



# Wellington Catholic District School Board Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) Wednesday, April 15, 2009 MINUTES

## Attendance:

**SEAC Members:** V. Dupuis, D. Watson, S. Newcombe and G. Lavalley

**Regrets:** J. Hollen, T. O'Regan and D. Smith

**Program Staff:** L. Clifford, Superintendent of Program  
M.B. Tersigni McCuen, Student Support Services Coordinator

**Guests:** J. Furfaro, Trustee  
L. Artuso and L. Hutt, Autism Ontario, Wellington Chapter  
C. Malone, Vice Principal, St. John Catholic School, Guelph  
N. DeFrancesco, SERT, St. John Catholic School, Guelph  
T. Lindsay, Principal, St. Peter Catholic School  
T. Goodwin, Principal, St. Peter Catholic School  
A. Henry, SERT, St. Peter Catholic School  
R. Silveri, SERT, St. Peter Catholic School  
A.M. McKechnie, Principal, St. Michael Catholic School  
E. Zen, SERT, St. Michael Catholic School  
N. Tonin, SERT, St. Michael Catholic School

**1. Opening Prayer** – L. Clifford opened with prayer at 7:00 p.m.

**2. Review of SEAC Minutes** – L. Clifford asked if there were any questions. V. Dupuis noted that J. Furfaro's name was omitted from the March minutes. N. Linforth to correct.

## 3. Discussion Items

### 3.1 School Presentations

#### St. John Catholic School, Guelph

- C. Malone and N. DeFrancesco reported the following:
- St. John currently has 11 students identified as Autistic, and expects that number to rise.
- Tier 1 successes revolve around communication, such as weekly Youth Worker and SERT meetings, bi-weekly meetings with EA's and Administrators
- Tier 3 successes include follow-up team meetings with M.B. McCuen, P.T. and O.T. large part of success
- Thanks to Michelle Chimienti for her support
- Support for Autistic students includes sensory diet and body breaks
- St. John is currently trying to find space to convert to a sensory room
- Gaps – purposeful staffing is needed; YW time is a concern, had 2 last year, this year between .4 and .6; no scheduled visits from ErinOak; biggest gap is support for students with mental health issues
- Have extensive programming around 2 students, one of which is a selective mute
- 11 students with laptops purchased through SEA
- V. Dupuis asked if ErinOak time has been reduced; C. Malone advised that consistency has been a concern, partly due to the number of students with Autism
- D. Watson asked if they still have good parent involvement and engagement; C. Malone advised they have a strong Parent Council; many IPRC's waived that indicates parent confidence in the school's process

### **St. Peter**

- T. Lindsay, T. Goodwin, A. Henry and R. Silveri reported the following:
- The neighbourhood is diverse, families with everything and families with nothing
- The school has a lot of support, and are thankful for it, but it is never enough; YW allocation has been reduced from 1.0 to .6
- Varied needs, such as a student starting next week; he is from Viet Nam, speaks no English and has Downe Syndrome
- Very supportive parent population
- Some students with mental health issues and issued from the home; SERTs working hard – we have a great team but day to day challenges to meet the needs of children is difficult
- Require more agency support; often working on non-academic issues, so is difficult to get to academics, therefore is hard to raise EQAO scores
- Estimate 30% of students are ESL
- Part of challenge is socio-economic; week to week students leave and new students arrive
- Mail from Trellis indicated that one if five students have mental health issues
- Good role modeling going on with older students
- V. Dupuis asked if this school was experiencing the same challenges with ErinOak; T. Lindsay advised that ErinOak support is not child specific, but the visits are consistent
- C. Malone advised that J. Teeter has been a great help and would have like her support at the beginning of the year, with check points to follow

### **St. Michael**

- A.M. McKechnie, E. Zen and N. Tonin reported the following:
- School is in a predominately affluent community with pockets of ELL students, high number of students with Asperger's
- Concern with turnover of Youth Workers over the years; more consistency would be helpful
- Tier 1 Academic – many parents spend time at the school to assist; running Strong Start Program with younger students
- Tier 1 Behavioural – School Team and SERT's offer support; ASD consultant in every two weeks, gives workshops in accepting differences and is doing a teaching/coaching model to show how to use visuals in the classroom; would be helpful if it was child specific
- Tier 2 – volunteers, SERT support, student teachers, volunteers from U of G; Big Brothers/Sisters has run Go Girls program for grade 7 and has done individual mentoring
- Tier 3 – ASD consultant has been great support; YW support helpful
- GAPS – mental health issues, limited resources, need more strategies; increase in staff awareness of exceptionality is needed; more staff training required for dealing with behaviour; disconnect with some social agencies – would like to improve those relationships
- D. Watson reported that there is a huge effort in the community to work on more coordination for kids 6-18; several community agencies are working on this.
- L. Clifford advised that we are working in a cluster with Dufferin, Wellington and that the Ministry has put funds into a coordinated approach so we can access outside agencies. One goal is to have a Trellis person sitting at each cluster meeting, as it will save the school and family going head to head; and to get Trellis involved earlier in order to support families. L. Clifford also advised that our Board is working toward a pilot program with U of G
- A.M. McKechnie commented that we still don't have a child psychiatrist; D. Watson advised that one has just started and that Trellis and Guelph General Mental Health can provide the link
- V. Dupuis asked if the person has to be manifesting an issue; D. Watson replied that there has to be a risk of harming self or others
- L. Clifford asked if the child has to be voluntarily entered into the program. D. Watson – yes.
- L. Clifford advised that the Ministry, to support deeper implementation of PPM140 is providing funding in the amount of \$42,000.00 for additional ABA expertise; the Board has searched out a company that will work with us on ABA and deliver hands-on support.

