



Wellington Catholic District School Board Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) Wednesday, January 21, 2009 MINUTES

Attendance:

SEAC Members: V. Dupuis, D. Watson, S. Newcombe and T. O'Regan

Regrets: G. Lavalley, J. Hollen

Program Staff: L. Clifford, Superintendent of Program
E. Clinton, Principal of Student Learning and Achievement
M. B. Tersigni, Student Support Services Co-ordinator

Guests: Rev. D. Noon, Chair
J. Furfaro, Trustee
D. Smith, Autism Ontario, Wellington Chapter
J. Dalbello, Principal, Holy Trinity Catholic School
J. Ondercin, Vice-Principal, Holy Trinity Catholic School
J. Goddard, SERT, Holy Trinity Catholic School
C. Dixon, SERT, Holy Trinity Catholic School
S. Busato, Teacher, Holy Trinity Catholic School
Mr. & Mrs. Corvelo
Jacob Corvelo, student at Holy Trinity Catholic School
J. Basso, Principal, St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School
D. Mencfeld, Vice-Principal, St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School
N. Tonin, SERT, St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School
A. Welsh-Devlin, SERT, St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School
A. Bin, Principal, St. Joseph Catholic School, Guelph
A. Hariton, Chair, Catholic School Council, St. Joseph Catholic School, Guelph

1. Opening Prayer – L. Clifford asked those present to reflect on three things they were grateful for, and then asked everyone to join him in the Lord's Prayer.

2. Review of SEAC Minutes – T. O'Regan asked for a motion to accept the November 2008 SEAC minutes. Motion accepted by D. Watson, seconded by V. Dupuis.

3. Discussion Items

3.1 School Presentations

Holy Trinity: J. Dalbello introduced himself and those representing Holy Trinity, including Jacob Corvelo and his family.

Assistive Technology Demonstration: Jacob received a laptop in September 2008 through the Special Equipment Allocation process. He demonstrated and discussed the use of assistive technology, including Premier, Smart Ideas, Dragon and Kurzweil. S. Busato reported that Jacob has advanced two grades since September.

School Presentation: The school presentation form was distributed; the following points noted/discussed:

- Last year 6-7 students wrote EQAO using assistive technology and did very well.
- New technology includes 12 ultra laptops, 6 in primary, 6 in junior; SMART Boards.
- Gaps – lost an EA end of September, 2008, lost 1 day of Youth Worker support.
- There is a backlog of students needing to go through the IPRC process.

Questions/Answers/Comments:

- Explanation of “Corrective Reading” as the process of repetition and sounding out.
- L. Clifford acknowledged challenges and gaps, thanked school team for their flexibility and efforts, and advised there will be a meeting to discuss “moving forward steps”.
- J. Goddard reported that children with significant needs have multiple exceptionalities.
- J. Dalbello reported that one classroom has eight children with exceptionalities.
- J. Dalbello reported that there are significant mental health issues.
- J. Ondercin explained the “3 sticks, apple” program.

St. Francis: J. Basso introduced herself and those representing St. Francis.

School Presentation: The school presentation form was distributed; the following points noted/discussed:

- Boys Literacy Carts based on EQAO scores of two years ago, gender gap noticed.
- Based on feedback from parent surveys, inventory of books set up; the result is that the boys are really engaged.
- Staff in-service was held on boys literacy and how boys learn differently.
- Addition of Social Worker in school twice per week has been beneficial.

Questions/Answers/Comments:

- School teams have done brainstorming in conjunction with the Special Education team, in particular to address the learning needs of two students.
- With support of the District Team, new strategies have been utilized.
- EA time was lost at beginning of year – those EA’s had specific training; the loss created a gap in consistency for student.
- Very appreciative of PlaySense program.
- St. Francis has a unique population of student with English learning needs; D. Watson advised the Immigration Centre is in the neighbourhood of the school.
- St. Francis was awarded funds for “School on the Move”, the direction of which is to provide literacy/numeracy support to the school, train staff.
- Librarian assigned to classroom is assisting primary and junior teachers.

St. Joseph Guelph: Angie Bin introduced herself and Anna Heriton, Chair of Student Council.

School Presentation: The school presentation form was distributed; the following points noted/discussed:

- St. Francis draws from a number of different neighbourhoods; heavy on ELL and linking families with outside agencies, including those that provide economic support.
- Have developed professional learning communities that focus on helping all students, including those with special needs.
- Have been developing models for students that need repetition, partnered work, individual work and differentiated instruction.
- Success being charted to indicate areas of focus for teachers.
- St. Francis concentrates on mediation for behavioural situations.
- Special needs students can come in at recess or lunch during difficult times and speak with the Youth Worker or Principal.
- Jan Teeter (Safe School Coordinator) has been working with grade 6, 7 and 8 students; concentration on classroom mediation, social skills, showing more support toward one another.
- Tier 3 students are provided with a life skills program, special projects, and PlaySense program.
- ASD consultants work with teachers and EA’s.
- BMS training has been very successful as a preventative strategy.
- Areas of gaps – lack of consistency with Kurzweil as teacher changes each year – more focus on teacher training needed.
- Need more support for Learning Disabled and Developmental students as EA’s have not been working with this group and SERT’s spend most of their time with highest needs children.
- Availability of psychological assessments is difficult – many parents do not have funds to proceed.

