

LAMBTON-KENT DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD
SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
 ~ Thursday, May 21, 2020 @ 6:00 p.m. via Teleconference ~

| Present: | Rose Gallaway - St. Clair Child and Youth Services (Chair) Janet Barnes – Trustee (Vice-Chair) Derek Robertson, Trustee Melani Rich – Autism Ontario, Chatham-Kent and Sarnia Lambton Chapters Steve Stokley – Community Living, Chatham-Kent Chris King – Community Living, Sarnia-Lambton Wendy Smith – Community Living, Wallaceburg Julia MacKellar – Learning Disabilities Association of Chatham-Kent Jean MacIntyre – “Member At Large” Vicki Ware – First Nations Representative | |
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| Regrets: | Chris Moore, System Coordinator - Multidisciplinary Team | |
| Resource Staff: | Angie Barrese, Superintendent of Education Sandra Perkins, System Coordinator of Special Education Tara Mitchell, Special Education Coordinator Adam Davis, Special Education Coordinator Marty Passmore, Lambton-Kent Secondary Administrators’ Association Lucy Rizzetto, Lambton-Kent Elementary Administrators’ Association Lori Gall, Recording Secretary | |
| Guests: | Danielle Stewart, Itinerant Resource Teacher – Vision Team Julie Vandernaalt, Itinerant Resource Teacher – Vision Team Eva Thompson, Itinerant Resource Teacher – Enrichment and Reading Support Team Bethany Tiegs, Itinerant Resource Teacher – Enrichment and Reading Support Team Shae VanderGriendt, Vice-Principal – John McGregor Secondary School | |
| Agenda Item | Details/Discussion | Action Items |
| Call to Order and Approval of Agenda | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rose Gallaway called the meeting to order • Before moving into the Agenda, Superintendent Barrese read the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>By order of the Ontario Minister of Education, all public schools are closed from March 14th through to the end of the school year in response to the emergence of COVID-19. This closure currently includes the Education Centres. The Ministry of Education and the Government of Ontario previously introduced Legislation allowing for Board Meetings to occur electronically. Regulation 463/97 was amended by Regulation 42/20 and removes the requirement for any persons to be physically present at electronic meetings if all schools have been closed by the Minister, the Medical Officer of Health or Cabinet.</i> • Steve Stokley Moved, Julia MacKellar Seconded “<i>That the Agenda be approved</i>”; All in favour | |
| Traditional Territorial Acknowledgement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trustee Barnes recited the Traditional Territorial Acknowledgment | |
| Approval of Minutes of April 30, 2020 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Janet Barnes Moved, Wendy Smith Seconded “<i>That the Minutes of April 30, 2020 be approved.</i>”; All in favour | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lori |
| Business Arising | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was no business arising from the Minutes of April 30, 2020 | |
| Vision Team Update | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tara Mitchell, Julianne Vandernaalt and Danielle Stewart were in attendance to highlight the initiatives that have been undertaken during the school closure thus far in order to support students who are visually impaired • Danielle said a Google Classroom, organized by topic, has been set up and accessible lessons can then be re-posted by Teachers to their own classroom • For students who read and write using braille, materials have been provided to them for home use in order to ensure student engagement and wellness • She said the Vision Team created ‘Office Hours’ so staff can pop in to ask questions and receive support as needed • Julie said they’ve been busy with transition planning and noted that, depending on the students’ age, there are different requirements | |

