



SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

January 18, 2022

PRESENT: Committee Members: M. Guenette, B. Morris, A. MacKenzie, D. Lacombe, N. Tabbert

Administration: J. Poirier, B. Smith, M. Ingram, C. Barber, S. Smith, L. Rigby,
A. Macdougall-Popke, S. McCafferty

Guests:

ABSENT: (With Regrets) A. Bergeron

1. CALL TO ORDER

B. Smith called the meeting to order.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA OF 15 December

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

The motion was CARRIED.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF 15 December 2021

MOVED BY D. Lacombe, seconded by M. Guenette, that the Special Education Advisory Committee approves the minutes of the meeting held on 15 December 2021.

The motion was CARRIED

4. STAFF UPDATES

A. MacKenzie joined the meeting at this point and resumed the role of Chair for the remainder of the meeting.

B. Smith shared that the department has been continuing to provide support with the pivot to virtual learning and setting up for in-person learning for some Special Education students during the virtual learning period. This week they have also been working to help students transition back into routines from the extended holiday and virtual learning period. Staff are continuing to provide support in schools due to increases in absences for COVID-19. It is hoped that this unsettled period will end soon and allow for a refocus on the SEAC Manual.

We have received additional Mental Health funding to augment School Support Counselling. An additional 3 full time School Support Counselor positions will be added; one full time at Fellowes HS, one full time shared between Champlain Discovery PS and High View PS and one full time for the Renfrew area.

The After School Skills Development Program (ASSDP) will begin soon. J. Lehman and K. Wright have been hired as coordinators. Both are leaders in ASD and ABA development programs. The program will run virtually again this year. The virtual format does have benefits in reducing barriers to participation for some students who are disadvantaged by location. There are tight timelines to meet and it is hoped information will be going out to students and families soon.

The end of semester 1 is approaching for secondary students and they are being supported as we approach culminating assignments and transition to a new timetable for semester 2.

C. Barber shared that the focus for the last two weeks has been on supporting students and school teams with the shift to remote learning and back again, as well as supporting school teams and students who were doing in person learning. In preparation for semester 2 we have been working to ensure all of our secondary teachers including RSL and V-learning, have access to IEP information for their students for the next semester. Requests are being received from teachers for support around programming, heading into semester 2.

Behaviour Management Systems training sessions are planned for the upcoming Feb. 2nd PA Day. C. Barber, L. Rigby and S. Smith will deliver a full day certification for approximately 40 Educational Assistants and SSCs as well as a half day recertification session for educators in those same roles.

Integrated Transition planning Feb/March 2022 meeting dates have now been set by our high schools. D. Lacombe and C. Barber met this week to confirm the list of students for planning and the processes around these meetings.

Gr.8 to 9 transition planning is underway for some of our students with complex needs. We have been attending meetings and assisting with preparations for those transitions.

L. Rigby shared that for the past couple of years, our board has been digging deep into learning about the individual skills that lead to proficient reading, and providing literacy intervention that is precise and efficient. In the last couple of weeks she has had the opportunity to work with one of our Literacy

Coaches, L. Mason, to create a 'Literacy Intervention Planning and IEP Goal Setting' document that provides foundational literacy skills such as phonological awareness, phonics and high frequency words broken down into very specific developmental steps by grade, and aligned with each other and the Ontario Language Arts curriculum expectation that each skill is related to. Our hope is that this will be a useful tool for school teams planning interventions and writing IEP goals that are as specific and action-oriented as possible. In addition, resources have been added for assessment and intervention.

S. Smith shared that she has been working with our numeracy coaches, in connection with the math project shared last month. Resources have been created to allow us to be precise in our math interventions. We now have a checklist that merges the scope and sequence of a number of math resources and allows SERTS and teachers to provide accurate assessments and timely interventions. J. Good and the math coaches also created a slide deck that is a self-guided course for educators on the development of early numeracy skills so they can further develop their understanding of numeracy instruction and intervention.

A. MacDougall-Popke shared that she has been collaborating with the TELT-Cs (Technology Enabled Learning and Teaching coaches) to run sessions with teachers to review updates to Google Classroom and making texts digital prior to the online learning that occurred in early January, ensuring accessibility for all students. They also hosted general Q&A sessions supporting teachers. She has also been working on reviewing progress made by our Lexia literacy software users, renewing technology subscriptions used in Special Education, and continuing with SEA assistive technology training.

M. Ingram shared that she has had the opportunity to work with different administrators while supporting schools due to absences, including in our Section 23 program New Horizons. She has also spent 2 days in the last weeks completing BMS "Train the Trainer" and hopes to be able to assist with BMS training in the near future.

6. REPORT FROM THE BOARD

M. Guenette shared that at the Committees meeting on January 11, 2022, Director Buffone gave a verbal report on operational matters regarding the pivot to virtual learning following the winter break. M. Guenette that they are impressed with everyone's ability to manage under these exceptional circumstances and appreciate staff taking the time to prepare and deliver presentations.

M. Guenette shared a concern that he had been made aware of in the media regarding Provincial Demonstration Schools for blind and deaf students. The report said that the residences attached to these schools were closing, therefore out of town students are having to learn virtually which is very difficult for students with vision or hearing differences. The concern is that the schools attached to the residences may also close. M. Guenette asked if RCDSB had any students who attend or do we make use of the expertise available in these schools. B. Smith and Special Education staff said that we have had some students utilise the schools. This is something we will keep on the radar.

B. Morris shared his appreciation of staff and the time being taken to work "above and beyond" in the current climate. He shared his hopes that staff will try to keep some balance and ensure they take care of themselves.

7. ASSOCIATION REPORTS

D. Lacombe shared that she is very impressed that staff are able to keep pushing and creating action oriented plans, not just maintaining the status quo in the current climate. She referred back to the previous meeting and the report on the FASD Seminar. She wanted to remind the committee that they have a dedicated FASD worker, V. Gillon, who can provide support, and provide materials and resources related to FASD that would be useful.

A. Mackenzie shared that PMFRC programming will continue virtually. There are a few more programme offerings coming up. A parenting programming with training in self regulation has been adapted specifically to military families. The social skills improv program "Improvaganza" is being modified to be offered on a virtual platform. There will be a speaker series for families with exceptional needs where families will share their experiences and offer advice around advocacy and achieving goals.

Michael Jaques, author of "Here's My Book" will be a guest speaker along with his father, Marcel, in February/March. They will share stories with families of their struggles and how they were overcome.

A. Mackenzie noted that the PMFRC workshops are open to the public and she will share the information.

8. NEXT MEETING

February 16, 2022

10. ADJOURNMENT

MOVED by M. Guenette, seconded by B. Morris that the meeting adjourned at 4:43 pm

The motion was CARRIED.