



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

MINUTES OF MEETING
June 7, 2022
Via MS Teams
12:00 Start Time

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

Trustees: R. Reid, S. Evans

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

Regrets:

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 (May 10, 2022)

- Agenda approval. Moved by. S. Evans. Seconded by M. Barbeau. All in favour.
- Approval of Minutes. Moved by S. Kitts. Seconded by M. Barbeau. All in favour.

3. Correspondence:

- **Letter from Kawartha Pine Ridge DSB SEAC re: PPM 81:** This letter addresses similar concerns that other SEACs have voiced over the past few months about the shortage of nurses and potential changes to PPM 81. We developed and sent out a letter expressing our concerns about PPM 81 earlier this year.

4. Presentation: Budget Update (Superintendent Joe Santa Maria)

- Superintendent J. Santa Maria began by recognizing our SEAC community partners; we appreciate the hard work that everyone does for children and the productive working relationships.
- Budget of approximately \$168 million for 2022-23 will go to the Board for approval on June 14th. Approximately 22 million is budgeted specifically for Special Education.
- Enrollment drives funding. We have seen a significant enrolment increase in our overall enrollment for this school year, and our current enrollment projections have continued to increase since bringing initial Organization to the Board in March.
- This is a good news budget - only a small deficit at present.

- Includes Partnerships & Priorities Funds (PPF). These are targeted funds that go towards specific areas. Several items have moved from PPF into the Grants for Student Needs (GSN) which is usually considered to be a good thing as GSN has more permanency.
- Similar budgeting in all special education areas for the upcoming school year. There have been increases in Ministry funding in a few key areas including mental health supports, learning supports, as well as incremental increases in the Special Equipment Allocation, and the Special Incidence Portion.
- It is positive to see some increases as this will help to support some of our key areas, including additional support staff, assistive technology, mental health and counselling supports, Autism supports including Applied Behaviour Analysis, and Language supports.
- Northern Adjustment Category funding continues – this has been very valuable in allowing us to expand necessary services.

Questions

- S. Evans wondering when the SB 8 and SB 11 memos were released. Superintendent Santa Maria responded that initial information came out in the memo around March 25th, followed by the budget package towards the end of April.
- S. Evans inquired about whether the funding for special education/ mental health needs is sufficient to cover what students require.
 - Superintendent Santa Maria and Superintendent Vallee both responded that we can always use more funding, but we are generally pleased with the trends over the past few years as it appears that there has been more attention towards special education and mental health supports.
 - B. Vallee discussed some of the key areas that have been addressed with additional funding over the past five years, including
 - Substantial increase in the number of students receiving formal psychological-educational assessments through the Board (187 this year as compared to 85 in 2017-2018)
 - expansion of our language services team with the hiring of an additional Speech-Language Pathologist three years ago and the addition of 3 Communicative Disorders Assistants this year;
 - the addition of our ASD support team (2 resource facilitators, a behaviour analyst and behaviour coach),
 - the addition of a Learning Disabilities Resource Facilitator
 - expansion of our Mental Health, Counselling and Attendance Team from 12 to 18 staff
 - increased SERT/Resource time in all schools
 - implementation of the Empower reading program in 27 schools
 - additional support staff (e.g. Educational Assistants)
 - Increases in individual laptops to address assistive technology needs,

5. Member Organization Updates

S. Kitts (North Shore Tribal Council)

- Busy time of year ending of one school year starting of a new school year.
- This year the graduation parade will be taking place June 22, 23 for all graduating students in Senior Kindergarten, Gr. 8, and Gr. 12. The parade started 2 years ago when the pandemic began and has proven to be very popular.

L. Lambert (Thrive)

- Thrive is growing quickly. The new Infant-Child Development Program consisting of all new staff (except for Lori) is now up and running at Thrive.
- Busy for the last few months working with schools on the spring meetings for Kindergarten transitions.
- Will be testing about twenty-two little ones; the reports and recommendations should be ready for when they begin JK in September.
- Work on the *Entry to School* program continues. B. Vallee commented that school boards met with Thrive again this morning to continue work on what the transition component of the program will be.

