

REPORT OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

2005 February 01
12:15 p.m. - 3:10 p.m.

Members

P. Sattler, Trustee (Chair)	J. Steele, Learning Disabilities Association - London Region (LDA-LR)
D. Anstead, Trustee (+12:22, -2:00p.m.)	A. Loebus, London Down Syndrome Association (+1:15)
L. Stevenson, Trustee	B. Bialik, London Down Syndrome Association
B. Hoffman, Autism Society Ontario London and District	B. Montminy, Madame Vanier Children's Services
B. Hurwitz, Association for Bright Children (Thames Valley)	B. Bocking, Thames Valley Children's Centre
D. Ensing, Association for Bright Children (Thames Valley)	L. Manicom, Thames Valley District Council of Home and School Association
S. Wilson, Community Living London, Oxford, Elgin, Middlesex	R. Tisdale, Thames Valley District School Council
A. Morse, Easter Seal Society	C. Stewart, Thames Valley District School Council
P. Gillis, Integration Action for Inclusion London Chapter (IAI)	L. Wilhelm, Voice

Administration and Others

V. Towell, Secondary Principal	B. Tucker, Superintendent of Education (+1:50)
M. Hubert, Corporate Services Assistant	S. Campbell, Learning Supervisor

Regrets: C. Oke, G. McGahey, P. Cook, J. Worthington, S. Seymour
Absent: J. Ross

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting convened at 12:15 p.m. in the Katherine Harley Room at the Education Centre.

2. CONFIRMATION OF AGENDA

"Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) Waivers" was added as item 11 and "Adjournment" re-numbered as item 12. The agenda was confirmed as amended on a motion by L. Stevenson.

3. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

No conflicts of interest were declared.

4. SEAC UPDATES

- Special Announcement

Chair Sattler introduced Steve Campbell, Learning Supervisor, who is currently under contract while Vicki Corcoran, Learning Supervisor, is on secondment to the Ministry of Education. Mr. Campbell, previously with the London Board for 16 years, was welcomed to the Committee.

5. REPORT OF MEETING FROM 2005 JANUARY 4

The report of the 2005 January 04 meeting was approved on a motion by R. Tisdale.

Business Arising From the Report

Chair Sattler reported on item 9.1 of the report which discussed publishing members' personal information on the SEAC website. She stated that a signed release from each member would be necessary to authorize the posting of personal data. It was noted that members' personal information is included as part of the Special Education Plan which can be viewed and downloaded from the Board's site. It is to be determined whether inclusion of SEAC members' personal contact information on the Special Education Plan is a Ministry requirement. The SEAC Members section of the Board's website should indicate contact information for the Associations along with the names of the current representatives.

5.1 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM REVIEW OF SEAC MEETING EVALUATION FORMS

The review of the SEAC meeting evaluations, presented at the 2004 November 23 meeting by Kyle Heffernan, Learning Co-ordinator, included several suggestions for re-structuring the SEAC meetings and evaluation forms. A sub-committee, established at the 2005 January 04 SEAC meeting to review Ms. Heffernan's report, suggested that the proposals contained in the report be adopted into practice with the following modifications:

- that the sub-committee meet with Steve Killip, Research and Assessment, to draft a measurable evaluation form;
- that the Vice-Chair be appointed the official time-keeper beginning with the 2005 March 01 meeting;
- that new agenda items be added for discussion at the end of the meeting, as time permits and that sub-items, if any, be added where applicable in the existing agenda;
- that "Urgent Issues" become a part of the SEAC Updates and scheduled earlier in the agenda;
- that an in-service be scheduled to review Robert's Rules of Order;
- that groups making presentations provide a fact sheet to be attached to the agenda for members to review prior to the meeting;
- that the order of the agenda be adjusted and that "Special Education Plan" and "Special Education Budget Issues" be added as standard items.

6. COMMITTEE UPDATES

6.1 COMMUNICATIONS

Copies of a report from the SEAC Communications Sub-Committee outlining ideas and progress in the development of the SEAC website were circulated. The main page of the site will include links to several related websites as well as SEAC information such as membership, agendas and reports, the special education plan, frequently asked questions (FAQ's), a glossary of special education terms and acronyms, and a "What's New" section. Sample questions and answers for the FAQ section were provided and discussed and it was explained that this area will provide short answers as well as links to additional information, resources and relevant websites. Concerns regarding currency of information, definitions, and language were noted and an annual review of Parent Guides was suggested. Members were advised to forward their concerns and suggestions to A. Morse at abmorse@kwic.com.

Superintendent Tucker and R. Tisdale, Thames Valley District School Council, have provided specific topics for discussion at Home and School and School Council meetings to encourage meaningful public input for the 2005-06 Special Education Plan. Documentation of the consultation process is to be included in the Plan and it was suggested that if successful, the process be implemented as best practice for future years.

