



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

**MINUTES OF MEETING
December 10, 2024
Sugar Maple Room/Teams
12:00 Start Time**

Present: M. Tuomi, (Autism Ontario), M. Barbeau (Community Living Algoma), Amanda Gauthier (Thrive CDC), Clinton Snider (Algoma Family Services)

Trustees: Susan Myers

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

Regrets: Velma Simon (Member-at- Large), S. Evans (Trustee), H. Whitley (Trustee), P. Mick (Member-At-Large), S. Kitts (North Shore Tribal Council)

Guests:

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 M. Barbeau. Seconded by M. Tuoumi. All in favour.
- Approval of Minutes (November 19, 2024). Moved by. M Tuomi. Seconded by M. Barbeau. All in favour.

4. Correspondence: Limestone DSB SEAC to OCT Registrar re: Special Education Training

- The letter addresses lack of consistent Special Education training in teacher education programs. ADSB SEAC would like to prepare a letter of support as we believe that special education training should be a mandatory part of the curriculum for teacher education programs.

5. Presentation: *Charting the Path* (Sarah Anich-Mansfield, Learning Disabilities Resource Facilitator)

- *Charting the Path* is an internal ADSB program, similar to programs used by LDAO, that we have been developing and implementing for several years. The program is intended to help build self-advocacy and learning skills for students with learning differences to support the transition from elementary school to secondary school. The goal is to increase self confidence and self-advocacy by building awareness of personal strengths and areas of need, facilitating knowledge and understanding of the accommodations and support systems available in secondary schools, and helping students understand their individual learning profile. During the first term, 187 grade eight students in 21 different schools participated in the program.
- Programming consists of eight to ten sessions that include topics such as building knowledge about learning differences/learning disabilities, understanding the individual learning profile, accommodations that are appropriate for the student and how to access supports at the secondary level. Students develop a self-advocacy card that the student shares with the secondary school SERT at the inter-panel transition meeting as a culminating activity.
- Questions during the presentation included how it is received when students advocate for accommodations (S. Anich responded that teachers have been fantastic working with students and encouraging students to advocate what their needs are); the age at which students can participate in an IEP meeting (usually begins to take place between grade 6 and 8 with parental permission); and whether all secondary schools receive the advocacy cards (yes).

6. Member Organization Updates

Thrive (Amanda Gauthier)

- Not much to share this month
- Christmas party was a fun event for families.

Community Living Algoma (M. Barbeau)

- Gearing up for the *Together We're Better* contest open to all 4 school boards each year.
- The last Education Committee meeting took place in November; the next meeting is scheduled for January.

Autism Ontario (M. Tuomi)

- Several workshops coming up, including [Strategies for Transitions](#) on December 12th, 2024, and [Navigating a New Diagnosis](#) on January 16, February 13, and March 27th. The second workshop will provide information to help families learn more about autism and how to access financial supports, with a focus on the Ontario Autism Program (OAP).

Clinton Snider (Algoma Family Services)

- The Hub will be holding a free Christmas pancake breakfast on December 24th, 2024.
- Counselling supports continue to be available as Christmas is not an easy time of year for our youth.

7. Report from the Board (Trustees)

- Regular Board Meeting took place on November 26th, 2024.

- Organizational Meeting took place on December 3rd. Chair Jennifer Sarlo, and Vice-Chair Elaine Johnstone will remain in their positions for the upcoming year.

8. Report from Administration (B. Vallee, K. Viita, K Lappage)

- **SERT Professional Learning:** Elementary SERTs participated in a full day of learning on Friday, November 22nd. Topics covered during the day included a presentation on Grade 8 Pathways in preparation for supporting students with upcoming option selection, unpacking EQAO data, use of the Mathup resource for mathematics intervention, and IEP review processes. During the afternoon SERTs participated in three breakout sessions focused on *Troubleshooting Edsembli Issues*, *Online Data Collection*; and a session on *Universal Design for Learning and Differentiated Instruction*.
- **ADM Visit:** We were pleased to host a visit from Assistant Deputy Minister Clayton Latouche from the Ministry of Education, accompanied by Andrew Locker, who is the Director of Field Services Branch and Stephen Simard, the North Regional Manager. Our team conducted site visits to our Structured Learning Classroom at Boreal FI Public School, and the Don Doucet Youth Centre, which is one of our Education & Community Partnership Programs (ECPP). This was a great opportunity for a rich discussion with our visitors about pressing issues related to special education in our district.
- **Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) Conference:** K Lappage, System Administrator had the opportunity to attend the CEC conference in Toronto on the weekend of November 30th/December 1st. The keynote speaker addressed the importance of mat-tering (feeling that you matter or belong and the impact to school success as well as fu-ture success). Some of the sessions attended included:
 - *A.I. in the Classroom:* featuring a discussion around the benefits of AI in class-room settings at the secondary level as well as the benefits of AI in universal de-sign
 - *Accessibility in Accommodations:* focused on how educators can support further Universal Design for Learning and DI when 3 areas are examined - physical spaces, academics and social spaces/interactions
 - *Understanding Psycho-Educational Assessments:* the purpose, what the data tells us and how educators can use this information to support all students in their classrooms (including discussion around Learning Disability vs. dyslexia/dy-scalculia)
 - *Students with ASD and Developmental Disabilities - Sexual Health and Abuse Prevention,* which focused on how parents, educators and BCBAs can support children, teenagers and young adults to learn about consent, their bodies, and their rights.

9. Next Meeting: January 21,2024

10. Motion to adjourn: Moved by C. Snider. Seconded by S. Myers.

Meeting adjourned at 1 p.m.