



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

MINUTES OF MEETING  
April 12, 2022  
**Via MS Teams**  
**12:00 Start Time**

**Present:** S. Kitts (North Shore Tribal Council), P. Mick (Member-At-Large), A. Gauthier (Thrive Child Development Centre) M. Barbeau (Community Living Algoma)

**Trustees:** S. Myers (Alternate), R. Reid

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

**Regrets:** S Evans (Trustee)

**Meeting called 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 (November 30, 2021)**

- Agenda approval. Moved by. S. Myers. Seconded by A. Gauthier. All in favour.
- Approval of Minutes. Moved by M. Barbeau. Seconded by A. Gauthier. All in favour.

**3. Correspondence:**

**Email/Letter from Algoma Public Health- Lori Lambert and Hilary Cutler resignation**

- At our last SEAC meeting, L. Lambert spoke about how the Infant - Child Development program will become part of Thrive.
- As Thrive already has representation on SEAC, L. Lambert and H. Cutler have resigned from the SEAC committee. B Vallee has received the letter and will compose a letter to thank them for their service sitting on SEAC. S. Myers asked A. Gauthier if she had an Alternate and wondering if L. Lambert would be a fit. Thrive does not have an alternate member at this point and Amanda has already reached out.

**Correspondence: Draft Letter of support re: PPM 81 Consultations**

- A letter of support for Durham DSB SEAC's letter re: PPM 81 consultations has been developed. The draft has been approved by SEAC members and will be mailed.

### **Correspondence: Draft Letter of support re: SIP**

- A letter of support for Durham DSB SEAC's letter re: SIP has been developed. The draft has been approved by SEAC members and will be mailed.

### **4. Presentation: Draft of the 2022-23 ADSB Special Education Plan/Parent's Guide**

- B. Vallee took SEAC members through proposed changes to the Special Education Plan for 2022-2023 and provided a rationale for changes that have been made. These changes are highlighted in yellow in the draft document that SEAC members will receive.
- B. Vallee also pointed out that some items in the document are currently highlighted in green. These items represent our numbers and statistics. We generally use May 1<sup>st</sup> as our official 'count date' to ensure consistency from year to year. These numbers will be updated after May 1<sup>st</sup> and reviewed at our May 10<sup>th</sup> meeting.
- Some of the items reviewed include:
  - Due to significant decline in enrollment, the practical learning class will not be offered at Rockhaven during the 2022-2023 school year. Students have been provided with the option of accessing the specialized classes that are currently offered at their home school(s). S. Meyers inquired as to how many students would be affected next year and the ages of these students. Specific numbers and ages will not be included in the minutes to protect student privacy. B Vallee provided an overview of plans and processes.
  - ADSB piloted the position of Special Education Lead (SELEAD) in the 2021-2022 school year. SELEADs work with a small group (three-four schools) to support the school in planning, developing, implementing and monitoring special education programs and services in collaboration with the school SERT and Principal. SELEADs support schools by facilitating meetings and case conferences for students, conducting the IPRC and IEP development processes, as well as supporting SERTs, classroom teachers, and other staff through mentoring, demonstration, and the provision of professional learning opportunities, thereby enabling SERTs in these schools to use instructional time to provide direct instruction/remediation to students. M. Barbeau commented that she really liked this approach to enable SERTs to do more direct work with the students. B. Vallee commented that we are pleased with how the pilot has gone so far. While there were definitely 'growing pains' at the beginning – sorting out who does what – we are now seeing the benefits of SERTs having more time to work with students. We are hoping to continue to expand the model in 2022-2023.
  - Empower Reading: During the 2021-2022 school year, ADSB expanded implementation of the Empower Reading program into twelve additional schools in addition to the three schools that began the program in 2020-2021 five schools that began in 2018-2019 and seven schools that began in 2019-2020. Empower Reading is now offered on-site in 27 ADSB schools. In addition, we are running two virtual groups (Gr. 6-8 program) to provide the program to students from a range of schools.
  - Language Services: In January 2022, we were able to hire 3 Communication Disorders Assistants (CDAs). CDAs work under the direction of our Speech-Language Pathologists. Much of their work takes place in schools conducting or implementing screening tools and working with oral language or phonological

awareness development groups focused on using and understanding oral language (e.g., vocabulary development, semantics (meaning of words), syntax (sentence structure), morphology (grammar), story re-tell, story grammar elements, following directions, and/or “Wh”- questions. CDAs rotate amongst schools to provide blocks of intervention to students. CDAs also work collaboratively as part of the multi-disciplinary team to support board staff and other stakeholders in addressing the language needs of students.

