

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

MINUTES

Attendance:

SEAC Members: T. O'Regan, V. Dupuis, L. Artuso, S. Newcombe, John Hollen,
K. Zamin, G. Lavalley

Regrets: D. Watson

Guests: M. McCuen, Youth Worker; M. Malak, Social Worker

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

1. Call to Order

1.1 L. Clifford opened the meeting with a prayer at 6:32 pm

2. Review of SEAC Meeting Minutes – L. Clifford distributed minutes of September SEAC meeting

3. Discussion Items

3.1 Chair and Vice-Chair Positions 2009-2010 - L. Clifford

- L. Clifford advised T. O'Regan that recognizing his time served, time and effort contributed, it may be time to give him a break and provide the opportunity to train others
- G. Lavalley offered to be Chair, and S. Newcombe offered to be Vice-Chair
- T. O'Regan in agreement

3.2 PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) – M.B. McCuen

- M.B. McCuen explained the purpose of PPE – for EA's to wear for use with students who present aggressive behaviours that may present harm to self or others
- PPE is used as a last resort; PPE was purchased last year; WCDSB is in the process of purchasing updated PPE this year
- PPE may be written into student Safety Plan as a result of prior incidents, and if so, the use of such equipment is non-negotiable
- E. Clinton advised that of 17 Safety Plans last year, 5 required PPE to be worn by EA

3.3 Youth Worker Presentation – M. McCuen, YW, St. Peter

- L. Clifford introduced M. McCuen and asked him to talk about his role in the district, his challenges and satisfactions

M. McCuen reported the following:

- That the role of YW is primarily to support students at school for social/emotional and behavioural needs
- Support is provided on several levels – individual counselling, group counselling, support for teachers, incentive and discipline programs – focus of support is to help students stay in the classroom and to be successful
- Challenges – aggressive behaviour, shift of the mental health understanding spilling into education (e.g. – some students need to get up and walk out, as they cannot function in the classroom)
- Successes – the writing of a school wide program that fits school population and provides teachers a tool in the classroom to deal with non-compliance, behavioural issues, and provide a link to the home for parents to have input into the program
- At the request of L. Clifford, M. McCuen provided an example of a challenging student

- With the BMS system at St. Peter, a code system has been implemented – the code is announced in the school and the BMS team responds
- This year there have been 7 codes announced and each time the student has been transported to a safe room
- M. McCuen explained the process when the BMS team is called in; data collected to date indicates the response time for the first three calls was 20, 15 and 10 minutes
- Staff at St. Peter believe the process is very effective

Question and answer period followed

3.4 Social Worker Presentation – M. Malak, SW, St. James

- L. Clifford introduced M. Malak and asked him to talk about his role in the district, his challenges and satisfactions
- M. Malak reported the following:
- Main focus at secondary is with the family, as they often provide the student more freedom than in elementary
 - One of the challenges is seeing the family dynamics diversified, keeping in mind that he sees only 2% of the school population
 - Presented a gift to grade 9 students in part so they could meet him; a piece of paper that asked the students to think about last year and ask themselves if they saw anyone belittled – now that they have a new start, keep this question in mind and consider how they want the world to see them
 - Sees many mental health issues, self esteem issues; students often reactive in dealing with pain
 - Suggests to students that he “walk” with them to help them make the necessary shift
 - Building resilience is all we can do at times
 - Challenge – parents that are not on board, not engaged with their children, or not concerned about what is happening in their children’s lives
 - Other parents are just tired, some out of work, and cannot keep up with their child
 - Positives – seeing a student make the necessary shift (e.g. last year a student with Autism and mental health issues graduated)
 - Daily routine is trying to connect and get the family on board to make a plan – sometimes parents image of school can be tainted from their own experience
 - Challenge at secondary – how long has this child’s experience been – trauma in first five years of life can have long term effects

Question and answer period followed

3.5 Attendance Procedure – E. Clinton

- SEAC members were provided copies of the Attendance Handbook
- L. Clifford advised that it will be on the November agenda

3.6 Roots Pilot Program – E. Clinton

- E. Clinton showed a PPT presentation and described each of the students in the program; their specific challenges and number of credits earned

The following was reported:

- The idea for the Roots program came out of a lunch meeting with E. Clinton, L. Clifford and Family and Children’s Services
- Roots Program is run at the Ignatius Centre
- It was noted that there was a gap in alternative education for students from grades 6 to 10
- Program was scheduled to begin in November, but due to extreme need, the doors were opened immediately in the school year
- The name “Roots” is metaphorical – starting from the ground
- Staff members running the program are Julie DeMaeyer (Student Success teacher), Jan Teeter (Safe Schools Program Coordinator), Raymond Carere (Social Worker) and Becka Dupuis (certified teacher)
- Students needs tend to be social and emotional, and most have been or are in crisis
- Beth Bailey is Director at New Hope Youth Ranch where children receive equine therapy – Beth has rescued each horse and tells the children the horse’s story – the children identify
- The Julien Project is run by Sharon a retired mental health nurse, and Susan who provide horticultural therapy – located at Ignatius

- Sharon and Susan have much experience with high needs students
- OLOL has a full operating greenhouse that will also be used for this purpose
- WCDSB is in constant discussion with F&CS and we are asking for financial support – they have agreed to cost share
- L. Clifford advised that credit needs to go to E. Clinton for recognizing the gap and coming up with an idea and the resources - he credited the Trustees as well, as they have been very flexible and supportive
- The Roots Program is under the umbrella of our new school, St. John Bosco, that supports PASS and the Safe Schools Program as well

4. Correspondence Items

- 4.1 Special Education/Schools Update
- 4.2 Psychological Assessment Referrals 2009 * 2010
- 4.3 WCDSB Bullying Awareness & Prevention Plan
- 4.4 Ministry of Education Special Education Update
- 4.5 Learning Disabilities Association Package
- 4.6 PAAC (Provincial Parents Advisory Committee) on SEAC

L. Clifford invited everyone to look at the correspondence items and identify which ones they would like copies of.

5. Open

- E. Clinton distributed copies of the Protocol for Youth Worker/Social Worker Services and advised that we will take questions at the next meeting
- L. Clifford advised the following:
- That he has spoken with the Principals about bringing families with children in tiers 1, 2 and 3 to speak with us and will talk to the SERTS about this initiative
- Principals will be meeting with Trellis, Family & Children's Services and Student Support Services and come back to another meeting in December to address their questions and concerns
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The meeting adjourned at 8:54 p.m.

6. Next Meeting – November 18, 2009