



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

MINUTES OF MEETING
February 14, 2023
DT Walkom/Teams
12:00 Start Time

Present: S. Kitts (North Shore Tribal Council), A. Gauthier (Thrive Child Development Centre) P. Mick (Member-At-Large), Margaret Tuomi, (Autism Ontario)

Trustees: R. Reid.

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

Regrets: S. Evans, M. Barbeau (Community Living Algoma), E. Torresan (Algoma Family Services), S. McIlquham (Sault Ste Marie Down Syndrome Society),

Meeting called to order at 12:15p.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 (January 10, 2023)

Approval of Agenda. Moved by S. Kitts. Seconded by M. Tuomi. All in favour.

Approval of Minutes. Moved by R. Reid. Seconded by A. Gauthier. All in favour.

3. Correspondence: Greater Essex County District School Board re: Special Incidence Portion (SIP) Funding

- The letter outlines a concern with SIP funding as costs have continued to increase. In 2018 the previous government had announced an increase of approximately \$10,000 to the maximum SIP Funding claim (from approx. \$27, 000). Following the election, the incoming government rescinded the proposed increase, opting instead for a more modest increase of about \$800 to the maximum claim amount. This caused issues for many Boards as they had budgeted based on the proposed amount. ADSB SEAC wrote a letter of support regarding SIP funding several years ago.

4. Presentation/Discussion: Special Education Programs & Services in ADSB (B.Vallee)

- Presentation provided an overview of special education programs and services in the ADSB, including definition of programs and services, Individual Education Plans (IEPs) including accommodations, modifications and alternative programming, current demographic data,

programs & placements available, as well as an overview of our current special education team members and their respective roles.

➤ **Questions related to the Presentation**

- **Identification:** S. Kitts asked for clarification about the criteria for identification in the category of Multiple exceptionalities. B. Vallee responded that school boards establish specific criteria for identification based on the Ministry definitions. ADSB criteria for identification in this category is a student profile presenting a combination of three or more exceptionalities including severe physical limitations. S. Kitts also inquired as to why Giftedness remains a category. B. Vallee stated that it is important to remember that a gifted identification is not synonymous with high achievement but has its own specific criteria that impacts student learning. The number of students identified in this category does differ from board to board and in some boards a high number of students are identified in this category. R. Reid commented that it can be quite difficult to program for children who are gifted-trying to keep them engaged, challenged, and not bored can be a struggle.
- **Funding:** S. Kitts asked whether students on IEPs generate more money. B. Vallee responded that while the number of IEPs in a board is not a specific category to generate funding, it is included as one of the *Measures of Variability* within the *Differentiated Special Education Needs Amount*.
- **Formal Assessment:** S. Kitts wondered how long an assessment remains current and at what age is it best to formally assess a child. B. Vallee responded that when students are tested at a young age (e.g. seven and under) the assessor will usually recommend “re-testing”. Due to demand, it is not realistic for school boards to assess a student multiple times; therefore many boards prefer to test students when they have reached at least grade three. There are two parts to the formal assessment. An achievement test (ADSB uses the Weschler Individual Achievement Test or WIAT) assesses reading, writing, and mathematics while a cognitive test (ADSB uses the Weschler Intelligence Scale for Children 5th ed. or WISC-V) assesses cognitive potential. The results of a cognitive assessment should be relatively stable if a valid and reliable instrument is used, whereas achievement can be much more fluid. There is always a request for updated assessments when a student shifts to adult services and/or moves to post-secondary education. These assessments are usually conducted independently, via the post-secondary institution and/or a community agency.

5. Member Organization Updates

S. Kitts (North Shore Tribal Council)

- Still very busy with school-based meetings. Many of these meetings are focused on issues dealing with behaviours, including students struggling with self-regulation and coping skills.

A. Gauthier (Thrive)

- Busy time with Thrive participating in JK/SK Transition meetings.

M. Tuomi, (Autism Ontario),

- Still waiting for documents from Autism Ontario and will keep us up to date.

P. Mick (Member- At-Large)

- Nothing to report this month.

6. Report from the Board (Trustees)

- The Board meeting in January included a presentation on the new pilot project between City of Sault Ste Marie (Transit) and Algoma District School Board. Several students from our DARE program, along with teacher Scott MacDonald came to talk about their experiences. The goal of this project was to help students develop the ability to access city transit independently to get to destinations around Sault Ste Marie. Students were able to share their stories, experiences and how fluent they have become in getting around the city.
- Approximately 300 high school students were able to take part in the one-day Bon Soo event. Student Trustees were instrumental in organizing many of the activities.
- Building of the new Blind River school is finally moving forward!
- February 7, 2023 was the Committee of the Whole meeting. However, the weather was not fantastic and most trustees attended on-line. This meeting included a presentation on de-streaming grade nine courses in our secondary schools.
- ADSB trustees also participated in the annual OPSBA Public Education Symposium that took place in Toronto Jan 26 to Jan 28.

7. Report from Administration (B. Vallee & K. Viita)

- **JK/ SK Transition Meetings.** K. Viita completed the initial round of introductory meetings with incoming kindergarten students and our community partners. Initial meetings took place over seven days. So far meetings have taken place with 72 families of incoming kindergarten student families.
- **Development of the 20203 Special Education Plan/Report:** Bit of a delay on the survey – should be live by end of the week with letter to go to schools encouraging families to complete the survey. Survey period will be extended, remaining open until the end of March.
- **January Principal's Meeting:** January Principal's Meeting was a full-day devoted to completion of mentor-coaching training. All administrators have been participating in *mentor-coaching* training to help augment their instructional leadership skills.
- **CAT4/Insight Testing:** Results have arrived. Special Education Department Staff are in the process of sharing individual and school results with school-based staff.
- **February 3rd PD Day:** Educational Assistants rotated through four virtual workshops during the PD Day. Topics included *Indigenous Education 101* led by Joel Syrette, our Indigenous Education Lead, *Language Impairment: How to Help* led by our Language Services teams; *Quick & Easy Data Collection & Visuals* led by our ASD/Behaviour team, and *Personal Wellness* led by our Mental Health, Counselling & Attendance team.
- **On-Going SERT PD:** Our Special Education Assignment Teachers (SEATs) and Special Education Leads (SELEAD) are now facilitating bi-weekly sessions with their school groupings of SERTs. Sessions are focused on providing a combination of information items and ongoing professional learning and discussion.

8. Upcoming Agenda Items:

- We are looking at towards providing an update/overview of some of the services provided by various members of our multi-disciplinary team to give our SEAC members some more detail about the work they are doing in our schools.

9. Next Meeting: March 21, 2023

10. Motion to adjourn: Moved by S.Kitts. Seconded by M. Tuomi.

Meeting adjourned at 1:15