

## Special Education Advisory Minutes (SEAC)

Thursday, October 19, 2023 | 1:00pm  
Zoom Online Meeting & North Bay Board Office

### **Present:**

Tim Graves, Superintendent of Education  
Melanie Allard, Executive Assistant  
Kim Pauli, Assistant Superintendent, Math Lead  
Chris Guillemette (Vice Chair), Community Living North Bay  
Kimberly Gignac, Special Education Coordinator – North Region  
Louise Sargent, Trustee  
Chantal Phillips, Trustee  
Howard Wesley, Trustee  
Julie Bertram, Trustee  
Jeanie Fuscaldo, Trustee  
Caroline Labrecque, Nipissing First Nation  
Lisa Paradis, Special Education Coordinator – East & West Regions  
Candy St. Onge, Almaguin Highlands Community Living  
Alison Clarke, Acting Principal of Special Education

### **Regrets:**

Laura Hansman, OPIC  
Ashley St. Pierre, Trustee  
Carol Couillard, Nbisiing Secondary

### **Guests:**

Elizabeth Simser, Principal of Land of Lakes  
Leah Dix, CanChild/McMaster University  
Wenonah Campbell, CanChild/McMaster University

### **Land Acknowledgement by Superintendent Graves**

Meeting called to order at 1:05pm.

### **Agenda Approval:**

Motioned by Jeanie Fuscaldo, seconded by Chantal Phillips. *Carried*

### **Approval of the Minutes of the September 21, 2023, meeting:**

Motioned by Louise Sargent, seconded by Chantal Phillips. *Carried.*

### **Business Arising from the Minutes**

#### **Partnering for Change Presentation by Leah Dix and Wenonah Campbell (CanChild/McMaster University)**

- Leah Dix and Wenonah Campbell from CanChild presented to the committee around occupational services.
- Historically a student would attend school and then when an educator notices the student is having difficulty with tasks a referral for OT services was put in. The waitlist for these services can be quite long hindering support to many children. When services did finally come available the occupational therapist tended to “parachute” into the classroom, often pulling that child out

of the classroom for individualized therapy on a short-term basis. When complete that child would go back to the classroom, however a gap is created where the educator may not know what was happening in the OT sessions and how they can do things differently to support the child's needs.

- The question was asked, what would happen if the OT was impeded into the school and invited into classrooms. They would have a chance to discuss and collaborate with the school team and come up with strategies that would support specific student needs, but overall, all students in the class in the end. As the child does not have to leave the classroom, the educator builds knowledge and capacity with the OT.
- The P4C model of service is a new way for occupational therapists to provide school-based services to children with special needs. This evidence based, tiered model for school based occupational therapy services is being studied in the Near North DSB.
- The model provides a more equitable reach to all students supporting whole classes. Team-based services or other referrals might be required but it is meant to be a fluid process and helps alleviate timely waitlists.
- The model allows for the Occupational therapist to build relationships with the educators, families, and administrators and it includes them in the circle of care and knowledge sharing.
- The P4C timeline was reviewed as it has been in existence since 2008.
- The model differs from original practice by offering services that are multifaceted and focused on the whole school approach. It follows a workload and not a case load which facilitates the inclusion of all children and allows collaboration with educators to facilitate participation of children with special needs. Time is not lost on travel as the OT is able to spend the whole day in one school and is intended to be present on a regular basis.
- The OT is the point of first contact which enables them to work with educators and whole classrooms supporting all children's participation and achievement. These services are also able to be provided without the requirement of a diagnosis or formal psycho-educational assessment.
- P4C has partnered with 10 school boards and 10 children's treatment centres to study this new OT service in different places across Ontario.
- This study has been taking place at Land of Lakes Public School. The school helps support this research by supporting the OT service in the school, sending out surveys to families and educators and taking part in interviews about their experiences with the OT services.
- The goal is to understand how P4C works and for whom it makes a positive impact in Ontario. Creating guidelines and tools to make it work and sharing what is learned through presentations, written articles, and meetings.
- Principal Simser spoke to the committee about how their school is so pleased to be a part of this project and how there has been such a need over the years for services. Land of Lakes is in year 3 of this project which has shown where putting in universal remedies for the class in the early stages has been instrumental for staff. It allows for Tier 1 solutions to be put in classrooms so educators can clearly see where specific and appropriate referrals are needed. Staff capacity has increased from being able to build the model from the ground up and engage in trouble shooting together.
- It was asked if this model could be used for childcare and early years. It was confirmed that some places are using this approach, but varies by region, service, and centre. There is much opportunity to expand however more research is needed to know what is optimal for these settings.
- Funding is provided through the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services but how to optimize this is still a question. They are not collecting financial data on what services cost; the focus is more on getting the waitlists down and then looking into what the investment needs

to be. They are looking at the different sites and how often services are being provided and what the consistency needs to be. Challenges can be more in the rural, remote areas with staffing, weather, linguistic and cultural needs.