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| Vision Team Update (continued) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She said they're working closely with Resource Teachers who are anticipating new visually impaired students in September in order to help make the transition as smooth as possible; she also noted that videos and transition booklets are being created to help these student • It was noted that when it's possible/safe to do so, Vision Team members plan to visit schools to do an 'environmental assessment' that will result in steps being taken by the school to make it safer for the student (for example, they may put yellow tape on barriers and poles in order for them to stand out) • Superintendent Barrese thanked the Team for providing a brief update and for going 'above and beyond' to help create a sense of normalcy for the Board's visually impaired students during this unprecedented time in education • Jean MacIntyre inquired about the number of visually impaired students supported by the Board; Danielle said their Team currently supports 85 students • Rose Gallaway thanked the Vision Team for their presentation | |
| Enrichment/Reading Support Team Update | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adam Davis, Bethany Tiegs and Eva Thompson were in attendance to highlight the fact that all students within the Board have been given access to Lexia Reading products, if they wish to utilize them • Eva Thompson provided background details regarding the Board's initial purchase of Lexia Reading products through to the point where, as a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic school closures, any student wanting to use Lexia can do so • She said that the program helps to close the gap for students that require additional reading support, and noted that secondary schools are using it to support ELL students, etc. • Bethany Tiegs said that Lexia collects data that helps the Teacher support each student where they need it • She said that, recently, over 800 educators attended Lexia training; as well, the Team uses the Office Hours they've established to help Resource Teachers be able to support the students in their respective schools • As well, Bethany said the Team recently made a presentation to about 100 parents, intended to help them understand the program; for those that couldn't attend that presentation they have some material that can be viewed when they're ready • Prior to the school closures approximately 200 students were using Lexia each day and, now, with <u>all</u> students having access to the program, there are almost 4,000 students that use it daily • Superintendent Barrese said that both Bethany and Eva have been working hard to engage educators and students in the program • Chris King asked if licenses are for specific students, or they're school access licenses and was told that the free licenses are all assigned to individual students within the Board • Chris inquired as to the cost of a license; Adam said that we have a deal where we pay for a license for 2 years and get 1 year free (at a cost of \$90 US); if a student no longer wants/needs a Lexia any more, it can be reassigned to another student • Vicky Ware asked if any First Nation schools have the program; Superintendent Barrese said that Bethany and Eva could partner with them to help with accessing the program • Vicky they may be interested in getting licenses for their schools; Adam Davis said he would share the information • Rose Gallaway thanked the Enrichment/Reading Support Team for their presentation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bethany Tiegs/Eva Thompson • Adam Davis |

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| <p>Special Education Department Update</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Superintendent Barrese and Sandra Perkins provided details about how elementary and secondary staff, along with the Board’s Itinerant Teams, are continuing to support students during the school closure • Superintendent Barrese said that for all students who are formally identified, an annual Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) meeting must be held; these are normally done between April and June but, given the situation, and since school won’t open until at least September, staff are conducting meetings virtually with Special Education Department staff working hard to assist in the completion of these virtual IPRC meetings • Where a student has been tested and there is a recommendation for an exceptionality placement; it is up to the parents if they want the child to be given that placement or not • As well, if there is a recommendation for a classroom placement such as the Alternative Learning and Lifeskills Program, all efforts will be made to ensure that students will get what they need • She said families (and students who have reached the age of 18) can ‘Waive’ the IPRC meeting if they’re still in agreement with the identification in place • One Principal, a Resource Teacher, one or more classroom teachers, a Spec. Ed. Team member, parents/guardians/advocate members meet to complete the IPRC • Information is encrypted to ensure there are no confidentiality breaches; Angie said schools are doing a remarkable job of conducting these meetings online • For ‘new placement’ meetings, documentation that’s required is in a hard copy at the Board Office, so it will be retrieved by a Coordinator when it’s safe to do so • She told the members that it’s new learning and a new process so if anyone has questions, they can and should connect with the school’s Principal • Angie said the department is doing everything possible to have a seamless transition into placements for students; Angie and Sandra can answer questions for anyone who has concerns • Superintendent Barrese said the Ministry memo about summer learning opportunities has just been received and the Spec. Ed. Leadership are working to decipher expectations to be ready • Sandra said all the Teams are working hard; as well, she reminded the members that Tracy Ronsick had created the curriculum for ASD and lessons are being provided to anyone in the Board with the basic Behaviour Management Strategies (BMS) training; as well, an ASD specialized module will be coming which should allow for the opportunity to train a large number of staff • She said that, prior to school closures, Preschool Intake meetings had been held in Chatham-Kent, but not Sarnia-Lambton; the meetings are now being scheduled as virtual meetings and will involve all the stakeholders and parents • They are doing transition work with the Teams to see what types of materials can be provided; our Teams will work with schools to prepare for each individual students’ transition to ensure the student is successful; if a student wants to have an actual visit to the school, that will be worked out • Chris King asked about young students coming in from Preschool as it is a stressful time and this situation only heightens that; Sandra assured that everyone is committed to making transitions as smooth as possible for everyone • Superintendent Barrese added that there are various Committees meeting throughout the Board to focus on transitions, and the transition for students moving into kindergarten is a large part of those discussions • Melani said she’s taken part of a virtual Preschool Intake meeting and found it to be a much more positive experience than she had anticipated; she said the Teams did a great job providing answers to questions, etc.; she thanked everyone for everything they’re doing to make things go as smoothly as possible; Sandra said she would pass the comments along to the Teams involved | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sandra |