Questions/Answers/Comments:

- A number of students have had no support before coming in the school system; while summer school has addressed this problem, it is still identified very close to the beginning of the school year.
- D. Watson advised that as of January 2nd, Kidsline has been open; a central number parents can call for help.
- E. Clinton suggested a link through ELL should be provided to students entering school as a preventative basis. Since ELL is not supposed to be serving JK and SK children, she will follow up on this suggestion.

- D. Watson advised that statistics suggest that families have more success when helped through local agencies.
- A. Bin commented that the high turnover in staff within the community programs affects families.

3.2 L. Clifford noted that one of the challenges of the SEAC meetings is keeping to the timelines. He pointed out the timed agenda that had been distributed, and noted that the times are gentle signposts only, noting also that important issues would be given the time required.

3.3 Safety Plans & BMS

L. Clifford reported that in his visits to two schools the first week in January, safety plans and BMS issues were at the forefront. He also heard issues at the Catholic Leadership meeting. He advised that there will soon be clear direction on BMS; the resources are being put into place, our people need to be trained, and that there are times when BMS must come into play. The last resort is to restrain a child, but it is an option. BMS Training will work in conjunction with the Safety Plan. There are mental health and environmental issues, and we are working to keep children in their home schools. Direction regarding finalizing the training will be covered at future Catholic Leadership meeting.

Questions/Answers/Comments:

L. Clifford clarified that BMS (Behaviour Management Systems) is a product term. If a child is posing imminent risk to themselves, others or property, physical restraint is a last resort. If physical restraint is necessary, another adult must be present, a phone call to the parents must be made, and the incident must be documented.

E. Clinton advised that we are working on a protocol document, but that the Teachers' Federation and OSSTF have gotten involved. The local unit grieved and the Ministry of Labour was brought in, and have reported their findings after visiting St. Paul and Sacred Heart schools. We now have the green light to proceed with clear directives for Principals, staff, unions and Human Resources.

L. Clifford advised that when an incident occurs, there are three options: ignore, clear the room, or employ BMS (verbal and/or physical) Staff is using their professional judgment in making decisions. Parents will be advised that BMS is an option that can be used, but we are not asking for parental permission to use it.

E. Clinton explained rollout plan for BMS training

3.4 Review of Section 23 Schools

L. Clifford explained that Section 23 is a treatment facility in which we have education programs. E. Clinton advised that WCDSB and UGDSB have received funding and have approval for a Section 23 school. The desired outcome is a successful transition back to school. The selection committee consists of E. Clinton, the Board psychologist from the Upper Grand, Vice-Principal from Section 23, and D. Gautier from Trellis. Section 23 schools are for students in grades 6, 7 and 8 only. Our Board had 2 students who were referred, but Section 23 was not appropriate due to the nature of their challenges. Principals have been advised to let us know of any referrals. We are meeting once per week as an intake committee. The ratio of students represented by each Board is unclear. L. Clifford will discuss with D. Euale, Superintendent, and Upper Grand DSB.

3.5 Review of SEAC goals from October 2008 SEAC Meeting

The three goals identified at the October 2008 meeting are:

- 1) Development of a SEAC brochure. E. Clinton advised that at this time we do not have a draft.
- 2) Summative report to be presented at March 2nd Board Meeting. All school presentations must be in by the third week of February. It was agreed that it would be helpful to have the school presentations for the February SEAC meeting prior to the meeting. L. Clifford will address this at the February 5th Catholic Leadership meeting. It was agreed that 5 minutes would be taken at the end of each SEAC meeting to discuss what is working and not working, to see patterns developing.
- 3) Third goal is the dedication of February's meeting to Program staff. M.B. Tersigni and D. Watson are unable to attend the February meeting.

3.6 Ministry Memo – Parent/Student Access to Electronic IEP

L. Clifford advised that he would communicate information to Principals who can then communicate to parents. The ability for parents to view the electronic IEP allows parents to develop specific goals for their children.

3.7 **Crown Ward Championship Teams**

L. Clifford attended the first meeting. Crown Ward children are in the custody of Family and Children's Services or Children's Aid. We have been asked to refer to these children as "children with Crown Ward status". Statistics tell us that children with Crown Ward status are usually two years behind and the chances of post secondary education are remote. L. Clifford pointed out that we are the focal point, because the children are with us five hours each day.

4. **Agency Updates**

4.1 **Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario Executive Summary**

S. Newcombe advised that she receives updates from the association on a monthly basis. January's update dealt with the Provincial Auditor's Report, in which deficiencies were identified in the IEP process. Recommendations have been posted on the LDAO website.

5. **Correspondence**

5.1 **Dr. E. Bruce Hendrick Scholarship**

L. Clifford briefly explained the brochure and the scholarship.

5.2 **Additional Items**

A discussion followed on the school presentations of the evening, and the format of the template. It was agreed that the School Presentation Form would be changed to reflect the following additions:

- 1) The number of IPRC's, with breakdown by category
- 2) Vice-Principal's name will be added to the form

It was agreed that exceptionality data (from eSIS) for presenting schools would be provided at each SEAC meeting.

J. Furfaro suggested that copies of school presentations be shared with Program staff.

T. O'Regan asked for a motion to adjourn. Motion accepted by Rev. D. Noon, seconded by D. Watson.