



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

MINUTES OF MEETING April 23, 2024, 2024 DT Walkom/Teams <u>12:00 Start Time</u>
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Present: P. Mick (Member-At-Large), M. Tuomi, (Autism Ontario), A. Gauthier (Thrive Child Development Centre), M. Barbeau (Community Living Algoma), S. Kitts (North Shore Tribal Council)

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

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

Regrets: Velma Simon (Member-at-Large), Clinton Snider (Algoma Family Services)

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 A Gauthier. Seconded by S. Kitts. All in favour.
- Approval of Minutes (March 2024). Moved by M. Barbeau. Seconded by M. Tuomi. All in favour.

4. Correspondence:

- **Rainy River District School Board** re: Staffing and funding issues. Northern school boards are experiencing the highest shortages.
- **Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board** re: recruitment and retention of Educational Assistants. Letter encourages the Ministries to support training for candidates to move into the Education Resources Worker profession.
- **Grand Erie District School Board**- endorsing the concerns outlined in a letter from November 22, 2023, from the Thames Valley District School Board, agreeing that there is a need for expanded partnership among education, community and health services.
- **TVDSB**- Mental Health Partnerships, as outlined above.

5. Presentation/Discussion: *Noah Vuicsics, Paralympic Athlete*

Trustee Whitley introduced our virtual guest speaker - Noah Vuicsics. Noah spoke passionately about his experiences with schooling, his journey to become a Paralympic Athlete, and next steps in his quest for a gold medal at the Paralympic Games. Noah's message is that everyone has a gift and can inspire others, you just need to find your gift and passion! SEAC Members asked questions about whether Noah felt it was a disadvantage to be placed in a specialized class, any potential barriers that he faced at school, and what he thought schools can do to help support students.

6. Member Organization Updates

S. Kitts (North Shore Tribal Council)

- Attended conference in Toronto in March, including several workshops on Special Education.
- Still having a lot of meetings with principals, teachers, parents about students who are struggling with self-regulation and behavior issues.
- Preparations for the Graduation Parade are underway.

A. Gauthier (Thrive Child Development Centre)

- Excited that pet therapy with some of the clients is now an option
- Sad to announce that Lori Lambert, has resigned her position at Thrive to take on a new role at Algoma District School Board.
- Some funding available to hire summer students that will support children at summer camps/activities.

M. Tuomi (Autism Ontario)

- [Celebrate the Spectrum](#) World Autism Day on April 2, 2024, and throughout the month of April. Tool kits for the students. School giving challenges and fly our flag during the month of April.
- [Autism Ontario Scholarship Applications](#) are open! Each year, Autism Ontario awards scholarships to outstanding students entering their first year of a post-secondary program across Ontario. Autism Ontario will be accepting online-only applications for scholarships from April 1, 2024 - April 30, 2024. Successful candidates will be chosen after that date, and all applicants will be notified of the status of their application by June 7, 2024. For more information on how to apply, visit www.autismontario.com/programs-services/adults/awards-and-funding/scholarships.
- The new AFS Wellness Hub, located by the city bus terminal, has helped to provide a safe place for youth to have a safe space to go. On-site services are available to support youth who may be struggling with mental health, addictions or other issues. Broad range of youth coming to use the space.

P. Mick (Member- At-Large)

- Nothing to report this month.

M. Barbeau (Community Living Algoma)

- *Together We're Better* contest submissions closed on February 29, 2024. Congratulations to St Mary's, who was the contest winner.
- Continued work on the Summer Employment Program.
- Community Event being held on May 2 from 6-8 at the Water Tower Inn
- May 9- share your success- socializing.
- May 24th walk
- August BBQ

7. Report from the Board (Trustees)

- Math Talk presentation from students from Mountain View.
- Policy Review – it was a busy month to review policies.

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

- **Transitions Update:** Lori Lambert has joined our team and has taken on lots of the transition work – we are excited to have her. Currently there are about 70 incoming Kindergarten students participating in our Transitions process. We are beginning the next phase of the process which is school-based meetings that take place in the Spring (currently scheduled between May 13th and May 30th). Transition processes (including sharing of student profiles) for students moving from elementary to secondary or intermediate schools has been on-going since February. The process of planning for students that are transitioning to or from specialized programs or classrooms is now underway as well.
- **SERT/SPT Professional Learning:** We hosted a full-day of in-person professional learning for our SERTs on Friday, March 22nd. Our morning included a session on *Meaningful Mathematics Intervention* hosted by Amanda Pykkonen and Debbie Gibbs from our Curriculum Team, as well as a follow-up session on Using Assessments that included case study work on developing programming based on a psychological-educational assessment and a speech-language assessment. During the afternoon, SERTs rotated through a series of breakout sessions on the following topics: *Literacy Intervention Groups*; *IEP Development*, and *Behaviour interventions*. Next full-day session for our SERTs will take place on Friday, April 26th.
- **Shelley Moore Session 4 (March 19th):** To accommodate the session that Shelley had to cancel in February, an additional session was added for April. Accordingly, session four will take place on Wednesday, April 24 and our final session (Session 5) is scheduled May 30th as originally planned.
- **CAT4/Insight Assessment:** The ADSB has historically administered two group tests to our student population on an annual basis. These include **Insight**, a group-administered cognitive abilities test and **CAT-4**, the **Canadian Achievement Test 4th Edition**. These tests are administered by classroom teachers with the support of the Special Education Resource Teacher. The Special Education Department reviews testing results and then discusses with individual schools any test scores which may indicate the need for a referral for further individual assessment. In the spring of 2023, ADSB began testing our cohort of Grade two students each spring (late April) - in previous years the CAT4 and Insight Assessment was conducted with grade three students during a fall testing period. Our schools conducted the assessment beginning the week of April 8th.

9. Next Meeting: May 28th, 2024 (Date changed from May 21st)

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

Meeting adjourned at 1:15