

# ST. CLAIR CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

## SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Monday, March 18, 2013 at 7:00 p.m.

Catholic Education Centre, Wallaceburg – St. Louis Conference Room

### MINUTES

#### COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Community Living Wallaceburg	Derek McGiven
Community Living Chatham-Kent	Derek Jane
Epilepsy Support Centre	Sharon Berry Ross
Lambton County Developmental Services Group	Adrian Vermeiren
VOICE for Hearing Impaired Children	Kathy Arcuri-Arnott
Down Syndrome Association – Lambton County	Kim D’Hooghe
Trustees	John Van Heck Linda Ward
Principals Representatives	Maureen Cecile Juli Faubert
Board Advisors	Deb Crawford Lisa Demers Janet Boyle Lisa Thompson-Power Renée Zarebski

Regrets: Derek McGivern, Kathy Arcuri-Arnott, Linda Ward, Janet Boyle

Absent: Adrian Vermeiren

*John VanHeck*  
SEAC Chairperson

*Deb Crawford*  
Board Advisor

**A. CALL TO ORDER**

- 1. Welcome
- 2. Prayer
- 3. Adoption of Agenda

**MOTION BY:** Sharron Berry Ross and seconded by Derek Jane to adopt the agenda.

**CARRIED**

- 4. Review of Minutes from February 11, 2013

**MOTION BY:** Derek Jane and seconded by Sharon Berry Ross to accept the minutes from the February 11, 2013 SEAC meeting.

**CARRIED**

**B. PRESENTATIONS**

- 1. Autism Speaks and TLLP Project N. Leger

Nicole Leger has been the teacher in the section 23, Autism Transitional Classroom for the past 4 years. Nicole has been successful in receiving grant money from Autism Speaks Canada and TLLP (Teacher Learning and Leadership Program) which has afforded the students in the ATC many opportunities. The project focuses on using iPads to enhance teaching methodology in the classroom. Nicole discussed using various apps to link with the Ontario curriculum and the Hawaii Early Learning Program in creating individualized programs for the students in the classroom; transition planning and training school staffs when the students return to their home school; the knowledge acquired throughout the project to date (student motivation, engagement, response, ability, reaction, etc.); videos were shared with the group showing the students using iPads in the classroom as well.

Nicole shared how the iPads are intrinsically reinforcing to the students. The motivation to use them and the engagement while using them is much higher than using real life objects during Applied Behaviour Analysis teaching. Prior to the iPad being introduced, the staff would accomplish approximately 10 trials per day with each student. With the iPad, they are able to accomplish up to 30 trials per day and the reinforcements have been faded due to the iPad being reinforcing to the student. Data collection has become more accurate as well due to the use of the iPad.

Nicole is writing a document, as part of the project, to link apps with curriculum goals and HELP goals. The document will be posted upon completion so that it will be available to board staff and parents.

- 2. UCC Rhythmic Souls – Video D. Crawford  
Melissa Fernandes, a dance teacher at UCC teaches dance to students in the lifeskills class. They have made a DVD which was shared with SEAC this evening.

**C. ASSOCIATION REPORTS**

- 1. Community Living Wallaceburg D. McGivern
  
- 2. Community Living Chatham-Kent D. Jane  
Derek Jane passed out information on a conference entitled “Meeting the Diversity Challenge” from July 14 – 17, 2013.

3. Epilepsy Support Centre S. Berry Ross  
Sharon Berry Ross shared that March 26, 2013 is National Epilepsy Awareness Day. Sharon will be at St. Patrick's Catholic High School for the day celebrating with the school population – "purple thumbs up"
4. Lambton County Developmental Services Group A. Vermeiren
5. VOICE for Hearing Impaired Children K. Arcuri-Arnott
6. Down Syndrome Association – Lambton County K. D'Hooghe  
Kim D'Hooghe shared that March 21, 2013 is international Down's Syndrome Awareness Day

**D. UNFINISHED BUSINESS AND BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES**

1. Information from VOICE Ontario K. Arcuri-Arnott  
Deferred to next meeting.

**E. NEW BUSINESS**

1. Special Education Report L. Demers  
Lisa Demers highlighted the following sections in the Special Education Report:  
Section 4, Phonological Awareness screenings – the change to be reflected is that French Immersion schools receive screenings.

