



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

MINUTES OF MEETING
March 21, 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), Margaret Tuomi, (Autism Ontario) ,M. Barbeau (Community Living Algoma, E. Torresan (Algoma Family Services), S. McIlquham (Sault Ste Marie Down Syndrome Society)

Trustees: R. Reid.

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

Regrets: S. Evans, R. Reid

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

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

2. Approval of Agenda and Minutes (February 14, 2023)

Approval of Agenda. Moved by S. Kitts. Seconded by M. Tuomi. All in favour.

Approval of Minutes. Moved by M. Tuomi Seconded by P. Mick All in favour.

3. Correspondence: nothing received

4. Presentation: *Language Programs & Services in ADSB (ADSB Language Team)*

- ***Our Team:*** Our Language team includes 2 Speech - Language Pathologists (SLPs) - Sara Amato and Lianne Vezeau, as well as 3.5 Communicative Disorders Assistants (CDAs) - Jenna Carlucci, Mikaela Caputo, Jess Nicholson and Danielle Secondi. Danielle's position is shared with Huron-Superior CDSB to support eastern area schools.
- ***Tiered Support Model:*** Our Language support services are based on a tiered service model, Generally, our Language team focuses on Kindergarten-Grade Three students with an eye towards early intervention/remediation. The first tier of support focuses on providing language -rich classroom programming. Our Language team supports classroom educators through resources and professional learning opportunities. Tier 2 supports are focused on small group intervention provided by our CDAs. Four different types of groups are used. Groups are focused on pre-linguistic skills, language

development, language enrichment and language component skills. Tier 3 supports include formal assessment and consultation provided by the SLPs. SLPs complete formal language assessments to assess student's understanding and use of language. A formal assessment is also used as the basis for identification by the IPRC as a student with a Language Impairment and the provision of an Individual Education Plan.

- Our team members have a family of schools and use a block scheduling model that rotates intervention blocks among schools. Usually four schools will receive services simultaneously from the CDAs.
- Screening of all JK and SK students for both language needs and speech, as well as screening of Grade 1-3 students considered at-risk for language or speech needs took place this year. In future years, the focus will be on screening all incoming JK students as well as SK-3 students considered at-risk. Our SLPs will also be participating in JK transition meetings this spring for students with potential language needs.
- Our Language team also works extensively to provide ongoing professional learning for teachers, early childhood educators, educational assistants and other board staff.

Questions related to the presentation.

- ***JK Transitions process.*** S. Kitts inquired about the JK Transition process. B. Vallee stated that during the first phase of the transitions process, K. Viita works with community partners to gather information for a student profile. The profile provides information on specific student needs that may include behavior, physical needs, language development, etc. Our goal is for our Language team to be involved with students that have language needs as early as possible, so the SLPs will be participating in the next phase of Transitions (which includes school-based meetings in the springtime). S. Kitts also noted how hard it is to reach parents that have had no prior connection to an outside agency. This is an ongoing concern. Now that the registration process is online, principals reach out to all incoming kindergarten families, and Welcome to Kindergarten nights provide a great opportunity to see the kids. Nevertheless, each September we do have students that begin school without any school personnel being aware of their needs prior to the start.
- ***Older Students:*** S. McIlquham asked what happens to students after grade 3...is there any involvement by SLPs? B. Vallee responded that we focus on K-3 to ensure early intervention with language skills. However, as students move through the grades other academic needs may also appear and we sometimes need to expand our focus to include other areas (e.g. literacy development). S. McIlquham also asked specifically about students with Down Syndrome. B. Vallee responded that access to support services continues based on student programming needs. For example, our SLPs continue to provide ongoing consultation and support for staff working with students in all classrooms as well as providing ongoing support to specialized programs/ classrooms.

5. Member Organization Updates

S. Kitts (North Shore Tribal Council)

- Still lots of meetings going on with schools.
- Transition Meetings with Garden River's daycare services to begin to prepare JK's with high needs for the upcoming school year.

