

Wellington Catholic District School Board Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) Wednesday, June 10, 2008

MINUTES

Attendance:

SEAC Members: D. Watson, T. O'Regan, D. Smith, V. Dupuis, G. Lavalley
Regrets: John Hollen

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

Guests: J. Furfaro, Trustee
C. Zen, Principal, St. Joseph, Fergus
B. O'Donnell, SERT, St. Joseph, Fergus
A. Marchesan, JK / SK Teachers, St. Joseph, Fergus
A. Finoro, Principal, St. Mary, Elora
B. Hayne, SERT, St. Mary, Elora
A. Asselin, Principal, St. Mary, Mount Forest
A. Harris, SERT, St. Mary Mount Forest
D. Marcoccia, Principal, Mary Phelan
K. Fitzgerald, SERT, Mary Phelan

Session A: 7:00 – 7:45 pm

1. Call To Order

1.1 E. Clinton opened the meeting with a prayer at 7:04 pm

2. Review of SEAC February Meeting Minutes

2.1 No changes or comments

3. Discussion Items

3.1 School Presentations

St. Mary Elora

- A. Finoro and B. Hanye reported the following:
 - The school has a mix of families, mix of artists, musicians, poets
 - Corrective Reading Program, small groups, direct instruction through the SERT
 - All exceptional students trained on Kurzweil
 - Many volunteers, very willing community
 - Strong Start has been a great program, positive results also from Tutors in the Classroom – critical in helping students in Tier 1
 - Teachers involved in TLCP
 - Student Success board has replaced Honor Roll, students are recognized for accomplishments not necessarily academic
 - Senior students are great role models, Intramural program, referral, other students look up to these students, asking students to help the little ones can change poor behaviour into modeling, key is knowing the students and what they can handle

- Raise the Bar – Health Unit program, each day students who exhibit some sort of fitness (biking to school, walking/running around the track) swipe a card on a solar unit, gives credit, students are registered on-line
- Most IPRCs are waived because parents are happy with the programming that is happening
- Data wall that identifies students levels, (DRA), helps us to focus on children, visual demonstration
- SERT working on adaptive technology
- Working with W.R. MacDonald
- Supply days provided through board – training with the SLP
- Use of manipulatives with peers in order to integrate student into classroom lessons
- Youth Worker involvement
- Psychological Assessment for a student in grade 8
- BMS training has been successful
- Gaps – Academic – increased teacher/SERT training, purchase of a SmartBoard
- Researching life skills programming in the area of math
- EA in primary, 6 students incoming
- Support for board for Strong Smart program
- Motivation strategies are needed for behaviour students, engagement
- Experiential learning
- SERT is able to help students other than students on programming

St. Mary Mount Forest

- A. Asselin and A. Harris reported the following:
- Very blue collar community, socially and economically disproportionate
- Follow EDI (early developmental inventory) data very carefully, measures family characteristics, developmental milestones, activities the child has been involved in, independence
- Students have some challenges before they even enter the school
- Very data driven – leads to success
- Actively seek out new registration and enrollment through mail outs, door to door, information to churches
- Headsprout program, phonetics program – one student successfully completed this, process of getting a license for another student
- Balanced Literacy program instituted last year, reading level gr. 1 or 2 , very successful in Tier 1
- Class structures help manage behaviour
- Communication – 5 phone calls a week – in one month you will reach every parent in every class and develop a positive relationship
- Literacy for Life program has always been offered
- Offer Junior Literacy program through a community member volunteer
- Speech to Text software – Dragon – helped with many students in grades 7 and 8
- Extensive use of small reading groups through all grade levels
- New Reading programs work well for reading groups
- PALS (Parents Assisting Literacy Success) parents are trained to ask the leading questions
- Chill Out / Helpers with Mr. Harris or Mr. Asselin
- Use praise extensively but not so extensively that the praise becomes redundant
- Interventions with Tier 3 – introduction of doing only oral French
- Making great progress with speech to text software
- SERT relationship building with parent, teachers, EAs
- Extensive work with assistive technology in the area of EQAO, increased the number of students who wrote EQAO
- Body break
- Crown Wards – 16 students currently, work with Family and Children Services – need for specialized services, we have a number of services that are broad but we need very specialized service i.e. Big Brothers, volunteers
- More assistance, consistently – Youth Worker
- Great BMS training – consistent decisive plan to put in place when the need arises
- D. Watson commented that chores are very important, best practice supports giving kids with special needs jobs

