



SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee was held via Google Meet
Wednesday, October 20, 2021 at 12:00 pm CT

<https://meet.google.com/mik-vvrp-hxs>

Present	Evie O’Flaherty Jennifer Kitowski Brenda Barradell – Executive Assistant	Gerald Kleist David Cornish Michelle Sanderson Emily Kaldeway	Olivia Karle Chantal Moore Tara Barber
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Regrets	Lana Goodman Heather Bird	Debbie Michaud	Shirley Jette
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Guests / Members of the Public	none
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Call to Order at The meeting was called to order at 12:03 pm by the Chair, Evie O’Flaherty

**Approval of the
Agenda** Moved by: David Cornish
Seconded by: Gerald Kleist

The order of the agenda would be amended to allow for the Phonological Awareness presentation to be given at the beginning of the meeting so that the presenter could finish in time for her to meet with students at 1:00 pm.

The date of the next meeting on the agenda should read Nov. 17, 2021.

THAT the agenda for the October 20th, 2021 meeting be amended.

CARRIED

Presentation

- **Tara Barber** **Phonological Awareness**
Tara Barber, KPDSB Speech Language Pathologist provided a very detailed overview of Phonological Awareness, with information on the following:
 1. Early Developing Literacy Skills (EDLS) – which refers to everything a child should know about reading and writing, before actually learning how to read

and write. EDLS are the building blocks required for learning effective reading and writing strategies.

2. Phonological Processing – The use of phonological information, or the sound structure of oral language, to process written and oral information.
3. Phonological Awareness (PA) is an ‘umbrella term’ referring to a wide range of auditory skills: a conscious awareness or sensitivity to the sound structure of speech or spoken language; the awareness that spoken language can be broken down into smaller parts (i.e., sentences, phrases, words, syllables, sounds).
4. Phonemic Awareness (which is a subset of PA) refers to the smallest unit of sound in human speech i.e., the phoneme: the awareness that spoken words can be broken down into individual phonemes or sounds.

She noted that when we are talking about PA, we are talking about “the SOUNDS that the ears HEAR”. It does not refer to the spelling or symbols attached to those sounds. PA is the “AUDITORY awareness” of the sound structure of language. It is different than Phonics which incorporates symbols and sound-symbol relationships. PA intervention can take place with the *eyes closed!*

She stressed that Phonological Awareness is just one piece of the puzzle. Some children have very strong PA skills and are still struggling readers/writers. Some children have weak PA skills and may have strengths in areas that have allowed them to develop relative fluent reading skills with minimal impact on comprehension. A thorough evaluation is necessary for interpretation and intervention planning purposes.

Questions/Comments:

David Cornish would like to sit in on a PD PowerPoint presentation that Tara might give at a school (when he is able to go into a school again). Tara said she is willing to speak to him or anyone else at any time on this subject. Jenn Kitowski thought it would be a good idea to invite parents for a presentation on Phonological Awareness.

The Chair thanked Tara for the thorough presentation.

Approval of the Minutes

Moved by: Gerald Kleist
Seconded by: Olivia Karle

THAT the minutes of the meeting on Sept. 15th, 2021 having been circulated, be approved as written. **CARRIED**

Business Arising

1. Minor Changes to the Special Education Plan (copies of Plan and Executive Summary were included in the Meeting Package).
2. Recruitment in areas where we are now lacking representation.

Chantal is working on getting representations from other areas of the Board. We have no representation from Dryden/Sioux Lookout at the moment. She has reached out to Dryden Community Living and the Dryden District Services Board. Also, we would like to bring in a parent hopefully from Dryden/Ignace/Upsala area.

3. Letters of 'Thanks' to Kari Couch and Pearl Alver were sent. A letter will also go out to Heather Bird following this meeting.
4. Discussion about Michael Jacques' presentation offer.
Chantal talked to Michael's father, Marcel. He shared the fact that Michael is part of the Ministry Advisory Committee for Special Education in Ontario and the President of Community Living Ontario. He has presented to other SEAC committees and staff. His presentation is usually 1 hour + questions. His message is one of inspiration for students who struggle and have special needs. It's a focus on setting appropriate goals in terms of the world of work. Chantal felt that his presentation would be worthwhile. She suggested that we also invite all the Special Education team to that meeting if he comes. Discussion ensued regarding when this presentation should take place i.e., during a regular SEAC meeting or outside of regular meeting times.

David Cornish asked about costs and live streaming this presentation. Chantal noted that the *only cost* is to purchase Michael's book. Her suggestion was that we should start with SEAC and then, depending on the messaging and if it's aligned with the philosophy of the Board, we would look at further presentations.

