden acknowledged the commitment to student achievement of staff in our board.

Brenda Rumble reported that the board has resumed meetings and is looking forward to a busy year.

H. QUESTIONS ASKED BY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

None

I. NEXT MEETING DATE – Monday, November 19, 2007 at 7:00 p.m. at the CEC in the St. Louis Conference Room. Please contact Niki Ritchie at 1-866-336-6139 ext. 388 if you are unable to attend this meeting.

J. AGENDA ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

1. OSSLT Results – Information and Presentation
2. Update on Post Secondary Transition
3. IEP Update for November 19, 2007 Meeting

K. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION BY: Kathy Arcuri-Arnott and seconded by Fabrizia Romano to adjourn the meeting at 9:45 p.m.

CARRIED