



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

MINUTES OF MEETING
June 6, 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: H. Whitley, S. Evans

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

Regrets: E. Torresan (Algoma Family Services), S. McIlquham (Down Syndrome Society),

Remembering Trustee Russell Reid: S. Evans and B. Vallee began the SEAC meeting with a reflection on the passing of Trustee Russell Reid in June. Trustee Reid represented our northern communities as a trustee for 29 years and was recently recognized by the Ontario Public School Boards Association for his many years of service. He served as a passionate member of our SEAC for many years. His quiet wisdom and commitment to representing the interests of all students will be greatly missed. SEAC members observed a moment of silence in memory of Trustee Reid.

Meeting called to order following our reflection. 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 guests.

3. Approval of Agenda and Minutes

- Approval of Agenda. Moved by S. Kitts. Seconded by M. Barbeau. All in favour.
- Approval of Minutes (June 6, 2023). Moved by S. Kitts. Seconded by M. Barbeau. All in favour.

4. Correspondence:

Simcoe County DSB SEAC

- Letter to Minister Lecce from the Simcoe County DSB SEAC outlining a variety of concerns related to special education.

Dufferin-Peel Catholic DSB SEAC

- Letter to Minister Lecce from the Dufferin-Peel Catholic DSB SEAC regarding shortage of Educational Assistants (Education Resource Workers) in the province. This is an issue throughout the province, including the Algoma District. The letter proposes that the Ministry of Education collaborate with the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development, to develop a collaborative strategy with post-secondary institutions to support recruitment, retention, and training of educational support workers in the province.

Waterloo Region DSB SEAC re: Special Incidence Portion (SIP) Funding

- Letter to Minister Lecce about concerns about SIP money. Many letters on this topic have been received over the past few years. B. Vallee provided an overview of the SIP funding process and the types of supports that can be included in a claim. Important to note that Boards make SIP claims to partially recoup costs of supports already in place – a claim does not provide new funding for additional services. The maximum claim covers a little over half of the annual cost of an EA. For this year, the Ministry will not require claims to be submitted but will be providing SIP funding based on a formula (2022-23 funding plus an additional five percent). Staff are pleased as SIP claims are very labour-intensive and pull staff away from their regular duties for several weeks each year.

5. Presentation/Discussion:

Overview of ADSB Special Education Programs & Services 2023-2024 (B.Vallee/ K. Viita)

- The presentation provided an overview of special education programs and services in the ADSB, including principles of special education that support our board model, a definition of programs and services, an introduction to Individual Education Plans (IEPs) including accommodations, modifications and alternative programming, current demographic data, programs & placements available in our board, as well as our current special education team members and their respective roles.

6. Member Organization Updates

S. Kitts (North Shore Tribal Council)

- Regret to announce that Education Manager Connie Traves will be leaving the role on Friday (September 16th)
- Very busy with start-up issues.
- Postings are in place to hire more staff.

M. Tuomi (Autism Ontario)

- Nothing to report this month

A. Gauthier (Thrive)

- Therapists have begun rehabilitative services in schools.
- Did not receive grant/funding for summer programs but offered a school-readiness program to families.
- Thrive is currently located in two sites and continues to expand.

P. Mick (Member- At-Large)

- Nothing to report this month.

M. Barbeau- Community Living Algoma

- CLA finds an increase in mental health issues compared to the past
- ADSB and HSCDSB have contracted for a five-part learning series with Shelley Moore. Five dates have been selected for board staff to participate in professional learning.

7. Report from the Board (Trustees)

- Trustee Whitley will be filling in on SEAC in her role as the alternate.
- First ADSB Board meeting is scheduled for next Tuesday (September 19th)
- Northern Regional Trustee conference is scheduled for Oct 13 and 14. This will be hosted in SSM.

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

- **Transitions:** Transitions take place across many levels (e.g. entry to school, divisional changes, change in school, and/or change in panel). The next phase of the formal process for Kindergarten transitions is the fall meetings, which will take place in late September and through October.
- **Professional Development Day (September 5th):** The first Professional Development Day of the 2023-2024 school year took place on Tuesday, September 5th. Staff participated in a range of operational training (e.g. fire safety, traumatic events response, mental health emergency procedures, and developing student support plans. The afternoon was focused on Health & Safety training, including workplace violence prevention, accessibility training for customer service, OESC reporting (e.g. Safe Schools and Workplace Violence Reporting as well as an introductory session to school improvement planning which will be the focus of the upcoming September 29th PD Day. Educational Assistants will be completing BMS training on this PD Day as well.
- **Summer Institute.** Teachers had the opportunity to participate in two days of professional learning on August 29th and 30th. Special Education topics included *Using Psychological-Educational Assessment to Plan IEPs*, *The Role of the Classroom Teacher in Supporting Specialized Programs and Classrooms*, and *Differentiation for Diversity* (focused on cognitive processes). A session on mental Health, *Planning for Wellness* was also included in the agenda. Approximately 275 teachers participated in the two-day session.
- **Empower Reading:** We continue to expand our use of the Empower Reading program. This week, we are training six additional staff in the use of the Empower 6-8 Decoding and Spelling on September 11th & 12th, providing refresher training for existing teachers on September 13th, and training new Empower Grade 2-5 Decoding and Spelling teachers on September 14th and 15th. This year, we will be including three Itinerant Empower Teachers to provide the program at additional sites.
- **Formal Assessments:** We have continued our efforts to conduct additional psychological-educational assessments over the summer months. Approximately 15 assessments were conducted during the month of July. Report shares for summer testing will take place over the upcoming weeks. We have also begun our assessment process for the 2023-2024 school year with formal assessments beginning this week.

9. Next Meeting: October 17, 2023.

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

Meeting adjourned at 1:20