- The Parent's Guide to Accessing Special Education Programs & Services
  - This year, we have done an overhaul of the document. We are trying to emphasize the importance of the Individual Education Plan as the foundation of special education programming and services – regardless of specific identification.
  - With this in mind, the organization of the document has changed...we have ‘front-loaded’ an overview of the IEP, the process for families to access special education programs and services, the categories and exceptionalities (including a breakdown of each category/exceptionality as a percentage of students in ADSB with an IEP), and the specialized programs and placements available in the board.
  - The detailed information regarding the IPRC process (the Ministry requires this to be in the Parent Guide) follows. R. Reid commented that having the IPRC information at the front of the document was very overwhelming for parents, so he likes the idea of re-structuring the document so that information about the child's exceptionality and what is offered in the board is more of a focus.

## **5. Member Organization Updates**

### **P. Mick (Member at large)**

- Nothing to report.

### **S. Kitts (North Shore Tribal Council)**

- Currently hiring for 2 support workers and a person to drive the van.
- S. Kitts has been helping by driving. S. Myers wondered Sault College programs and do many graduates apply? S. Kitts responded that it varies a bit from posting to posting, but there are generally a number of interested candidates. B Vallee also commented that we see this when hiring for Educational Assistants, as there is currently a lot of competition among organizations (many of our community partners/agencies are looking for the same qualifications for their staffing). We maintain an open posting for EAs as we are always looking to add to our casual list.

### **A Gauthier (Thrive)**

- Infant-Child Development Program (ICDP) and the Pre-School Speech & Language programs have officially moved to Thrive as of April 1, 2022. The goal is for services to be back in place by May.

### **M. Barbeau (Community Living Algoma)**

- Education Committee meeting took place last week. Discussion about having Shelly Moore (who is an activist for Inclusion) come to Sault Ste Marie. This is tentatively booked for Oct 24, 25. Hoping for a presentation on October 24<sup>th</sup> which is scheduled to be a PD Day.

- Workshops/ presentations would be offered in the evening with child care services for parents
- Working hard to get students back to class as there are still students who are not receiving any type of education.
- Sergio Iacoe is now the Manager of Inclusion for Community Living Algoma, so he will be doing much of the liaison with school boards.
- Both winners from *Together We're Better* contest were from Elliot Lake. Amazed with the one winner in grade 5 who launched a game program to get students involved.

## 6. Report from the Board (Trustees)

- Trustees had a busy March Board meeting
- The winners of the Sault College Bridge contest attended the last board meeting (virtually) to talk about their experiences. Video from the contest was also provided so trustees could see the load test on the winning bridges. It was fantastic to see the number of female students interested in engineering!
- Update on *Literacy JK to 12* programming was provided by Superintendent M. Bell, including an update on *Empower Reading* programming by Superintendent B. Vallee.
- Student trustees provided information on “virtual” Bon Soo events. The students had a great time participating in events at their schools, with links to other schools.
- Update on enrollment for JK – 12. Very excited to report that over 500 new students (285 secondary, 232 elementary) are projected for September.
- This is an election year, which always includes a review of trustee distribution and numbers. This occurs every 4 years. Status quo for the next cycle.
- Quarterly financial report. Halfway through the school year ADSB has used 50.7 percent of budget, so we are on-track with our spending. Superintendent Joe Santa Maria provided an update on expenses and how the Board is spending funds.

## 6. Report from Administration (B. Vallee & K. Viita)

- **Transitions:** Our spring transition meetings are slated to take place during the first half of May. Thus far, 64 transition meetings have been scheduled for students that will be entering Kindergarten in the spring months.
- **Charting the Path:** Our SERTs have begun to implement a program called *Charting the Path* to support students with learning differences with recognizing their pattern of strengths and learning needs, the accommodations that they require, and building the self-advocacy skills that they will need. Our initial focus this spring is on implementing the program for students with learning differences moving from Gr. 8 to Gr. 9, as well as those moving from Gr. 6 to 7 in areas where all students attend an Intermediate program (e.g. Central Algoma and Elliot Lake)
- **SERT PD:** Elementary SERT PD has focused on *Charting the Path* and other transition work. Our secondary SERTs have been working with Mental Health Lead Darryl Fillmore on the SERT's role in supporting and promoting positive Mental Health programming in our schools.
- **Formal Assessments:** Our assessment schedule continues. Psychological-educational assessments occurring throughout April and May. We are currently on track to provide 150 psychological-educational assessments this school year. For the purposes of comparison, we were able to provide about 70-80 assessments during the 2016-2017 school year, so we have essentially doubled this number over the past five years. The wait time for an assessment is currently one-six months of the intake period, as compared to twelve to twenty-four months five years ago.

**8. Next meeting: May 10, 2022**

We will be reviewing updated numbers for the Special Education Plan. We will also extend an invitation to Superintendent Santa Maria to provide an outlook on the budget for next year. We usually do this at our June meeting.

**9. Motion to adjourn:** Moved by. R. Reid. Seconded by S. Kitts.

**Meeting adjourned at 1:10p.m.**