

**GREATER ESSEX COUNTY DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD
REPORT OF THE
SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

The Special Education Advisory Committee meeting was held on **Tuesday, December 12, 2017** at the Administration Office.

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Connie Buckler, Trustee
Kim McKinley, Trustee
Mary-Ann Fuduric, Learning Disabilities Association of Windsor-Essex County
Monica Gilles, Windsor Essex County Down Syndrome Association
Karen Wilson, Parents for Children’s Mental Health
Susan Smith, Community Living, Windsor/Essex County
Anna Jurak, Brain Injury Association, Windsor/Essex County
Judy Kraemer – Canadian Hearing Society
Jan Matte-Gasparovic – Autism Ontario

BOARD PERSONNEL:

Lynn McLaughlin – Superintendent
Melissa Debryne, OPC Secondary Representative
Tracey Rilett – OPC Elementary Representative
Mike Wilcox – Supervising Principal of Special Education Services

REGRETS

Jo Ann Percy - Windsor Council of Home and School Association

ABSENT

Beth Cook – Indigenous Community
Jo Ann Percy – Windsor Council of Home and School Association

RECORDER

Peggy Russette

1. Call to Order
C. Buckler called the meeting to order at 12:50 pm.

2. Approval of the Agenda
Moved by: K. Wilson
Seconded by: M. Fuduric
That SEAC approve the agenda for December 12, 2017.

4. Approval of Minutes
Moved by: M. Fuduric
Seconded by: A. Jurak
That SEAC approve the minutes for November 14, 2017.

5. Business Arising as a Result of the Minutes
There was no new business arising.

The motion was carried.

The motion was carried.

C. Buckler welcomed our new SEAC Committee members, J. Matte-Gasparovic – Autism Ontario, and J. Kraemer – Canadian Hearing Society.

6. News from the Classroom – Melinda Hinch

Enhancing Emotional Vocabulary and Literacy in Young Children

The GECD SB Speech-Language Pathologists, under the leadership of both Dr. Sharon Pyke and Mrs. Lynn McLaughlin, supported early years' educators in the implementation of a 5 week emotional vocabulary and literacy program. Supports included explicit and implicit instruction, whole group and small group lessons, and use of activity kits. The roll-out of resources has occurred over the past two years. All schools have now received the program and training. Data has been collected to determine effectiveness of this program.

What is Emotional Vocabulary and Literacy?

Emotional literacy is the ability to recognize, label, and understand feelings in one's self and others. It includes factors children need to interpret nonverbal communication such as body language, tone of voice, facial expression and physiological response (crying, sweating, etc.).

How does this Relate to Social and Emotional Skill Development?

Emotional literacy is the precursor to skills in emotional regulation (e.g., calming down, controlling anger and impulses) and problem solving (e.g., generating safe and equitable solutions to interpersonal problems that result in positive feelings) and is one of the most important skills a child is taught in the early years.

Why is it Important?

In classrooms that devote time to helping children acquire a rich and varied emotional vocabulary, we may expect fewer challenging behaviours and more developmentally sophisticated and enjoyable peer social relations.

Children with emotional literacy: tolerate frustration better, get in fewer fights, exhibit less destructive behaviours, are healthier, are less lonely, have more friends, are more focused-less impulsive, and demonstrate greater academic achievement.

Did you know?

- Children with disabilities and children from low income families have more limited feeling vocabularies than their typically developing and middle income peers
- Adults can foster emotional vocabulary feeling words by teaching feeling words and their emotional definitions. This can be done incidentally through adult-child interactions or through direct interventions in the contexts of conversations and play, and through special activities
- Teaching emotional vocabulary is aligned with the expectations outlined in the new Full Day Early Learning Kindergarten Program document (draft 2015)

Discussion involved having something like this in secondary school. M. Hinch explained the difference between "sad" and "tired" is a state and they don't necessarily mean the same thing. It's just an offshoot of that feeling. When students are asked, "why are you sad", they sometime say it is because they are tired. A. Jurak asked when this program started. M. Hinch replied that two years ago there were only a few schools but now this program is out to all schools. M. Hinch explained that the research will be used by Dr. S. Pyke and the information will be shared across the board. Every student in kindergarten had data collected and notes were made if there was an identification, including students who are deaf. Dr. C. Saunders has these notes for analyzing data. The first set of data showed an increase on all 4 objectives across all schools in our board. C. Buckler added that we are very excited to have this data in our schools.