6.2 PERVASIVE DEVELOPMENTAL DISORDER (PDD) REVIEW

Learning Co-ordinators Carol DeDecker, and Marilyn Foss joined the meeting to present the PDD Review and the Gifted Review. Ms. DeDecker outlined the data gathering and analysis process of the PDD Review and distributed copies of the draft report for discussion. The report provided review findings, recommendations for changes or enhancements, and staff development implications in the areas of assessment and program planning, program interventions, level of service, and instruction.

Emphasis was placed on assessing social, behavioural, and adaptive skills, job placements for transitional students, transition planning, and training for bus and van drivers. Details of the report were discussed and Ms. DeDecker responded to questions.

6.3 GIFTED REVIEW

Marilyn Foss distributed a draft of the Gifted Review and described the review process stating that the preliminary findings indicate that there is little common understanding of what gifted programming is or should be. The following definition was taken from the section on Giftedness in The Ontario Curriculum Unit Planner: Special Education Companion (2002) as a basis for interpreting the data, assessing the state of current programming, and making recommendations:

“Giftedness: an unusually advanced degree of general intellectual ability that requires differentiated learning experiences of a depth and breadth beyond those normally provided in the regular school program to satisfy the level of educational potential indicated.”

The draft provided preliminary findings, recommendations and staff development implications in the areas of General Findings, Program Interventions, Instruction, Learning Environment and Technology. The review is expected to address issues of congregated vs itinerant with the intent of providing a full spectrum of service for students.

A need to lobby the Ministry of Education to provide programming standards for gifted students, similar to PDD standards, was noted.

7. FINANCIAL UPDATE

Executive Superintendent Greene and Jane Roth, Manager Financial Services, joined the meeting. To accommodate the guests, “Financial Update” was moved to Item 7 on the agenda and “Correspondence” was moved to Item 9. Copies of the audited 2003-04 Special Education and Partnerships for Excellence Financial Results and the Special Education 2004-05 Budget were distributed.

Mr. Greene discussed the reports explaining the financial position at the end of the 2003-04 fiscal period and outlining the preliminary 2004-05 Special Education Budget. The budget projected a deficit of \$3,281,581 as a result of Ministry Memo 2004: B11 which indicated that 2004-05 Intensive Support Amount (ISA) allocations would be reduced by calculated underspending. An amount of \$4,631,067 was transferred to offset the ISA allocation reduction leaving a reserve balance of \$628,497. The government plans to channel funds not utilized as a result of underspending into a new Effectiveness and Equity Fund to be reinvested in special education over the 2004-05 school year. Guidelines for accessing the Fund have not been released.

During the discussion, Mr. Greene explained that an allocation for transportation of special needs students is isolated in the Transportation budget. B. Woodley, Supervisor, Transportation Services, is to be invited to the 2005 March 01 meeting to report the details of these costs.

8. SYSTEM ROAD MAP SPECIAL EDUCATION PLAN 2005-2006

Superintendent Tucker presented a proposed outline of the Special Education System Road-Map as a separate entity from the Special Education Plan. Guided by the principles of improving student learning, supporting teachers supporting students, and enhancing the spectrum of service, the road-map is based on key concepts such as multi-disciplinary and inter-disciplinary teams, and a differentiated approach to staff development.

It was noted that no major changes to the Special Education Plan are planned. It is anticipated that a draft of sections requiring modifications will be presented for discussion at the 2005 March 01 SEAC meeting.

Mr. Tucker presented a letter from St. Clair College regarding its application to the Ministry of Education for priority funding to deliver an Ontario College Graduate Certificate Program in Autism and Behavioural Science. As a community partner, it is anticipated that the Board would host student work placements if the program is approved.

9. CORRESPONDENCE

9.1 2004 October 14 - Re: Halton District School Board v. Ontario Special Education (English) Tribunal et al. - Divisional Court file no. 105/04

A copy of a letter was received, dated 2004 October 14, from the Ministry of the Attorney General to Solicitors Keel and Cotrelle regarding the Halton District School Board v. Ontario Special Education Tribunal.

10. FORUM: ASSOCIATION UPDATES

B. Hurwitz, Association for Bright Children, announced that she would be leaving the Committee and D. Ensing, the current Alternate, would be the new representative. She plans to continue on the Gifted Review Committee. Trustee Stevenson thanked Ms. Hurwitz for her contributions over the past several years.

A. Loebus was welcomed as the representative for London Down Syndrome Association replacing Ed Hager and Bev Bialik was named as the new alternate. It was suggested that an induction process be developed to ensure that new members and alternates receive current documentation and manuals.

11. IDENTIFICATION, PLACEMENT AND REVIEW COMMITTEE (IPRC) WAIVERS

It was requested that a discussion of the Policy and Procedure around IPRC waivers be included on the 2005 March 1 SEAC agenda.

12. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 3:10 p.m., on a motion by R. Tisdale.

P. SATTLER
Chairperson