M. Barbeau (Community Living Algoma)

- Still working on one list to help support students.
- Shelly Moore presentation follow-up. In contact with both school boards for professional learning sessions to begin in October 2023

M. Tuomi (Autism Ontario),

- Training for Autism and mental health taking place on April 4 and 5.
- April is Autism Awareness Month with the theme of “Celebrate the spectrum”. This will help promote learning about autism, how we can make changes and support people with ASD. Lots of resources available (sent out to SEAC members)

A. Gauthier (Thrive)

- Nothing to report this month.

P. Mick (Member- At-Large)

- Nothing to report this month.

S. McIlquham (Sault Ste Marie Down Syndrome Society)

- **March 21, 2023 is World Down Syndrome Day.** The goal is to promote the development of individuals with Down Syndrome, so their lives may be enriched and that they may reach their full potential.
- Since 1983, life expectancy for babies born with Down Syndrome has doubled!

E. Torresan (Algoma Family Services)

- May be aware that AFS has been working with Children’s Aid Society (CAS) to find a solution for high-risk adolescents who require more intensive treatment options. AFS has secured the former Holder House as a facility. Hiring and staff training is underway and looking into having their first clients in place during the spring.
- Also progressing with the new Youth Hub located on Douglas Street. This will offer multiple services- counselling, laundry, showers, skill development, cooking and wood working among others. Hoping to have a summer program running.

6. Report from the Board (Trustees)

- Great presentation on the new FIT program that will be available for Gr. 7 & 8 students next year. Following the success of our Hockey Skills program, the FIT program will provide students with addition training experiences related to swimming, cross-country skiing and dance. The program will run out of the White Pines Intermediate program.
- Opportunity to tour the new Trades Trailer that we will be using to bring new trades-related experiences to our Intermediate students. The trailer is completely renovated with tools, equipment to help students get a better feel for the trades. The tour took place at the Moose Lodge, which was set up for local Skills Ontario carpentry competition.

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

- **Transitions:** The next phase of the Transitions process includes school-based meetings set for April and May. The Special Education team, including Special Education Assignment Teachers (SEATs), Special Education Leads (SELEADS) and our multi-disciplinary team will be working with school-based teams to conduct transition meetings and planning for the 72 incoming students that are participating in the process.

- **Development of the 20203 Special Education Plan/Report:** Letters have gone out to all schools to be sent to families re the Parent Survey. A link to the survey is embedded in the letter. We are using two surveys this year– there is a general survey focused on special education programs and services, and a second survey focused on specialized programs and classrooms. Surveys will be live until the end of March.
- **February Principal's Meeting:** With a busy agenda for the February Principal's Meeting, we focused on providing principals with information updates on a number of topics of interest.
- **Vice-Principal Professional Learning:** Our quarterly vice-principal's session occurred at the end of February. 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. We will be continuing this work with our Principal group at their next leadership learning session (March 23rd) as well.
- **On-Going SERT Professional Learning** – SELEADs/SEATs have been focused on using a "grand rounds" format in which SERTs present a learning profile and the group examines needs and next steps to improve programming for the student. Our secondary SERTs also participated in a full day PD session focused on transitions to secondary school and content of the learning strategies courses.
- **CAT4/Insight: CAT4/Insight Testing:** Each October our Grade 3 students have participating in group testing using the Canadian Achievement Test 4th edition and Insight. These assessments provide both ability and achievement data and are used to identify both individual and school-wide learning needs. As discussed at our October meeting, we will be shifting our focus from testing Grade 3 students each fall to testing Grade 2 students each spring beginning in 2023. Accordingly, CAT4/Insight testing for our Grade 2 students has been scheduled for April 11th through the 14th.

8. Upcoming Agenda Items:

- Over the next few meetings, we are hoping to provide a more detailed look at some of the programs and services that our team provides by inviting various members of our multi-disciplinary team to give SEAC members more detail about the work they are doing in our schools. We are hoping to have our Autism/Behaviour team and our LD Resource Facilitator come to our next few meetings.

9. Next Meeting: April 18, 2023

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

Meeting adjourned at 1:20