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| Special Education Plan Items to Be Reviewed in May | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sandra Perkins outlined changes made to the various Sections/Appendices of the Special Education Plan in May, as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The ‘Philosophy of Special Education’ was revised and impacts three different parts of the Plan: Section 2.1.3, Appendix 2.8.1 and Appendix 3.1.4 have been amended to reflect the new philosophy ○ Section 4.0 was revised, in keeping with current practices in place ○ Some of the Preschool Intake information was updated to reflect current practices and this required amendments to Appendix 4.1, 4.2, and 4.4 ○ Section 2.15 was replaced by the Board’s Regulation, and Appendix 2.15.1 was removed as it was no longer necessary ○ Appendix 4.3, 4.5 and 4.6 were reviewed, but no amendments were necessary, so they remain unchanged ○ Sandra said, because of the school closures, the updating of the Placement info. (Section 2.8) was deferred and some Program Reviews will take place over the summer months, so that updated information will be presented during next year’s Special Education Plan Review | |
| Correspondence | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A letter, dated April 29, 2020, from the Nipissing-Parry Sound Catholic District School Board regarding the Ministry’s Advisory Committee on Special Education was received; Rose reminded the members that SEAC had previously sent a letter to the Ministry outlining its opinions on this matter; no further action was taken | |
| Association Reports, Other Business and Sharing of Best Practices | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trustee Janet Barnes said she’s pleased with everything that’s going on and she’s hearing the same thing from parents • Steve Stokley said that they still haven’t closed the door on running summer programs, so they are looking to see what might happen between now and July to see if they can proceed • Wendy Smith said they haven’t come to a final decision regarding their summer program either; they are looking at alternative options that may be activity based; they haven’t heard about the Canada Summer Jobs grant yet, so that will determine what happens • Julia MacKellar said they are trying to finalize plans for a free reading program; more info. will follow once things are finalized • Vicki Ware said that Aamjiwnaang there are issues with remote learning due to access to Internet for some of the First Nation Members; they are seeing low participation rates as a result • Overall, the First Nations have found that remote learning is challenging for students, so they are trying to problem-solve; for instance, each week there are virtual meetings with Principals to help bridge the gaps to success in reaching families/students and ensuring students are engaged • She said that IPRC Meetings and virtual tours are happening, as well, they are creating picture books to help ease with transitions and they’re holding video chats and leading some hands-on activities with high needs students; they are doing whatever they can to ensure students are successful • They are doing a ‘Three Sisters Gardening Project’ where corn, bean and squash are planted in a specific way, in keeping with tradition; the information is being documented and will be shared; as well, the Sugar Bush documentary, which is full of history, has now been released • Marty Passmore said he is proud to be part of the LKDSB team: hundreds of devices and packages were distributed to students; online support groups, team and staff meetings, etc. have all been held to try and create a sense of normalcy; everyone is adjusting to deliver top-notch education to all the Board’s students; Virtual Welcome Centres are operating to help with transitions; and the staff at AMSS are doing an outstanding job | |

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| Association Reports, Other Business and Sharing of Best Practices (continued) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lucy Rizzetto said that the number of different things staff are doing to support all students but, specifically, students with special needs is admirable; she is sure the public cannot possibly realize the full extent of everything that’s going into ensuring student success • Chris King said their Day Programs have been shuttered so they’re focusing on their Group Homes; staff were redeployed to their Group Homes to ensure that they are taking all precautions necessary to avoid getting cases • He said they received funding for 9 summer students, so they will work with them to find ways they can assist with service delivery • Summer Employment Transition has been in touch with Community Living and there have been some creative ways to deal with the new normal and to move forward and stay connected • Jean asked if retired teachers are being called back into service to help support learning, similar to how retired nurses were called in to help in hospitals; Angie said she hasn’t heard anything about that, but will bring it to the Executive Committee • Jean asked what accountability or follow-up there is regarding the delivery of lessons; Angie said that all Principals and Vice-Principals are dropping into virtual classrooms to ensure proper program/course delivery • Angie said there have been a range of responses to online learning from families, and the Board is ‘meeting families where they’re at’, without judgement • The Ministry has indicated that there needs to greater flexibility; this week Teachers in both panels are asking students about their desire to engage, and, to find out how they would prefer to learn (live vs. recorded); Angie said that some families are exhausted while others are craving the routine and want more • She feels there’s a wide range of supports available to anyone that needs them; if anyone has questions or concerns (or want/need more or less contact and/or support), they should reach out to the classroom teacher and/or the school Principal to make them aware • Rose said they’re still not open, but they remain busy with online meetings between families and other agencies; DSO meetings are still being held, and there is a crisis team conducting virtual walk-ins | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Angie |
| Next Meeting | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The next meeting is scheduled for June 11, 2020; at this time, it is unknown whether the meeting will be able to be held in person or via teleconference so that information will be provided closer to the date | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All |
| Adjournment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The meeting was adjourned at 7:15 p.m. | |