



**ALGOMA DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD
SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (S.E.A.C.)**

MINUTES OF MEETING
October 26, 2021
Via MS Teams
12:00 Start Time

Present: P. Mick (Member-At-Large), L. Lambert (Algoma Public Health - Infant Child Development Program), S. Kitts (North Shore Tribal Council), M. Barbeau (Community Living Algoma) A. Gauthier (Thrive)

Trustees: R. Reid, S. Evans

Staff: B. Vallee (Superintendent), C. Phillips (Recording Secretary), K. Viita (System Administrator)

Regrets: N/A

Guests: D. Fillmore- Mental Health Lead- Updates on Mental Health Programs/Services

Chair Pat Mick called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m. With the approval of Chair Mick, Superintendent Vallee to facilitate the remainder of the Teams meeting.

1 Round Table - Introduction of members, staff, and guests.

2. Approval of Agenda and Minutes (September 21, 2021)

- Agenda approval. Moved by. S. Kitts. Seconded by M. Barbeau. All in favor.
- Approval of Minutes. Moved by R. Reid Seconded by S. Kitts. All in favor.

3. Correspondence: No correspondence received this month.

4. Presentation: Update on Mental Health Programs/Services (D. Fillmore, Mental Health Lead)

Highlights of the presentation included:

- It has been exciting times for Mental Health services with Algoma District School Board.
- Our *Mental Health, Counselling and Attendance Team* is currently sitting at 18 staff. We are currently hiring for temporary positions to cover maternity leaves.
- During school closure period, we continued to provide students with access to mental health services. 3 types of platforms- in-person, audio, secure video available although in-person counselling is clearly the preference. Most frequent presenting issues include stress, anxiety, and mood management. Attendance/engagement has also been a concern during the pandemic.

- Our services operate without waitlists. School-based services are intended to be short-term so if kids need to see a counsellor that happens quickly. School-based services provide referrals and supports for system navigation when students require more intensive levels of support that are the purview of our community partners.
- Summer Wellness Programming. A video prepared by Grace Winters, one of our summer wellness counsellors was viewed. Summer was successful, we provided direct counselling to students on-site at the Education Centre, as well as conducting outreach to over 500 students identified by their home schools with engagement or attendance concerns during the pandemic closure. Lots of positive feedback by parents on our re-engagement efforts as this provided a timely check-in to determine ways that we could help support families in the return to school
- Rebound Mentorship Program. Now in our 4th year in partnership with Algoma Family Services. Grade 11 and 12 students act as peer mentors and receive a course credit (U-level) that incorporates both academic expectations and the practical experience of mentoring. Programming focuses on social and life skills that enable young people to make sound decisions, communicate effectively and develop a sense of personal responsibility. Last year, the program was offered virtually to 10 classes in six schools across the district...technology has enabled us to provide the program to whole classes virtually, rather than just selected students on-site.
- A *Back-to-School* professional development session focused on Mental Health was provided for all staff at the beginning of September. Very comprehensive overview focused on promotion of positive mental health, prevention of mental health issues, and an overview of resources to promote social-emotional learning in the classroom.

Questions/Comments: S. Evans- thanked Darryl and commented that the information provided at the board meeting and at SEAC was fantastic. The past few years have been tough, and we are amazed how well the mental health team has supported our students. Very thankful that the Rebound program, Summer Wellness program etc. have been in place. The counsellors that work for Algoma District School Board are amazing and kudos for all the support they provide for students!

5. Member Organization Updates

P. Mick (Member at large):

- Nothing to report.

L. Lambert (APH Infant Child Development Program)

- It has been a very busy start-up as many JKs with high needs entered school this year. We have also started the transition process for our students who will be entering into school next September.
- Biggest struggle for students is anxiety, needs such as toileting have also been a huge challenge.
- Very grateful to be back in the swing of things in the schools and supporting students. It has been very exciting to see students in person again.
- Dealing with pandemic – learning curve due to ongoing change, for example the provincial and local screening chart are not the same which has made things difficult for many of our parents to figure out which guideline to follow.

M. Barbeau (Community Living Algoma)

- Community Living Algoma had their annual meeting September 29th, 2021, via Zoom.

- CLA is discussing bringing in Shelly Moore as an on-line presenter (were originally looking at an in-person presentation prior to the pandemic). Shelley Moore who is based in Vancouver, British Columbia, is a highly sought-after teacher, researcher, consultant, and storyteller that has worked with school districts and community organizations throughout both Canada and the United States. B. Vallee recommended members check out her video collection online – lots of great stuff!
- Staff have been moving back into the office and have been able to meet in person with clients instead of on the phone or via Zoom.

S. Kitts (North Shore Tribal Council)

- Majority of staff are back in the office.
- Happy to be able to support students in the school environment again
- Currently looking at hiring 4 additional ASWs to cover maternity leaves.
- Excited that Garden River's JK/SK programs are up to 16 students attending daily.

A Gauthier (Thrive)

- Growing and growing – excited to be moving to an additional location!
- Thrive started working back into schools September 20, 2020. Still supporting students within schools.
- Starting transition meetings for upcoming school year.
- Some staff still working from home, most from office.

6. Report from the Board (Trustees)

- Committee of the Whole Meeting featured a Mental Health presentation from D. Fillmore
- Presentation from our Student Trustees on their goals for the year
- October Regular Board Meeting is scheduled to take place tonight.

7. Report from Administration (B. Vallee)

- **River View Public School.** B. Vallee provided an updated on the COVID-19 situation at River View Public school over the past few weeks.
- **Transitions:** Schools have now begun the process of conducting their fall follow-up meetings as part of the transition process. K. Viita also participated in the annual reflection meeting that takes place with all the partners involved in the process to discuss any refinements that may need to take place for the following year.
- **Principal/Vice-Principal Professional Development:** Special Education is an important part of ongoing professional learning at our Principal and Vice-Principal meetings. Topics discussed at our meetings over the past month include the use of student and class profiles as part of 'knowing your learners' as well as the use of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles and Differentiated Instruction (DI) strategies to address the needs of all students in the classroom ('Tier One' supports).
- **CAT4/Insight Assessments:** Every year we conduct group assessments of our grade three students using the Cognitive Abilities Test (CAT4) and Insight assessment. During the fall of 2020, testing was cancelled due to large numbers of students learning remotely. This year, we are conducting testing with both grade 3 and grade 4 students. This year, assessments are taking place between October 18th-29th. Results of the assessment are generally available early in the new year.
- **Formal Assessments:** Assessments have continued at a furious pace over the first few months of the school year. Our existing waitlist from our last intake period (June 2021) have either had an assessment conducted or are scheduled to have an assessment prior to

mid-November. This leaves us well positioned for our next referral intake period slated for December.

- **Parent Involvement Committee:** PIC is still looking for a SEAC member to sit on the Parent Involvement Committee. The role of the PIC is to encourage parent involvement board-wide, so it would be great if a SEAC member was able to bring information from SEAC to the PIC, and vice-versa. Lori Lambert indicated that she would be interested in representing SEAC on the PIC.

8. Next meeting: November 30, 2021 (will remain with virtual format for now)

9. Motion to adjourn: Moved by. S. Evans. Seconded by L. Lambert.

Meeting adjourned at 1:10 p.m.