- Very good partnerships with Trellis, just did a very good presentation on trauma

Mary Phelan

- SERTs are amazing people; go into the job as a calling
- Mix of socio-economic incomes
- Spectrum of identified students
- High yield instructional practices through TLCP programs have been helpful
- Differentiated instruction in classrooms
- Literacy for Life program
- First Light Theatre Group – Bullying Prevention – students put on plays about the topic, connection to John Howard Society
- Healthy and active living focus, student leaders are involved, active playgrounds, intramural program
- Student of the Month – Character Development, promote leadership
- ASD Team support – effective teaching strategies, invited consultant and S. Zonneveld in to do observations; instrumental in meeting with the teacher and providing strategies to support and provide connections for teachers
- Accepting Differences presentation to the entire class; did this in all primary classrooms, no one was singled out, very respectful of dignity and privacy
- Assistive Technology for students with SEA claims
- Participating in math contests
- Number of parents, University student volunteers in the area of Literacy
- Youth Worker involvement with small groups
- Behaviour reflection sheets
- Student involvement in school service (environmental club, peer helpers, peer coaches)
- Star Fitness day – block off half a day – stations – low organizational games – senior students will organize
- Community service projects and fundraising – in service of others, Guelph Police presentations
- Tutors in Classroom working with individual students
- Work Experience Program – connected with our feeder high school – with a selected grade 8 student – “at risk”, also involved in the track team at BM, this student has made significant gains
- ELL Resource Teacher for tier 1 and 2 students
- Good collaboration with JK students with special needs
- Collaborative team approach with student with complex needs
- ABC tracking charts, BMS Training, development of individual student plan for success
- Provision of a safe de-escalation room, beginning each day in a quiet setting
- Consistency of assigned EA, relationship building
- Gaps – PD opportunities for EAs, supplemental allocation of assistive technology, additional training, effective teaching strategies specific to special needs, programming for students with complex emotional needs, training and human resources to conduct FBAs, continuation of release time for teachers to conduct transfer of information

St. Joseph, Fergus

C. Zen and B. O'Donnell reported the following:

- Large number of students on IEPs, only 21 Identified students, many students in the primary grades, don't like to move too quickly to identification
- Data walls, and EDI scores; C. Zen showed a graph of DRA scores, grade 3 students – only 4 at grade level (out of 40)
- Not a lot of high needs (in terms of identification) but many kids struggling
- Keeps returning to Differentiated Instruction
- A. Marchesan advised that the following is in place for JK / SK class – Balanced Literacy Approach, Jolly Phonics, demonstrated a differentiated instruction approach, kids always know what to expect, immersed in literacy in the classroom
- Grouping is informed by the Literacy Assessment for Kindergarten
- Very detailed transfer of information to grade 1, process for where student should pick up instruction, important for early intervention
- A. Marchesan demonstrated differentiation (process)
- Differentiation by product (handout) – presented DI kit for grades 7 and 8 classrooms

- A. Marchesan provided an example of end of unit assignment, and a website example
- Students would be given the opportunity to use these intelligences to demonstrate their learning
- Alternatives to paper / pencil, some challenges, parents like tests coming home
- Students are given opportunities to develop weaker intelligences as well as build on the strength
- Important to give kids a sense that they are succeeding
- Differentiated Instruction is not just about grouping but also about how we deliver curriculum
- Unique to St. Joseph Fergus – three students on medical needs, doesn't fit well into tiered model, needs to be tested, program their pump, can take as low as 90 minutes, as high as 1 hour and a half.
- Very high stress situation for Educational Assistants who are administering
- Low EDI scores in Fergus has not gone unnoticed by community partners

3.2 Plans for Next Year – Community Partners, SEAC Committee, dates, and topics

- Trellis person to sit on our SEAC
- Will be a Trellis person sitting on our District Team
- Brenda Courtney has been hired as part of the Student Support Leadership project – Subcluster #26
- Dates for next year were distributed
- So much talent to bring in to demonstrate what it is like to teach in a classroom, how are we responding to a Tier 2/3, specific exceptionalities

4. Correspondence

5. School Presentations Review and Discussion – waived due to time

6. Adjournment

13.1 Meeting adjourned at 9:19 pm