M. Barbeau (Community Living Algoma)

- Community Living Algoma is very please to announce that Shelly Moore- Teacher, Researcher and storyteller will be presenting on October 24, 2022.
- M. Barbeau asked whether it would be possible to have a guest speaker from Community Living Algoma come to a SEAC meeting in September to explain the services of CLA. B. Vallee suggested that it might be more effective to have CLA come and do a presentation for the SERT group as they are the ones that most often refer families for services, and offered time at a SERT meeting for that to happen.
- Sergio Iacoe (Manager of Inclusion) is participating in Integrated Transition Meetings for students that are clients of CLA. Integrated Transition Meetings take place annually for students that have reached the age of 14.
- Annual General Meeting is scheduled for June.

P. Mick (Member- At-Large)

- Nothing to report

6. Report from the Board (Trustees)

- An in-person reception recognizing employees with 25 years of service took place on May 31, 2022. Congratulations to K. Viita and B. Vallee for reaching this milestone.
- Excited that we were also able to host our Retirement Dinner on June 6, 2022. This dinner recognizes retiring staff from all employee groups.
- Committee of the Whole was held on May 31st. The focus of this meeting was review of a number of policies, including Bullying, Right to Disconnect, and Trustee By-laws.
- Trustees have the OPSBA Annual General Meeting taking place at the end of the week and will be attending in person.

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

- **Transitions:** Spring meetings for incoming Kindergarten students have occurred, so the Transition process has now shifted from system-based staff to school-based staff (although a few new referrals continue to trickle in). Transition information for inter-panel (elementary to secondary) transitions was shared between sending and receiving schools in March, and transition activities between schools continue. Transition meetings for students that are entering or leaving a specialized program are also underway.
- **Welcome to Kindergarten:** The Welcome to Kindergarten program is running “on-site” again this year! Incoming JKs have the opportunity to visit their schools, meet the teachers, participate in some fun activities, and receive a bag full of activities and resources to use at home. Our new JK students will also be received the “learning journey” lawn signs again this year.

- **EA Allocation Process:** Initial steps in the EA Allocation process is underway. Schools submit an allocation request form that provides information on students in the school that have needs falling within specific categories of support, including health/medical, adaptive functioning, communication and safety. A system committee reviews the allocation forms and makes recommendations for initial EA staffing allocations for each school. These are then reviewed and approved by the system administrator and superintendent. These allocation numbers are provided to Human Resources, who will then staff schools based on the process outlined in the Collective Bargaining Agreement. Once staff are allocated, the school principal is responsible for assigning and scheduling the EAs allocated to the school as this provides some flexibility to be responsive to needs. A second “pass” takes place in August before the school year begins to accommodate any changes or adjustments that may be necessary. We anticipate that the number of EAs in our system will increase again this year. M. Barbeau mentioned that she has heard comments about cuts in the number of EAs. B. Vallee responded that at this point in the process there is often a perception that cuts are being made as allocations in individual schools may change, and the initial staffing number is usually lower as we need to have some staffing flexibility to add in August based on updated needs. However, our current staffing allocation for September 2022 represents an increase over last year’s initial staffing allocation for September 2021. Should this comment come up, you can safely say that there will actually be an increase in EA allocations across the system.
- **SERT PD:** We wrapped up our SERT PD for the school year on Friday, June 4th. This session focused on Transition Processes, pre-planning for the Empower Reading program for 2022-2023, and some streamlining of the IPRC Review (and waiver) processes.
- **Formal Assessments:** Assessments from our last round of referral intake (December) are scheduled for completion prior to the end of the school year. We do have a few outstanding assessments from several of our Northern Schools as our assessors are now travelling again and working to get caught up on some of these. We anticipate opening referrals at the end of June so that we can once again complete assessments during the summer months – we are aiming for approximately 20 assessments to take place in July and August.

8. **Next meeting: September 13, 2022.** We will plan to meet in-person for this meeting.

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

Meeting adjourned at 1:00p.m.