The Chair asked if it would be face-to-face or virtual. She felt it might be impractical to do it at a SEAC meeting due to the length (and the fact that these meetings are open to the public). She agrees/prefers it should start with SEAC and the Special Education team before we suggest presenting to others and see how it goes. She asked the committee if they were interested in an evening meeting.

Chantal said the presentation would have to be virtual (otherwise we would have to pay travel etc. and with COVID it is best to do it virtually). Committee members were interested in going ahead with the presentation.

Jennifer Kitowski suggested that we poll the group re the following suggested times:

- a) during a regular SEAC meeting;
- b) at a special evening meeting;
- c) on a weekend i.e., Saturday evening; or
- d) any of the above.

Brenda will send out a poll and report back at the next meeting.

**Review of
Presentations for
2020 - 2021**

The Chair reviewed the list which was in the meeting package. David Cornish asked if the December meeting would have both the Financial Update and the usual Information for members – presented by the Chair. The Chair replied that yes, both presentations could happen in December, as hers would likely be short (depending on the number of changes in the legislation). Chantal – If Michael Jacques is presenting at a regular meeting, we may have to re-jig the presentation schedule.

**Covid Update –
- Chantal Moore**

Chantal Moore highlighted some important points in her COVID-19 Update:
- We continue to follow all the protocols set out by the NWHU and the Ministry of Education i.e., self-screening, masking etc.
No active advisories!! All measures in place seem to be working well. The highlight for students is sports – all core sports are going forward now. Some field trips are also happening e.g., swimming lessons etc. Staff are happy to be working with students in person again.

**Association
Reports**

Firefly Report – Lana Goodman

- New online Self-referral form for Child and Youth Mental Health (CYMC) Services – can still access CYMH in the same way as before as well. one for parents/caregivers coming soon!
- Ashley Hendy has moved to School Mental Health Ontario, and we have hired 2 new CYMH clinical managers in Kenora - Zoe and Jodelle.
- We still have counselor vacancies in SLKT but have hired a clinician that has started.
- New CYMH brief model - regional approach will see 2 Single sessions available a day which should see significant improvements in wait times for first appointment.
- FIREFLY daycares and aftercare programs are being transitioned to the KDSB as of Jan 1, 2022.
- Creating a seating clinic model for our clients who use wheelchairs for mobility. This involves our local vendors attending along with an OT who is specializing in seating to have more local access to specialized seating. GJCC (George Jeffrey Children's Centre) is supporting with mentorship to our clinicians.
- Have created an Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) consultation role. This will hopefully turn into a formal AAC Clinic now that FIREFLY is officially designated a Children's Treatment Centre and will be applying for funding for specialty clinics.

Member Reports

Emily Kaldeway: Special Education Team Report

In the last month, schools have been bustling learning the software for student information and IEPs. SELs have been supporting this transition. This past Friday was the deadline for initial IEPs being sent out to parents/guardians.

ABAs have been visiting schools and students on their caseload to support transitions back into the school building for students with Autism and students with Tier 3 behaviour support needs. There has been much collaboration between the ABAs, school teams, and homes to support this transition.

All team members are travelling as required to be in communities and meet with students and school teams in person. Everyone is thrilled to be back in school and working with students again.

The whole team is working to take the lessons from our experience over the last two years as we move forward. The ability to meet on short notice with schools in other communities via Zoom or Meet and providing virtual assessments have allowed us to provide more timely support and assessment. We anticipate that using Zoom and Meet will enable us to support the unique geographical needs of the board more effectively over the long term.

Correspondence

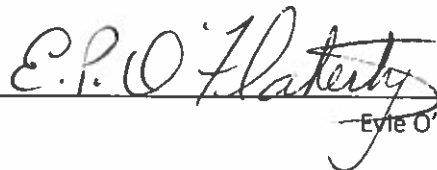
1. Trillium Lakelands – letter of support for Bill 172 – An Act in Relation to Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (to be included with next SEAC package).
 - For information only – no action is necessary.
 - Evie noted that our Board has always been a leader in FASD work.
2. Heather Bird requested a leave of absence. If this isn't possible, she would tender her resignation from the committee. Chantal checked the legislation which states our obligation to have representation from local associations, but we can also appoint additional members who are not representatives of associations i.e., parents. The committee agreed that we will accept Heather's resignation but welcome her back (when she is ready) as an alternate parent member. Of course, she is welcome to attend any meeting as they are open to the public.

Next Meeting:

November 17, 2021 at noon
After some discussion, it was decided to try another noon hour meeting before changing the time for all future meetings.

Adjournment

Moved by Gerald Kleist
That we adjourn at 1:05 p.m.



Evie O'Flaherty, Chair