

SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

October 18, 2023

PRESENT: Committee Members: M. Guentte, D. Lacombe, A. Derochers, A.Mackenzie, S. Tait
Administration: J. Smith, A. McGregor, C. Brash, S. Smith, L. Rigby, M. Wagner, J. Francis, S. Ward, A. Hilts
Guests: T.Hoffman, J. Barnes

ABSENT: (With Regrets) N.Tabbert, B. Morris

1. CALL TO ORDER

A. MacKenzie called the meeting to order.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA OF 18 October 2023

MOVED BY A. Derochers, seconded by D. Lacombe, that the Special Education Advisory Committee approves the agenda for today's meeting.

The motion was CARRIED.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF 20 September 2023

MOVED BY M. Guenette, seconded by D. Lacombe, that the Special Education Advisory Committee approves the minutes of the meeting held on 20 September 2023

4. STAFF UPDATES

T. Hoffman and J. Barnes provided an overview of the Special Education budget, including the Special Education grant.

D. Lacombe asked what GSN stands for Grants for Student Needs and J. Barnes also explained what PPF stands for -Partnerships and Priorities Funds.

M. Guenette indicated that the SIP funding has a positive ripple effect for students. It supports our highest needs students and the programs for the highest needs students.

J. Smith stated that our team does maximize every opportunity for funding.

S. Tait asked if the SIP funding goes towards students that require more than 2 EA supports?

J. Barnes responded that the SIP funds are generated and based on our EA allocation as a District, and we would assign EA's to locations where supports are required.

S. Smith, we do take students with highest needs into account when allocating.

J. Smith stated that schools are assigned a number of positions, not the funds.

S. Tait also inquired if special education expenditures are also reviewed?

T. Hoffman, it has not been past practice to review expenditures.

S. Tait as a parent and advocate we are concerned and we feel that the number of supports are down, and students with physical developments are increased.

A. McGregor introduced the new Transition Support team member S. Ward.

S. Ward shared her work history and experience working in special education throughout our District. For transition into school and transition out of school.

J. Smith shared it is sometimes difficult to decide and plan how to best utilize the funds within the time we have the funding and how we can build capacity and sustainability.

S. Tait shared that Easter Seals has an annual grant for students who are moving on after high school.

S.Tait will share the information with S.Ward.

D. Lacombe stated the Children Community Support programs also support the transition and she will also share that template with S. Ward.

L Rigby shared that they have been working on IEPs, and we have also been working on bringing together all our small class teams to work together.

6. REPORT FROM THE BOARD

No reports

7. ASSOCIATION REPORTS

S. Tait, nothing new to report, our first meeting of the year will be next week and I will have more to report at that time.

A. Derochers we have our AGM next week at the Clarion. Management is working on that. We are also looking at different models for our Be Successful program. We will not be continuing with that program as the parameters would not meet our clients going forward. Our goal is to still meet the needs of the community as they are reaching out all the time for this type of program.

D. Lacombe shared that we are reviewing our numbers in children's programs. There are 660 children we serve. 7 Case managers who support those individuals. Service is provided in blocks. The first is assessments and goal planning. When families need support they would contact us and we would set up the block of support. Very busy, most of our programs have a waitlist of 6 months. Respite provision is a real struggle and families are experiencing burn out. An idea is having an open forum to share information.

S. Tait there is a FB group called Ottawa Respite Connection. You have to vet people yourself, but it is a place to connect with people looking for respite or willing to provide respite.

A. MacKenzie shared that our families are overwhelmed, they are on waiting lists but they do not know what wait list they are on. Families are struggling. We have onsite respite for anyone under 12 years. We do try to give families direction where to go for respite.

Another item we are spending a lot of time checking in on our families and we are trying to provide support to families.

We are back in our schools. We were in HRM street this week and in VAL next week.

8. NEXT MEETING

November 15, 2023

10. ADJOURNMENT

MOVED by D. Lacombe seconded by A. Derochers that the meeting adjourned at 5:00 pm

The motion was CARRIED.