



# Wellington Catholic District School Board Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) Wednesday, March 26, 2009 MINUTES

## **Attendance:**

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

**Regrets:** G. Lavalley, J. Hollen and T. O'Regan

**Program Staff:** L. Clifford, Superintendent of Program  
M.B. Tersigni McCuen, Student Support Services Coordinator  
V. Campolongo, Secondary Curriculum Coordinator  
C. Chaput, Elementary Program Coordinator  
D. Watters, Elementary Program Coordinator  
R. Finnigan, Co-op Coordinator

**Guests:** J. Vadala, Principal, Bishop Macdonell Catholic High School  
D. Bergin, Vice Principal, Bishop Macdonell Catholic High School  
V. Sheehan, SERT, Bishop Macdonell Catholic High School  
J. Candiotta, Principal, Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic High School  
F. Cecchetto, Vice Principal, Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic High School  
M. MacPherson, Vice Principal, Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic High School  
L. Soligo, SERT, Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic High School  
L. Mitukiewicz, SERT, Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic High School  
M. Sullivan, SERT, Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic High School  
P. Ingram, Principal, St. James Catholic High School  
T. Donaghy, Vice Principal, St. James Catholic High School  
B. Capovilla, Vice Principal, St. James Catholic High School  
K. Angerilli, SERT, St. James Catholic High School

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

**2. Review of SEAC Minutes** – L. Clifford asked if there were any question; no questions, minutes approved.

## **3. Discussion Items**

### **3.1 School Presentations**

#### **Bishop Macdonell**

- D. Bergin provided information on the journey of two students; the first student diagnosed with a Developmental Disability, Central Auditory Processing difficulties, a mild articulation day and oral motor problems. Due to the intervention of D. O'Brien (SERT), this student has made much progress in the areas of motivation, behaviour, literacy and self-esteem
- The second student, formerly from an abusive home, has been diagnosed with a Developmental Disability, his first language is not English, and had an articulation problem. This student is now fully involved, in coop last semester and this semester.
- L. Clifford asked for clarification on the Mental Health expertise gap. D. Bergin confirmed that outside assistance is needed. L. Clifford advised that much time has been spent at shared services meetings to bring mental health experts in to work directly with the needs of the children of our Board.

- L. Clifford asked D. Bergin to expand on the last bullet (Lack of Parent Support and follow through). D. Bergin advised that sometimes help is needed in the home and parents don't know how to follow through, or are not home to monitor children.
- L. Clifford asked where we are with respect to DI in the school. D. Bergin advised they are in the very beginning stages, not at the conversation stage, has not been enough in-service, but there are pockets of knowledge. L. Clifford advised that DI is tried and true with special needs students, and good DI has teacher knowing the needs of the student.

### **Our Lady of Lourdes**

- J. Candiotta provided a snapshot view of how their students are supported and some of the challenges.
- M. MacPherson provided information via PowerPoint
- F. Cecchetto – grade 9 challenges: a group of approximately 20 students who require a great deal of time – too much free time on their hands in the evening and parents do not have coping skills. Unless we continue to support these students, 15 will likely not graduate and 10 may end in jail.
- M. MacPherson advised students are supported with resource time, job entry into coop, experiential learning, SERT leadership, after school credit recovery focusing on math, Link program providing connection with incoming grade 9 students, in school credit recovery through Student Success (being tracked through the Ministry).
- Next steps – expanded Student Success Teams to include teachers and students; looking at best practices, creating a numeracy team
- Focus on literacy is helping students to become good readers and writers
- J. Candiotta reported that the administrative team has identified attendance as a major problem – the school attendance team meets monthly – contact with the parent is critical
- M. MacPherson – OLOL is piloting a junior alternative education program
- L. Clifford asked L. Soligo to expand on the Skyping – she advised that one of their students has a severe latex allergy and joint disorder – through Skype he is able to be a full participant in the classroom

### **St. James**

- B. Capovilla advised they have four SERTS, three Guidance Counsellors and one Student Success Teacher that make up the core team; a student population of just under 1,100 with a catchment area that reaches up to Mount Forest – a very diverse population. Sixteen percent have been identified as exceptional (164 students), next year will lose 21 of exceptional students and gain 49. School has 9 students identified with ASD with another 4 arriving. The largest population is LD, with over 50 working with own personal laptop.
- K. Angerilli reported on students within the tiered model:
- For tier 1 students there are a number of initiatives to promote student achievement including SOS (supporting our students), teachers who volunteer their on call one day per week, ongoing credit recovery in and after school, Sustain a Credit, Dual Credit and after school Literacy Program.
- Tier 2 – important to place EA for these students
- Tier 3 – Life Skills Program, helping in cafeteria with maintenance, cleaning and meal prep; trips to St. Vincent de Paul to sort clothing, literacy, banking skills
- Gaps – placing EA's in applied level classrooms as some EA's are not comfortable with material presented at advanced levels
- School facing a facility crunch as one of wings has been shut down – would like a space dedicated to students with specific needs
- Success story – student with ASD has been successful working at Rogers Video using the “Go Talk” system and PECs
- 57 SEA claims with a projected need of 70 by September. Support from Tech has been outstanding

L. Clifford thanked everyone for their realistic presentations – looks like we are making headway in a number of areas but also that we are not making enough headway due to resource and money restrictions. He advised that everyone's needs have been noted and that we are heading into budget planning soon.

### **5. Correspondence**

L. Clifford passed around a folder containing all correspondence items and advises SEAC members to indicate which items they would like copies of. SEAC member feedback was positive.

### **4. Program Staff**

L. Clifford – as one of SEAC's objectives, Program Staff is here to provide a brief description of their roles. The staff work together from a philosophical viewpoint to give students a greater chance of success. The following staff members provided descriptions of their roles: P. Dawson, C. Chaput, D. Watters, M.B. Tersigni, McCuen, R. Finnigan and V. Campolongo. A question and answer period followed.

### **3.2 SEAC Pamplet**

Draft 2 was included in packages. Any new suggestions/comments (to be provided by beginning of April) will be incorporated and the finished product will be presented for approval. It will be posted on the Board website and rolled out to Principals. It was determined that rollout to Principals will be done at August meeting.

### **6.2 School Presentation Review & Discussion**

L. Clifford noted there are a wide variety of needs, and not all were discussed; challenges the elementary and secondary level. He noted that he is impressed by the conviction of the staff, that they don't give up; also noted that our mainstream students treat our special needs students with the highest regard.

V. Dupuis – a note of caution that names of students were shared, in part due to the safe environment, but we should caution regarding confidentiality.

D. Watson thought it was good that each school took a different approach, but thought in future they should be given more than 10 minutes.

L. Clifford noted that next year he would like to have two schools present per night to give them more time and we should look at the possibility of having September and June SEAC meetings.

J. Furfaro noted that if presentations submitted ahead of meeting, SEAC members have time to read before the meeting, and focus on questions during the meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.