

Upper Grand District School Board  
**Special Education Advisory Committee**

**Minutes**

**Wednesday, December 9, 2015**

The Special Education Advisory Committee of the Upper Grand District School Board met on Wednesday, December 9, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. in the Boardroom at 500 Victoria Road North, Guelph.

**The following Association Members were present:** Sue Shaw, Autism Ontario-Wellington County, Jason Offer, Association for Bright Children-ABC, Sharon Dills, Learning Disabilities Association of Wellington County, Laurie Whyte, FASworld Canada, Don Richardson, Integration Action for Inclusion in Education and Community (Ontario), Carole Craig, Integration Action for Inclusion in Education and Community (Ontario), Stacey Stevens, VOICE for Hearing Impaired Children

**Present from Staff were:** Tracey Lindsay, Superintendent of Program, Cheryl Van Ooteghem, Principal of Program, Trudy Counter, Coordinator of Communication, Language and Speech Services, Wendy McIntosh-Clodd, Secondary Vice-Principal, Special Education Consultants, Mark Howe, Lesley Anne Jordan, Debbie Snow, Jacqueline Foster

**Trustees Present:** Linda Busutil, Bruce Schieck

**Absent:** Carrie Proudfoot, Autism Ontario-Wellington County, Dr. Mary Susan Crawford, Chief Psychologist, Christine Kay, Principal, Audra Cook, Secondary Vice-Principal, Special Education Consultants, Ben McCabe, Kyla Lightfoot, Jackie Speers, Kathy Green

Tracey Lindsay, Superintendent of Program, (Acting as Chair until Linda Busutil took over) called the meeting to order. She welcomed everyone and extended a special welcome to the parents and teachers that came to support the students that were presenting.

**Approval of Agenda December 9, 2015**

Laurie Whyte moved that the agenda of December 9, 2015 meeting be approved. Bruce Schieck seconded the motion.

**The motion carried.**

**Approval of Minutes of November 11, 2015**

Laurie Whyte moved that the minutes be received. Sharon Dills seconded the motion.

**The motion carried.**

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### Action Items

Tracey Lindsay updated the Action Items chart with the following:

- Special Education Survey – University of Guelph has taken our feedback and will incorporate into survey. This survey will be finalized and sent out March 1, 2016. Survey will close at the end of March and the results will be collated for principals to use for the next school year. This Climate survey will be distributed to parents, students and teachers. Sue Shaw questioned if this draft would be reviewed by SEAC. Tracey Lindsay responded that this survey is not a SEAC survey and so will not be brought to SEAC. The UGDSB Climate survey encompasses mental health, IEPs and safe and inclusive schools. SEAC did not find the Climate Survey results very informative so was initially interested in a separate survey, since the UGDSB Climate Survey was being revamped, input was provided but the draft will not come back to SEAC for approval.
- Co-op Placement – Tracey Lindsay to meet with Superintendent Zen
- Bully Prevention Plan – Don Richardson requested that the minutes reflect that he feels that the Board is not in compliance with the Education Act regarding Bill 13. He will table a motion at the January SEAC meeting regarding this concern. It was requested that the SEAC minutes reflect the following, *“Don Richardson asked if UGDSB had a Board Bullying Prevention Plan that was separate from the school plans. This is to be reviewed every two years. Linda Busuttill replied that she will follow up on this question and will bring the information back to Don Richardson.”*

### Correspondence

Letter from Rob Kirwan, Chair, Special Advisory Committee, Ottawa Carleton District School Board, addressed to the Mr. Michael Barrett, President, Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA) expressing their support for the efforts of Thames Valley District School Board and the Upper Grand District School Board regarding a coordinated provincial FASD strategy for children with FASD in Ontario Schools.

Tracey Lindsay asked for feedback. None given. No action required at this time.

### Technology – Elementary Inclusion Technology Coaches

Cheryl Van Ooteghem, Principal of Program introduced the Elementary Inclusion Technology Coaches (EITC) and welcomed her special guests to the committee. She commented that she was excited to hear from the students and how technology has improved their learning.

Elementary Inclusion Technology Coach is a new role (replacing the Itinerant Technology Resource Teacher positions) which now allows coaches to visit up to three times the number of schools and students that then can assist. The main focus is to help LD students with SEA equipment.