### **3.2 Tiered Model Survey**

L. Clifford introduced C. Zen and advised SEAC members that Carlo is currently working on his Supervisory Officer papers, and as part of the process is leading the Tiered Model Survey. C. Zen introduced the survey, and walked the SEAC members through each section.

Discussion followed:

G. Lavalley asked how the survey will be introduced at the schools and who will be completing it. L. Clifford advised there will be one survey per school, but is open to feedback. His position is that it would be rolled out at the Principal meeting; the SERT meeting and senior staff would have a chance to respond. G. Lavalley suggested the people within each school could each complete the survey and then determine where the school stands as a whole, as this would be a very valuable measurement within the school. L. Clifford said if we went with one response from each school we would have 19 responses, and he is not sure how valid the data would be with such a small group. He said that if we captured Principal, Vice Principal, SERT and SEAC populations, we would be able to report overall and specifically. C. Zen said it is a collaborative approach, but the Principal has the last look. He also said he would advocate that the school it is coming from is identified, as schools can be radically different in terms of population. This would allow one to see the needs per site. J. Furfaro commented that there is value in having stakeholders complete the survey, but as a school level stakeholder it is important to get SERT responses, as they are in the trenches. As Administrators, you are not as actively engaged every single day.

Other discussion points:

- Concern around Section 3, that the question would be answered to the position, rather than the person; intent of this section was the skill set, not the person
- The tiered model is looking at deployment of human resources and affects the way support is allocated
- The “perception” when the tiered model was introduced was that it took away support
- The tiered model must not be rigid, must be able to respond immediately to certain needs, and respond in steps to other needs
- The pie, from year to year, is not always cut the same way, and the size of the pie changes
- Try not to lose track of our tier 1 children
- The higher the tier, the more intrusive the support
- Results will differ from school to school
- Not every school has the same need; some require more SERT and less VP time, others will be different

In closing, L. Clifford advised that we would like to come to the next SEAC meeting and work on Section 3, the survey per school, and the position of those completing the survey. The hope is to have greater satisfaction with the deployment of human resources at the school level.

J. Furfaro – recognizing that the format is new to the board, will there be a need to get feedback from people who sit around this table; are there any recommendations to improve the format; is the template working; do the schools see areas for improvement on the template? C. Zen advised these concerns will be addressed, that he is aware of sensitivity in the system about the model and welcomes feedback.

C. Zen thanked L. Clifford for the opportunity to present the survey and thanked the group for their excellent feedback.

### **3.3 SEAC Pamphlet Draft 3**

L. Clifford advised that feedback from Draft 2 had been included in the present draft. D. Watson advised that her contact number is still incorrect – N. Linforth to change.

L. Clifford would like to roll out the final pamphlet at the August Principals meeting. G. Lavalley suggested a general email for the board be included – L. Clifford advised our interactive website is under construction, so suggested his and E. Clinton’s email addresses be put under contacts. S. Newcombe commented that money should not go into colour and gloss.

## **4. Correspondence**

- 4.1 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Kids Ability 1km Fun Run/Walk
- 4.2 Short Term program for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students
- 4.3 Non-Verbal Learning Disabilities – LDA of Wellington County
- 4.4 Special Education Funding – Ministry of Education
- 4.5 Safety Warning – Roll Barrel Equipment
- 4.6 AD VOX Wellington - an evening with Dr. Simon Davidson
- 4.7 School Information Finder

The above items were circulated; SEAC Members were invited to indicate items of interest to be forwarded to them.

## 5. School Presentation Review & Discussion

The following points/comments were made:

- J. Furfaro – the people are becoming a little more comfortable with the presentations; they are speaking more specifically to the good news stories and focusing in on two or three things critical to their area.
- L. Clifford – in chats with Principals, there is a comfort in the informality and we are getting more information because of that
- V. Dupuis – aware of significant challenges with demographics
- L. Clifford – with regards to the ASD support not being student specific, the support with the new company will be hands on
- M.B. McCuen – with ErinOak, we are getting to the end of the consultative stage, SERTs are getting good at handling the general needs of ASD, but specific needs are a challenge; we are piloting coaching model at two schools where consultant can go into classroom and work directly with student and EA
- G. Lavalley – are there funds through Geneva? M.B. McCuen – there was a two day training session for EA's provided by Geneva; the training was considered valuable by the EA's
- J. Furfaro – could respective boards let the Ministry know we need to take ABA support to the next level?
- D. Watson – still feeling like I don't know what it's like to be a tier 1 kid in the school; I understand the supports for tier 3, but no closer to understanding tier 1; L. Clifford advised we will bring forward an example of a tier 1 student (name removed) and accommodations for the child; there is no EA attached to tier 1, but usually a modified program
- V. Dupuis – lets look at tier 2 as well
- L. Clifford – PPM 140 package distributed – good example of getting information to Minister – reference to ABA implementation – our Board has gone down a different path than many boards, and will be able to respond to our schools to complete this survey
- V. Dupuis – our grayest area is in identifying students with mental health needs
- M.B. McCuen – behaviour is our grayest areas – teachers and SERTs are struggling
- D. Watson – medical diagnosis is required – put the right people with the child; unfortunately, communities are struggling with the problem
- L. Clifford – it would help to have Trellis and F&CS at District Team meetings
- L. Clifford – we placed our first child in Section 23 last week; that is a resource that came out of District Team
- G. Lavalley – the question is to explore how we can accelerate the process to identify the problem for the child and bring the resources in faster
- D. Watson – it is a community issue; a child with a problem is everyone's problem

The meeting adjourned at 9:13 p.m.

**6. Next Meeting:** May 20, 2009