



SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

September 20, 2023

PRESENT: Committee Members: B. Morris, M. Guenette, A. MacKenzie, N. Tabbert, S. Tait,
Administration: A. McGregor, C. Brash, S. Smith, L. Rigby, J. Francis, M. Wagner, A. Garcia
Guests: S. Dolan, T. Roach

ABSENT: (With Regrets) A. Desrochers, D. Lacombe, J. Smith, A. Hilts

1. CALL TO ORDER

A. MacKenzie called the meeting to order.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA OF 20 September 2023

MOVED BY M. Guenette, seconded by B. Morris, that the Special Education Advisory Committee approves the agenda for today's meeting.

The motion was CARRIED.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF 21 June 2023

MOVED BY M. Guenette, seconded by B. Morris, that the Special Education Advisory Committee approves the minutes of the meeting held on 21 June 2023.

4. STAFF UPDATES

Angela McGregor. introduced new Consultant Jennifer Francis and advised that Alison MacDougall-Popke has now been appointed to a school.

Angela also introduced new ASD coordinators Shannon and Tara who bring with them information and new learning which has been rolled out to the whole team including the ISIS coordinators in the schools.

Shannon spoke about the shift in the last few years compared to 10 or 20 years ago in relation to a trauma informed lens.

Examples:

- Functions of behaviour - Why are children behaving the way they are? (Attention, etc.) Focus was on ignoring negative behaviour, but has now shifted to keeping children safe and maintaining rapport between educators and children.
- New method is to try and meet the demands so we can calm the student and get them back on track.
- Also looking at the televisibility of the action - how does the action appear to others?

New philosophy - When a child is calm, happy and feels safe then they are ready to learn. Not always easy to achieve this state with some of the more severe behaviours, but the goal is always HRE - Happy relaxed and engaged.

Principal MacGregor spoke about the SBT course approach (Skills Based Treatment) which is shifting this focus to continually learn and improve in order to try and meet the needs of our population.

Since piloting this new approach the feedback has been very positive about the difference this makes on students which means we are now meeting the needs of our whole population.

Trustee Guenette asked about the parent and staff response to this pivot in focus?

Shannon Dolan commented about a specific student who has very high demands and is highly aggressive. Aggressive incidents are almost gone now and transitions to work are going better. Parents and teachers are thrilled. She did concede that it has taken some unlearning and buy-in by those who have previously done the opposite.

Principal MacGregor also reported that all special education educators were pulled out of school and provided updates. They had the chance to collaborate with each other, even across the Elementary / Secondary panels. Different sessions were provided and people had the opportunity to choose which one they participated in.

Finally Principal MacGregor informed the committee about a grant that they have been given to help build capacity in the school and community groups and this has allowed them to hire a transition support facilitator to assist for the year in reaching out to these groups to see how we can build on these programs.

6. REPORT FROM THE BOARD

Bryan reported that things are quiet as they search for a new Director. Erin Kelly has been hired as the new Interim Director. She was previously a Director in Essex County. Promeus has been hired to conduct the recruitment for our new Director of Education. Hoping to have the process complete by December.

With the start up of school, there have been busing issues. They have been gradually filling them in. They feel there will be further concerns and issues and this may be ongoing for some time. It will most likely get worse before it gets better.

7. ASSOCIATION REPORTS

S. Tait provided an update for Easterseals. Not much to update, have been taking a break over the summer. Reminder that Easterseals has grants for Grade 11 & 12 students moving to Post Secondary. Grant submission deadline was Sept 15th but keep in mind for next year.

A. MacKenzie, PMFRC, announced that sensory free swimming will return starting in November. Capping sessions at 25 people with extra lifeguards. Also for Petawawa schools and two Francophone schools - going in 4 times a year to provide support and also to provide pick up kids.

N. Tabbert asked if any follow up had happened regarding school pictures? Principal MacGregor confirmed they have connected with all schools and the company. Principal MacGregor will make sure to follow up again with a reminder to schools. Mr. Tabbert also asked about the possibility of including Education Assistants (EA) at Case Conferences with the teachers. He was disappointed that his daughter's EA, who spends the majority of time with his daughter was not offered the opportunity to provide their feedback. Principal MacGregor responded that they are not able to mandate it, but there are potentially ways around. Additionally she reassured him that Teachers and EAs work as a team and the teacher would know what is happening with the student.

Finally Mr. Tabbert expressed his frustration that third parties are not allowed to enter the schools. (Ex: Dragonfly)

8. NEXT MEETING

October 18, 2023

10. ADJOURNMENT

MOVED by N. Tabbert, seconded by B. Morris that the meeting adjourned at 5:03 pm

The motion was CARRIED.