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Three students demonstrated the various computer applications they utilized to enable them to articulate their strengths and needs. When they are in the school, they are co-teaching, modelling and supporting the inclusion of all students. Some of the tools available to students are the following: *predictive tool* – this generates a list of words and sounds them out. The student knows if it is the word they want to use. *Speech to Text* – student speaks to the computer and the computer types the words. *Readability* – this extension clears all the distractions away from the webpage and allows the student to focus. *Read and Write* – this is applicable for all languages. One of the students' who attends a French Immersion school spoke of how this technology enabled her to get caught up and follow along in class.

The EITCs thanked the students for sharing their stories and the parents and principals for their support. Linda Busutil thanked the EITCs, students and Cheryl Van Ooteghem for their presentation.

Sue Shaw questioned if this technology was available to all students. The coaches replied that it is available to all students. They explained that the students create a learning environment in their community. If there is a problem, the students get involved and help. The students with the SEA equipment are the leaders and help the other students in the class. It also benefits the teacher to see that the students are troubleshooting.

Linda Busutil thanked the Superintendents for making Chromebooks available in public libraries.

Tracey Lindsay thanked each of the students for their presentation with a token of appreciation.

### **VOICE Presentation**

Linda Busutil thanked Stacey Stevens for presenting at the December meeting.

Stacey Stevens began her presentation with a video explaining the different ways that students have lost their hearing. Some are born with a hearing loss. VOICE is a great organization that helps all types of people by providing information on how to speak, learn and hear. Children with a hearing loss learn to play music, play sports, draw, read, do ballet, etc. VOICE also provides an opportunity for other deaf children to meet and communicate.

Nearly 4 of every 1,000 babies born in Ontario have a hearing loss and as many as 10 in 1,000 school-aged children have a hearing loss. 40% of students with a hearing loss have another physical or learning challenge. Most deaf children can learn to listen and speak. Early diagnosis helps with options. There are good hearing aids or cochlear implants that enable the child to hear. In the Upper Grand District School Board there are 113 students being supported for hearing loss.

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In addition to early identification and access to auditory-verbal therapy, one of the identified factors contributing to the success of mainstreamed students is the support of trained teachers of the deaf and hard of hearing. Specialist teachers understand the specific needs of deaf and hard of hearing children and support both students and classroom teachers.

VOICE mission statement is to ensure that all children with hearing loss have their rights upheld with access to services for developing their abilities to learn to hear, listen and speak.

Online resources have been updated and are available for free [www.voicefordeafkids.com](http://www.voicefordeafkids.com). A new online resource added is "I Feel Good – A Guide to Support Mental Health".

VOICE Conference is held at the University of Guelph on the first Saturday of May every year. This year it will be held on May 7, 2016. "Get Loud, Dress Loud Day" will be May 6, 2016.

One of their annual events is the VOICE Family Camp, at Bark Lake, Haliburton. This is held for three days in August for all hearing impaired children to get together to socialize and network. Local events in Wellington-Waterloo also provide social opportunities for families and children.

VOICE students graduate high school, pursue post-secondary education and fully participate in the hearing society.

Tracey Lindsay thanked Stacey Stevens for her presentation. She commented that she is already thinking where this information can be shared.

*Powerpoint presentation is available in the December 2015 SEAC meeting folder on UGCloud.*

### **Special Education Plan and Review (small group discussion)**

The Committee formed groups and reviewed the 'Transportation' section of the Special Education Plan 2015-2016.

Comments and suggestions were shared with the group. Data gathered will be inputted into the Special Education Review document on UGCloud.

### **Open Forum**

**Laurie Whyte**, FASworld Canada – Training by Nancy Hall, lead facilitator and co-founder of FASCETS Canada: East, in Hamilton on February 29 2016 and March 1, 2016. Two day training for Professionals held in December 7 and 8, 2015 in Woodstock. Planning to bring Nancy Hall to Guelph in May 2016 for training opportunities.

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**Don Richardson**, Integration Action for Inclusion in Education and Community (Ontario) – Association has had success in starting new Chapters in the province. The Toronto District School Board now has a new Chapter.

