



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

MINUTES OF MEETING
April 18, 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), M. Tuomi, (Autism Ontario), M. Barbeau (Community Living Algoma,

Trustees: S. Evans

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

Regrets: R. Reid (Trustee), H. Whitley (Trustee-Alternate) S. McIlquham (Down Syndrome Society), E. Torresan (Algoma Family Services)

Meeting called to order at 12:05p.m. With the approval of Chair Mick, Superintendent Vallee to facilitate the remainder of the Teams meeting.

1. Welcome

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

3. Approval of Agenda and Minutes (March 21, 2023)

Approval of Agenda. Moved by A. Gauthier. Seconded by M. Tuomi. All in favour.

Approval of Minutes. Moved by S. Kitts. Seconded by M. Barbeau. All in favour.

4. Correspondence: Kawarta Pine Ridge District School Board SEAC- Letter advocating for an increase in the maximum Special Incidence Portion (SIP) claim amount. Similar to other letters received on this topic. We have written a support letter in the past on the topic of SIP claims.

5. Presentation/Discussion: Programming & Services for Students with a Learning Disability (LD) - Sarah Anich- Mansfield, Learning Disabilities Resource Facilitator

- Sarah's presentation provided an overview on learning differences (including potential effects of neuro-diversity on achievement and well-being in school), information about her support role within the ADSB, and an update on the *Charting the Path* programming in

place to help develop understanding and advocacy skills for students transitioning between panels.

- The goal of *Charting the Path* is to increase self-confidence, highlight awareness, and improve the student's understanding of their learning needs and the accommodations and the educational support systems that need to be available for them as they move into the secondary setting. With parent permission, students participate in 8-10 individual and/or small group sessions with the Special Education Resource Teacher (SERT). Sessions are focused on helping the student understand their learning profile and the accommodations that may help them be successful. The program culminates in the development of a self-advocacy card highlighting the student's interests, learning style, and suggested accommodations. Students are able to share their self-advocacy card with the secondary SERT and a copy is available for their teachers via Edsby. This year, we will have 180 Grade 8 Students from 24 different schools participating in the program.

Questions related to the presentation.

M. Barbeau asked if students require assessments to take part? **Sarah Anich- Mansfield** responded that all of the students have an IEP in place but some may not have had a psychological-educational assessment. **M. Barbeau** also asked if students from the intermediate program are included? **B. Vallee** responded that all grade 8 students in our Intermediate programs are still considered to be elementary students and participate in transitions into the secondary panel, even though they are at a secondary school site.. **S. Evans** commented how exciting the *Charting the Path* program sounds, and the value of empowering students by helping to develop their ability to self-advocate

M. Barbeau also wondered if there have been any changes in the number of students being diagnosed with a learning disability. **B. Vallee** replied that the numbers are relatively constant as a percentage of student population although there can be fluctuations depending on assessments completed. For example, there was a dip during the pandemic when fewer assessments occurred. However, our key message is that students should not need to wait for a formal assessment for programs and services to be put into place. Early intervention is important and we want to begin intervention/remediation as quickly as possible – often through provision of a non-exceptional IEP.

6. Member Organization Updates

S. Kitts (North Shore Tribal Council)

- Very excited to announce that the new Education Manager for Garden River will be Connie Traves. Connie is a retired ADSB principal who comes with a fantastic background in supporting students.
- Still attending a large amount of meeting trying to support students who are struggling with behaviour.
- Working with the Jordan's Principle team to help support students and needs. Very grateful for this funding as it helps to provide supports for a lot of students.

M. Barbeau (Community Living Algoma)

- Looks like the master list of students receiving or waiting for services has been completed.
- Shelly Moore- still working with both school boards on planning some professional learning with Shelly to begin next fall.

- Support work with student transitions is ongoing.