Section 5, IPRC process remains very straight forward. There will be no changes because it is legislated in the Education Act. Lisa pointed out the appeal process information in the report as well as the dispute resolution process information, also outlined in section 5.

Section 7, Specialized Health Support Services in School Settings - the change will reflect the addition of the mental health and addictions nurse.

**F. INFORMATION ITEMS**

1. PRT Meeting L. Thompson-Power

The PRT meeting was February 20, 2013. A guest speaker, Nancy Hall, spoke to the group on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder. Nancy is from the Southern Network of Specialized Care in the Niagara region. FASD was defined as an umbrella term referring to a range of disabilities resulting from prenatal exposure to alcohol. FASD is a lifetime challenge due to it being permanent organic brain damage caused by prenatal exposure to alcohol. She discussed the primary disabilities and how they relate to students in our schools. FASD has an impact on: developmental level of functioning, sensory systems, language and communication, processing pace, learning and memory, as well as abstract thinking and executive functioning. Nancy discussed the secondary disabilities as being: fatigue and frustration, anxiety, anger, shut down, poor self-esteem, isolating oneself, and depression. She also discussed the difficulty in diagnosing FASD and that it can be mistaken as: attachment disorder, ADHD, autism, tourette syndrome, ODD etc. . . . Nancy discussed the need for a paradigm shift in our thinking – from the student "won't" to the student "can't" and then implementing a "Positive Strength Based Approach" to begin making changes toward greater success.

Nancy provided many practical strategies that can be used in a classroom and/or a school environment. She also provided several resources for the group as well as her own personal contact information.

## 2. Amethyst Provincial School Application Process

L. Thompson-Power

Amethyst is a Provincial Demonstration School in London, Ontario, for students with severe learning disabilities. It is a residential placement from Monday to Friday and the students return home on weekends. It is a one year placement with the possibility of being 'invited' back for a second year. There are no placements longer than 2 school years. Currently, we have 9 students attending Amethyst from our board. For the 2013-2014 school year, we have 3 students within our board who have made applications.

The application process is as follows:

- The home school fills out an initial consultation package and submits it to the consultant at Amethyst for review. This step determines if the student appears to be an appropriate candidate.
- If deemed appropriate, the school and parents then fill out the application binders (very comprehensive information about both school and home)
- The consultants at Amethyst conduct pre admission assessments as well – providing a baseline for comparison if the candidate is successful. A complete assessment report is provided to the home school so that strategies and recommendations can begin to be implemented in the student's IEP.
- Spring interviews are held with the parents, student and school team.
- Within 2-4 weeks, a letter is sent indicating a 'yes', a 'no', or an indication they would like to send the student to 'resource services' for further assessment.
- All applicants are aware of their September placement by the end of June in the year they applied.

When the students are scheduled to return to their home board, Amethyst hosts a 'transition' day in June. The home school teams and parents are invited to attend and the student show cases their accomplishments over their stay at Amethyst. As well, Amethyst provides transition information to the home board around programming, technology and software so that it can continue to be part of the student's programming.

## 3. CYW / Social Worker / Behaviour Team update

L. Thompson-Power

Currently there is CYW and social work support in every school. The support is based on the needs within the school, therefore, the level of support changes and shifts with the needs. The CYW's do two blocks of "Prevention" per year where they spend 4 weeks in the fall and another 4 weeks in the winter offering "Prevention" programs. The fall prevention block is tailored to meet the needs of each school. Through consultation between the school and the CYW, programming is established and delivered. The winter prevention is focused on gr. 4's board wide. The Friends for Life program is used in teaching students about anxiety – what it is and strategies to use in order to better cope with it. Throughout the remainder of each block, the CYWs and social workers meet the needs of the students in a variety of ways – 1:1 counseling, small group counseling, and/or classroom programs. The CYWs and social workers also: consult with parents and the community partners on a regular basis, they work as the Catholic Compassionate Care team and assist schools in dealing with crisis, and they do many board presentations. New this year, the team are providing mental health information sessions at staff meetings throughout the year. The purpose is to provide an introduction to different mental health topics. The staff are then encouraged to discuss and inquire with the team on topics that are of interest to them.