Don Richardson presented a motion to SEAC that reads:

*“SEAC supports the Upper Grand District School Board in efforts to comply with Bill 13 which amended the Education Act with respect to bullying, and which became law in Ontario in 2012, and Ministry of Education Policy and Program Memorandum 144 (PPM 144) - Bullying Prevention and Intervention, which was also issued in 2012. SEAC seeks to support the Board in achieving compliance with both Bill 13 and PPM 144 by no later than March 31st, 2016, including:*

- 1) establishing a Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan for the schools of the Board and requiring its schools to implement the plan (Bill 13)*
- 2) when establishing the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan, soliciting the views of the pupils, teachers and staff of the Board, the volunteers working in the schools, the parents and guardians of the pupils, school councils and the public (Bill 13)*
- 3) when establishing the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan, consulting with the Special Education Advisory Committee, the Parent Involvement Committee, and with community partners, including social service agencies, mental health agencies, members of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities, and other appropriate community groups (PPM 144)*
- 4) when establishing the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan, following the model plan and related guidance provided by the Ministry to Boards in January, 2013*
- 5) making the Board's Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan available to the public by posting it on the board's website (Bill 13)*
- 6) having school principals make the board's Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan available to the public by posting it on the school websites (Bill 13)”*

The motion was deferred to the January meeting in order to get additional information and then to continue the discussion.

Board compliance with Bill 13 was discussed. Linda Busuttil commented that the Board has posted the Ministry template on the website. It is not SEAC's role to construct the Plan but rather the role of the Safe, Equitable and Inclusive Schools Steering Committee (SEISSC) to develop and bring forward for input. SEAC has asked that the SEISSC minutes be provided to SEAC via Google Docs for members to review prior to January meeting.

**Jason Offer**, Association for Bright Children-ABC – Pro Grant update – met last month to discuss budget costs as grant that was received was less than anticipated. Have a tentative speaker and venue has been booked. April 16, 2016 is the scheduled date for sessions: Pathways (jobs), Anxiety, IEPs/IPRCs, Advocacy. Jason Offer will post on Google Drive when more information is available.

### Updates from the Superintendent of Program

- Kiwanis lunch on December 3, 2015 – “most awesome day of the year”. Greater number of staff attended. Fantastic day!

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- Teacher from Drayton Heights won the AODA 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Champion award for leadership in accessibility and disability issues in the community. This is a one-time award that recognizes an outstanding individual who shows passion and commitment “in the promotion and awareness of accessibility and inclusiveness in their community”. Details are available on the UGDSB website.
- Chromebooks are now available in 25 public libraries for Upper Grand Students. The program launched in April 2015 in three pilot sites within the Wellington County library system: Drayton, Palmerston and Mount Forest. It has grown to include 14 branches in Wellington County, 7 branches in Guelph, 2 in Orangeville as well as Shelburne Public Library and Grand Valley Public Library.

### Trustee Report

**Bruce Schieck** – Chair and Vice-Chair of Business Operations have been acclaimed. Syrian refugees are being welcomed to our communities. Bonnie Talbot, Superintendent of Education will be the main lead and contact for the UGDSB. We are expecting 50 – 60 families.

**Linda Busuttil** – Board is bargaining locally.

Linda Busuttil thanked Bruce Schieck for his time on SEAC. Barbara Lustgarten-Evoy will replace Bruce Schieck and will attend in January 2016.

### Meeting Summary, Recommendation(s), Motions(s) and Action(s)

- New Action Item: Transportation – find a way to determine how clients are being served
- SEAC Calendar – add May 6 2016, GET LOUD – DRESS LOUD Day and the Annual Voice Conference on May 7, 2016 at University of Guelph
- Board Bullying Prevention Plan – this is standing item – Don Richardson will bring motion to January meeting.
- Regular Agenda Item to be added - SEISSC report monthly and minutes to be shared with SEAC
- Role of SEAC on SEISSC – clarify the role of SEAC on SEISSC to bring input to SEAC.
- Follow-up with SEISSC on the SEAC request for a pre-consultation of the Board Bullying Prevention Plan

### Questions for January Meeting Topic - FASD

- What could we (staff) do better or differently to support students with FASD?
- What information could be shared with every teacher?
- Tips for staff – student voice (What would your son/daughter want us (staff) to know?)
- What does life look like beyond school? What are the resources and best practices for transitioning to life after school.

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**Special Education Plan Topic for January**

Special Education Class Placements Provided by the Board (pages 39 – 48) will be reviewed at January 2016 meeting.

Janice Wright, Superintendent of Finance will provide year end results and current budget. Guiding Principles will be provided to committee for review.

**Other**

**Adjournment**

Laurie Whyte motioned for adjournment of meeting at 9:30 p.m.