### **Follow-up on Letter from Dufferin Peel Catholic DSB regarding retention and recruitment of Educational Assistant Staff (information re EA funding to be shared)**

- Assistant Superintendent Pauli followed up with the committee on the requested educational assistant staff information. The NNDSB employed 173 EAs last year with the cost of an EA being \$52,295. The SIP funding (based on applications) covered 40 EAs with the Board's budget supplementing the 133. Superintendent Graves highlighted that there is no specific place in the budget where EAs come from. Budget decisions are made from staff/program discussions.
- Superintendent of Business Van Haesendonck will be presenting at the next SEAC meeting, so any questions on this can be directed to Krista Holmes.

### **Trustee Fuscaldo: PPM 8**

- Trustee Fuscaldo presented the committee with information, using a PowerPoint presentation, regarding closing gaps in education for learners who have been identified as having special education needs.
- She reviewed several recommendations to the committee, which included such items as addressing Tier 3 intervention and supports.
- She referenced The Education Act and PPM 8, which relates to the identification of and program planning for students with learning disabilities.
- Trustee Fuscaldo included information on the responses to intervention (RTI) approach, which is a proactive method of identifying and supporting students' learning needs.
- She included information about structured literacy programs, The Ontario Human Right's Commission's Right to Read Report and Examples of Tier 1, 2 and 3 level interventions.
- Trustee Fuscaldo shared some of her personal learning journey with dyslexia and highlighted that students with dyslexia are capable of learning and may need more time and additional supports to be successful.
- The presentation concluded with references to the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), The Near North District School Board's Multi-Year Strategic Plan and the Education Act requirements relating to special education programs and services for exceptional pupils.
- The committee discussed student accommodations and how learning gaps for identified students are being addressed.
- Superintendent Graves noted that Trustee Fuscaldo's presentation may form the premise of some continued work around Tier 3 interventions in literacy for both our special education department and central program team.
- SO Graves noted that this presentation will be reviewed further and that items brought forward will be carried over to the next month's agenda.

### **Standing Items**

#### **Community Partner updates**

- Almaguin Highlands community living is celebrating their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a dinner and show (comedian) on November 4<sup>th</sup>.
- Community living North Bay has partnered with Canadore and is hosting a drive-in movie at commerce court. They are also working together with the Fire Department's Halloween Night from 5pm-8pm on October 31<sup>st</sup>.

### **Ministry/MACSE updates: SO Graves**

- There are no Ministry/MACSE updates, but Superintendent Graves welcomed Principal Alison Clarke to the role of acting special education principal. Principal Clarke comes with 22 years' experience and is a great addition to the team.

### **Reports**

#### **Board report (oral) – (Board Trustee)**

- Trustee Sargent welcomed Principal Clarke to the role and thanked Assistant Superintendent Pauli for all her hard work. She relayed that at the next Board meeting on November 14<sup>th</sup> a chair/vice chair will be elected along with committee members. She is hoping to continue to sit on SEAC.
- Trustee Phillips invited the committee to attend the MYSP public session being held on October 26<sup>th</sup>. The Board welcomes any feedback on the strategic plan the committee might have.
- Trustee Fuscaldo highlighted that October is Dyslexia Awareness Month.

#### **Special Education Report- Kim Pauli**

- The team has updated the multi-year accessibility plan and is now asking for feedback. The survey will be sent out to the committee with the request for feedback by October 31<sup>st</sup>. This allows for the feedback to be incorporated for the November 14<sup>th</sup> Board meeting.

#### **SEAC chair report**

- It was suggested to have recruitment of community partners for discussion on next month's agenda.
- Land acknowledgment – the committee discussed getting more education around land acknowledgements and taking turns each meeting. Trustee Phillips offered to do this for the next meeting.

#### **New Business**

- Superintendent Graves confirmed that SEAC's Chair/Vice Chair elections will take place at the next meeting. A virtual process will take place and any questions around these positions can be directed to Krista Holmes or Superintendent Graves for further discussion.

#### **Next meeting: Thursday, November 16<sup>th</sup> at 1pm**

Motion to adjourn at 2:49pm by Jeanie Fuscaldo and seconded by Caroline Labrecque. *Carried*