The Behaviour Support Team (B.S.T.) is incredibly busy – there is a referral process the schools must follow once the school team, in conjunction with the CYW/SW, feel they have exhausted strategies. The BST goes into the school with parent consent. The team remains in a placement until the student is exhibiting success and the school team is comfortable implementing strategies and recommendations. The team provides on-going follow up and the team is always open to hearing from the school if there are questions or concerns after the placement. The focus of the intervention is Collaborative Problem Solving. The team will also work with teachers on classroom management strategies. The Behaviour Support Team also

provides many board presentations and consults with community partners – their scope is wide!

4. Local Respite Planning Committee R. Zarebski

This is a committee in Chatham Kent that meets regarding Respite Services for families. The partners include: Community Living Chatham Kent, Chatham Kent – Recreation, Special Populations, CKCS, LKDSB, SCCDSB, KIDS Team, First Nations, Children’s Treatment Centre, WAYS, Community Living Sarnia. The goals are to have on-going discussion and sharing around the Respite services that are available to families and then to identify any gaps that exist. The group is planning a Professional Development Session for families and Respite Workers.

Details to date:

- Date: May 29<sup>th</sup> at CKCS
- Time: 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm
- Munchies/beverages will be provided
- Invitation for display tables
- Parent panel presentation
- 20 minute presentation on Respite Services
- Booths for older students – ODSP/Disability Tax Credit/RDSP

5. Jump Start Teen Transition Planning R. Zarebski

This is a committee in Lambton Kent whose purpose is to create a community based network to assist in planning transition related activities with youth and their families. Also, the goal is to develop a shared process and resource package to map out the transition process for youth and their families. The committee also provides opportunities for greater liaison between all service systems that support children and youth. A draft Resource Guide for Families is in the works. Upon completion it will include information regarding:

- Starting the Transition Journey
- Setting goals
- Checklists
- Frequently asked questions
- Safety
- Timetable for Growing up
- Agencies.

A one day conference is being planned in the fall of 2013 with a grant from Autism Speaks. The topic is “Clarity Please” – will be combined with the release of a website and the resource documents.

The conference will include a panel discussion of parents in different phases of transition. There are also plans to secure a Keynote speaker on transitions.

Also, in Sarnia Lambton – there is a vulnerable person registry with the police which may be extended to families with children with ASD and other exceptionalities.

6. Ability website R. Zarebski

Ability Online is a new website ([abilityonline.org](http://abilityonline.org)). Trillium funding was secured by Pathways; the Sarnia Lambton community will be linking into this website to include local information and blogging opportunities. There will be a soft launch of the website in May – a resource guide will be included in the soft launch. The site was developed for young people with disabilities to blog with one another. The web site will be monitored and thorough checks are done when you apply to become part of it. Anyone can view the site and the testimonial videos as an introduction to the site. In order to actually log into the site and participate in the blogging, you must be a member.

7. Lancer Times D. Crawford

An enclosure was provided with the minutes and tonight's agenda. The latest edition of the Lancer Times "Valentine's edition" was shared.

8. Correspondence

D. Crawford

Topic: Special Services At Home (SSAH) program funding cuts and switching students to Passport funding when students are transitioning from school to community. John read the correspondence to the group for consideration of supporting the issue (continuing SSAH funding beyond 18 years of age).

John recommended we send a letter in support of the SSAH funding beyond 18 years of age.

**Motion to draft a letter in support of SSAH continued funding.** The draft letter will be submitted to the Board of Trustees for their consideration. Derek Jane and seconded by Sharron Berry Ross.

**G. REPORTS FROM THE BOARD**

The main focus has been working on a budget for the upcoming year. As well, all of the board's policies and procedures are being updated

**H. QUESTIONS ASKED BY COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

None

**I. NEXT MEETING DATE – April 15, 2013**

**J. AGENDA ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS**

Deferred item – Information from VOICE Ontario (K. Arcuri-Arnott)

**K. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION BY:** Derek Jane and seconded by Kim D'Hooghe to adjourn the meeting at 8:47 p.m.

**CARRIED**