L. McLaughlin shared the Workplace Violence Report statistics with the committee. Approximately 20% of the reports submitted are from incidents with students in early years. M. Wilcox added that these statistics are consistent with what is happening across the province.

T. Rilett thought that introducing emotional vocabulary in the zones of regulation program would be beneficial.

7. Feedback to Ministry of Education on Governance

SEAC members were asked to provide feedback to the Ministry of Education. Trustees were available as resources but did not participate in the discussions.

L. McLaughlin and M. Wilcox – reported the five areas that they requested input from the committee:

- Integrity Commissioner and Trustee Code of Conduct
- Trustee Honorarium
- Electronic Participation of Board Committee Members
- Student Trustees
- Broadening the Director of Education Qualifications

Committee members were invited to write their responses for each area. They divided into groups to cover all areas. The results are being compiled for submission to the Ministry through Director Kelly.

J. Matte-Gasparovic, J. Kraemer, T. Rilett

A. Jurak, M. Debruyne, K. Wilson

S. Wilson, M. Gilles, M. Fuduric

8. Special Education Update

IBI: Geneva Centre for Autism – this is the 5th year of online training and we have all 35 spots filled for this year. Staff that had never had ABA training before were encouraged to register.

Connections Update: no change at this time. We currently have 12 students and 2 finishing Connections after Christmas. Approximately 250 staff are trained. L. McLaughlin explained that the Ontario Autism Program is being re-vamped. A direct funding option is being introduced so parents have the option to use Thames Valley Children Centre or a provider of their choice. The rate will be increasing from \$39 to \$55 per hour. An Autism Provider List is being compiled. IBI will become a regulated profession in the future. The recommendation for parents is to contact their regional provider, or go online at Ontario.ca/autism.

L. McLaughlin added that there are 18 boards involved in a Ministry of Education Pilot Project. They are either one or 2 different approaches:

- Target EA training – to gain understanding of behavior
- Dedicated space – ABA practitioners

11 of the 18 boards are using both approaches, while 7 are using the targeted EA training approach. IBI therapy will continue to be provided as it has been in the Windsor/Essex area as we are not part of the pilot project.

PD: It is slowing down a bit before the holiday break. Empower (35 LSTs) was held on December 11. Secondary IEP Audit was held on December 1st and 7th, which focused on STEPS this time. The goal was to better develop more consistent IEPs.

Conscious Classrooms: for students with autism, looking at things that will make a difference. Using the same approach as our local Community Living agency. We are going ahead as a Board, supported by a CODE project. Conscious classrooms is really about training staff on 5 different steps:

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- Catch – awareness of thoughts
 - Calm – compulsively assessing
 - Clarify and choose – objectively assessing
 - Being present – be respectful, kind, caring
 - Caring and competent services – ensuring our own actions are mindful, compassionate, effective.

L. McLaughlin and the team are attending a meeting in January and will bring more information to SEAC in February. This is a three-year program.

9. New Business

Parents for Children's Mental Health

K. Wilson – will compile a list of students that don't have an integration plan pending and share it with M. Wilcox. L. McLaughlin was unaware of any students in this situation. Concern was expressed that parents have to take time off work when they have to be at the school and may jeopardize their own employment. L. McLaughlin replied that we need to develop a trusted relationship with staff in the school. There are situations where children have separation anxiety or challenges where parents/guardians may need to be on site as part of the support plan. The plan may take some time, but it is the best way. Our staff make these decisions in consultation with community agencies typically. We have increased our educational support staff to help with this issue, and we are open to any other ideas.

10. Association Reports

M. Fuduric – January programs: Lego Social Skills, Brainology (for children with ADHD), Adult (18+) drop in peer support centre.

A. Jurak – January program: Gold Pearce Success Group. A. Jurak left information flyers for committee members.

T. Rilett – Mental Health seminars happening January to March.

J. Kraemer – the Canadian Hearing Society, Windsor, will be closed next week until January 2.

J. Matte-Gasparovic – Autism Ontario responded to questions re: wait list. There were some questions not answered (e.g. where services are going to be, flexibility of service).

The meeting was adjourned at 2:30 pm.

Connie Buckler, Chairperson
Special Education Advisory Committee

Lynn McLaughlin, Administrative Liaison
Special Education Advisory Committee