M.Tuomi, (Autism Ontario),

- April is Autism Awareness Month with the theme of “Celebrate the Spectrum”. Autism Ontario is working to provide learning about autism and how we can support individuals with autism.
- Autism Ontario will be offering training on how to become a good SEAC member this month for all of its SEAC representatives. Look forward to bringing this information back to our next meeting.
- Final portion of joint CMHO/Autism Ontario training for mental health support is underway. This has been an excellent opportunity and the training was very helpful. Hoping to have the opportunity to have more workshops in the future.

A. Gauthier (Thrive)

- Thrive continues to grow – hiring has continued and both spaces are being well-utilized.
- Hoping to hire summer students again this summer to support participation in inclusive experiences for children and youth.
- Flyer provided on groups and presentations being offered by Thrive’s OAP (Ontario Autism Program) Family Foundational Service.
- Thrive staff had the opportunity to take part in some fantastic workshops this month at the Empower Kids conference.

P. Mick (Member- At-Large)

- Nothing to report this month.

7. Report from the Board (Trustees)

- Last board meeting was March 28th, 2023
- Fantastic presentation on the Bridge-Building competition. Students showcased their bridges and engineering skills as part of the meeting (both virtually and in-person).
- Policy discussions are on-going at each meeting.
- The *Tour for Humanity* bus made its way to several schools where students to part in learning about human rights-related topics. It has been on the road since 2013, providing lessons on the Holocaust, genocide and Canada’s human rights history. With room for 30 people, the bus serves as an education center for students, teachers, and community leaders.
- April 1, 2023, trustees took part in the Northern Region meeting where Northern school boards had the opportunity to share information.

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

- **Transitions:** The second phase of Kindergarten Transitions focuses on school-based meetings with the family, community partner, school personnel and a contact from the Special Education Team. This year our Special Education Assignment Teachers and Special Education Leads will be participating in this round of meetings. Meetings for approximately 72 students will take place between May 8th and 15th.
- **Development of the 20203 Special Education Plan/Report:** Parent Survey was extended until the Easter weekend. We will begin the process of sorting through the data over the next

week or so. We anticipate that we will be bringing draft information on the Special Education Plan to SEAC for feedback at the May meeting

- **March Principal's Meeting:** Kristen Viita and the Special Education Assignment Teachers led both an elementary and a secondary session on applying instructional leadership strategies to support teachers in ensuring effective learning for students with an Individual Education Plan.
- **SERT Professional Learning Day–** In addition to the on-going bi-weekly PD led by SELEADs/SEATs, we were pleased to bring all of our elementary SERTs together for a professional learning day on April 6th. Our agenda focused on Instructional Leadership related to IEP implementation, a presentation from CLA on programs and services that they offer, Inter-Panel & Inter-Grade level transitions, and CAT4/Insight testing.
- **CAT4/Insight: CAT4/Insight Testing:** As discussed at our October meeting, we have made the shift from Grade 3 Fall testing to Grade 2 spring testing (which is actually the same “cohort” of students. Most schools conducted testing last week (April 11th through the 14th) with catch-up, etc to take place the week of April 17th to 21st. We anticipate that we will be submitting materials to the company for scoring on April 26th. Results usually take about 2 to 2.5 months to arrive.
- **Special Olympics (Bocce) at White Pines:** A shout-out to Scott MacDonald and the team from the DARE program at White Pines for their fantastic job in hosting the Special Olympics Bocce competition at the end of April. Students from White Pines, Superior Heights, Central Algoma Secondary School and St. Mary's College were able to attend. As always, we appreciate all of SSM Police Services support of Special Olympics.
- **Competing Rights Workshop:** B. Vallee had the opportunity to participate in a PD session put on by Hicks Morley regarding competing rights in educational settings. The workshop focused on intersectionality of rights, workplace violence and various legal issues connected to special education.

9. Upcoming Agenda Items:

- Autism team will be joining us to talk about programs and services available for students with ASD, and how our team supports these students.
- Sharing the initial draft of the Special Education Plan for feedback. B. Vallee will be sending information out prior to the May's meeting to provide time for review.

9. Next Meeting: May 16, 2023

10. Motion to adjourn: Moved by S.Kitts. Seconded by S. Evans.

Meeting adjourned at 1:15