



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

**MINUTES OF MEETING
October 22, 2024
DT Walkom/Teams
12:00 Start Time**

Present: P. Mick (Member-At-Large), M. Tuomi, (Autism Ontario), S. Iacoe (Community Living Algoma - Alternate), A. Gauthier (Thrive Child Development Centre)

Trustees: H. Whitley (Trustee), S. Evans (Trustee),

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

Regrets: Velma Simon (Member-at- Large), S. Kitts (North Shore Tribal Council), Clinton Snider (Algoma Family Services)

Guests: A. Naccarato (SEAT), L. Lambert (Early Years/Child Development Resource Facilitator), Sarah Burns (Nominee - Thrive Child Development Centre - Alternate).

Meeting called to order. With the approval of Chair Mick, Superintendent Vallee to facilitate the remainder of the hybrid meeting.

1. Welcome

2. Round Table - Introduction of members, staff, and/or guests.

3. Approval of Agenda and Minutes

- Approval of Agenda. Moved by A. Gauthier. Seconded by M. Tuomi. All in favour.
- Approval of Minutes (September 17, 2024). Moved by. A. Gauthier. Seconded by M. Tuomi. All in favour.

4. Correspondence: No Correspondence received this month.

5. Presentation: Update on Early Years Transitions/School Readiness Summer Program

- A. Naccarato (Special Education Special Assignment Teacher (SEAT) and teacher of the Summer Readiness Program; and Lori Lambert (Early Years/Child Development

Resource Facilitator) joined us to provide an update on Early Years transitions to school and particularly the School Readiness program.

- This summer, ADSB offered school readiness programming for students with special needs entering Kindergarten in September. This included Autism Spectrum Disorder, Developmental Disabilities, Behaviour or medical needs. All of the students that attended were part of the formal Kindergarten Transition program.
- The Sault Ste. Marie - based program ran for 2 weeks with students attending a half-day session each day at either Parkland (am group) or Boreal (pm group). Each group was clustered geographically to streamline transportation as learning to ride the school bus was an important part of the programming.
- The program was structured to mimic a typical day in Kindergarten to help students learn some of the routines that they will encounter in our classroom and schools (e.g. riding the bus, entry to school, carpet time, bathroom breaks).
- Learning goals for the program focused on language development. Activities completed by the students were based on a “theme” that changed each day or two based on a literature source such as a picture book.
- Supports included a Speech-Language Pathologist, Communication Disorders Assistants, ASD/Behaviour Team as well as Early Years/Child Development Resource Facilitator and the teacher. Thrive CDC also provided one of their Infant/Child Development staff to help support the program as well.
- Students attending the program demonstrated great gains over the two weeks. Some benefits included development of social skills, self-help skills, rules and routines.
- Staff from the schools that students will attend had the opportunity to visit and help build their understanding of ways that they can support the student to encourage success. Lots of positive feedback from parents regarding the benefits of the program.
- Other school readiness programs for incoming Kindergarten students took place in our district schools. Transition programming was also provided for students in the DARE and Community Education programs as well as numerous Structured Learning Classes. SERTs and staff at various schools also supported transition work for students at their individual sites.

6. Member Organization Updates

Community Living Algoma (S. Iacoe)

- CLA held their Annual General Meeting on October 2nd, 2024. In addition to policy work, part of the evening included some awards presentations. This year, CLA recognized both Algoma District School Board (ADSB) and Huron-Superior CDSB with its Champion of Inclusion Award. Some of the partnerships that have taken place included the Shelley Moore presentation and learning series, promotion of the *Together We're Better* contest, participation in the summer employment program, and the establishment of Project SEARCH. Superintendent Vallee from ADSB and Director of Education Fil Lettieri from HSCDSB were in attendance at the AGM on October 2, 2024 to receive this award.

Thrive (Amanda Gauthier)

- Thrive is offering programming for families on the wait list for Ontario Autism Program services. Several program offerings for students and their parents. Also offering the Kids in the Kitchen program again.

Autism Ontario (M. Tuomi)

- Collaborative programming underway between Autism Ontario and Algoma Family Services to offer youth with autism a place to go and grow at the Hub. Different programs will spotlight and support high school students as well as those transitioning to adult services.
- *Webinar: Aligning Communication IEP Goals for Academic Success* for parents with questions about setting meaningful goals to increase a non-speaking child's participation in school. This webinar will talk about how to use the IEP (Individual Education Plan) to help achieve these goals. The webinar link is [Aligning IEP Communication Goals for Academic Success - webinar.net](https://www.aligningiepcommunicationgoalsforacademic.com)

P. Mick (Member- At-Large)

- Nothing to report this month.

7. Report from the Board (Trustees)

- This week is Local Government Week and H. Whitley has been visiting classrooms in Central Algoma this week to do presentations on the role of Trustees.
- On October 8, 2024, our Trustees hosted a reception for staff members celebrating 25 Years of Service with the ADSB.
- Two board meetings have taken place since our last SEAC meeting. Topics of discussion included an overview of our summer learning programs, the introduction of our Re-Engagement team and an introduction to the work that is planned to improve attendance, as well as looking at our EQAO results and some of the strategies that we have been put into place to help improve these. We also continue to do ongoing policy review work at each of our meetings as this is a big part of the trustee role.

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

- **Transitions:** The “follow-up” meetings for all students that are part of the formal Kindergarten Transitions program take place during late September and through October each year. This is a “school-based” phase of the project.
- **Professional Development Day (September 27th):** A Professional Development Day took place on Tuesday, September 27th. A wide range of professional learning activities took place. Kindergarten – Grade 2 teachers participated in a full day of training on the Acadience reading screening tool that will be implemented board wide beginning this school year. Early Childhood Educators participated in a full-day training session that revisited the foundations of a play-based Kindergarten program and learned about strategies to enhance social-emotional development and co-regulation. Thanks to Lianne Vezeau (SLP) and Lori Lambert (Early Years) from our multi-disciplinary team for supporting this learning! Grade 7/8 Teachers had the opportunity to review the new Mental Health modules from School Mental Health Ontario, while teachers new to our specialized programs and classrooms completed Behaviour Management Systems (BMS) training. All other staff members participated in activities focused on school improvement planning, including review of data and the development of classroom improvement plans at their schools.
- **SERT Professional Learning:** Following our last SEAC meeting, a half-day session took place with our secondary SERTs. Secondary SERTs discussed changes to SEA claim process and how to ensure transfer of SEA claim equipment from elementary schools if applicable. Programming considerations for LEAD and START sections were also discussed as a round table to determine best practices within schools. Elementary SERTs participated in

a full day of learning on Friday, October 18th. Topics for the day includes whole group sessions providing an overview of Special Education Special Assignment Teacher (SEAT) and System Administrator areas of responsibility, a deep dive into scheduling for “Block One” of intervention/remediation programming, a review of SERT areas of focus for October/November, and a session on reviewing psychological-educational assessments for potential Identification and/or IEP development. A session on the MathUp resource also took place, as well as small group breakout sessions on Co-Regulation and Declarative Language.

- ***Vice-Principal’s Learning Session:*** At their October 3rd meeting, our system administrators provided our ADSB vice-principals with a learning session focused on *Universal Design for Learning, Differentiated Instruction, and the Tiered Approach to Intervention/Remediation*. This is a key component of our school improvement work, particularly with schools that are looking at improvement efforts through the special education lens as part of the three-year improvement cycle, as well as being the key components of the *Learning for All* document.

9. **Next Meeting:** November 19, 2024

- **Discussion & Feedback on the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan**

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

Meeting adjourned at 12:55