



Special Education Advisory Committee SEAC 20-08

Virtual MS Teams

Thursday, April 22, 2021 – 6:00 p.m.

MINUTES

SEAC Members

Present: Chair W. Rose, L. Boswell, P. Boutis, C. Brady, T. Buchanan, R. Collver, L. DeJong, A. Detmar, M. Gatopoulos, K. Jones, T. Sault, L. Scott, J. Trovato, T. Waldschmidt, T. Wilson.

Regrets: M. Carpenter, A. Csoff, R. Winter.

Resource Staff

Present: P. Bagchee, L. Boudreault, K. Mertins, L. Sheppard, L. Thompson, J. White

Guests:

Present: J. Gemmill, ITS Staff, R. TenBrinke, Child and Youth Worker

Recorder: P. Curran.

A-1 Opening **W. Rose**

(a) Welcome

Chair Rose welcomed everyone, called the meeting to order at 6:03 and read the Land Acknowledgement Statement.

(b) Agenda Additions / Deletions / Approvals W. Rose

i. Add H-1 Community Updates (a) Woodview Updates – A. Detmar.

ii. Add D-1 New Business (d) Virtual Learning Update – R. Collver.

Moved by: C. Brady
Seconded by P. Boutis

THAT the SEAC 20-08 Agenda for Thursday, April 22, 2021 be approved as amended.

CARRIED

B-1 Timed Items **W. Rose**

(a) A Day in the Life of the Child and Youth Worker R. tenBrinke / P Bagchee

P. Bagchee introduced the new series that will give members a deeper understanding of the roles Special Education Support Staff play in helping students. She introduced R. tenBrinke a Child and Youth Worker (CYW) who shared slides to augment her presentation.



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The tiered model of service as it applies to CYWs was presented to the group. In Tier 1, CYWs deliver classroom presentations that develop skills in social-emotional understanding, healthy relationships, self-regulation, and mental health and well being. They also connect families with community resources. Tier 2, CYW services focus on targeted prevention in smaller groups.

For students requiring continued support, following parental consent, Tier 3 offers more individualized intervention, which includes additional coaching and practicing.

The CYW is part of the In-School Team meetings, which include the school administrator, the Learning Resource Teacher and usually the classroom teacher.

Ms. tenBrinke shared her Day in the Life of a CYW This can vary between CYWs. Ranae is a person who thrives on routine and organization and she responded to these questions:

1. How Many Students Do You Support in a Week?
Ms. tenBrinke told members she provides Tier 1 and 2 programming to between 120-300 students per week from 12 -14 classrooms or small groups.
2. How Many Students Do You Support in a Year?
 - a) In Tier One, she has served approximately 1,000 individual students to date this year.
 - b) In Tier Two, she has run 12 small groups involving 40 students.
 - c) Wellness Lessons were run in 10 classes involving approximately 215 students, though many classes had multiple lessons.
3. How Do Schools Access Your Support?
Schools can invite their CYW to an In-School Team Meeting (ISTM) which should include a principal, a Learning Resource Teacher and the Classroom Teacher (if possible).
4. Describe a Day in Your Work Life?
 - She reviews any presentations she is planning for that day.
 - During COVID restrictions she tries to limit her visits to one or two schools per day.
 - She will also provide school staff with professional development training.
 - Her day may include ISTM or other scheduled meetings and could also contain future planning meetings with other CYWs and Social Workers.
 - Her day usually ends at her office which provides time to review her next day's schedule and begin preparation for any future presentations or meetings.



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5. What is Your Role in the Tiered Approach to Learning?

Ms. tenBrinke emphasized that all the supports focus on Social Emotional Learning, Self-Regulation, Healthy Relationships, Mindfulness and Overall Wellbeing.

Tier 1 - She provides support to whole classrooms and connects families to community agencies and resources. This provides educators and students with a better understanding of mental health and well being.

Tier 2 - She meets with small groups of students to focus on more targeted coaching in specific areas.

Tier 3 - She provides individualized support, coaching and script to vulnerable students.

6. How does Your Role Support Students in the Classroom?

Ms. tenBrinke noted this was her favourite question as she is very passionate about the classroom model and believes it is critical that all students receive the same message which helps them learn empathy, caring for one another and maintaining healthy relationships.

When students learn these skills, they are equipped to help and encourage their peers. The result is students feel more included and supported.

She recently started her presentations with a mindfulness exercise and was astounded at the increase in students' receptivity to learning.

Her laptop screen has information on the Kids' Help Phone. Ms. tenBrinke is amazed at how many students write down this information.

CYW have become accepted as a part of the school. They are a trusted adult that students know and can come to for help or to share their stories of success.

Chair Rose thanked Ms. tenBrinke for her enthusiastic presentation and noted how wonderful to hear her story and the difference her work is making for our students.

A copy of the power point presentation was presented to SEAC members.



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C-1 Business Arising from Minutes and/or Previous Meetings

W. Rose

(a) Ratification of Minutes March 11, 2021

Moved by: K. Jones
Seconded by: M. Gatopoulos

THAT the minutes for SEAC 20-07 be approved as circulated.

CARRIED

(b) Letter to Ministry of Education/EQAO
– AT Barriers for Field Test of Grade 9 Math and OSSLT

W. Rose

Ms. White noted Grand Erie students would not participate in the field test, so this does not impact our special education students.

Important that the company hired to create the field test has made the adjustments when the actual test is ready to be administered.

Members would like the word “important” removed from the second to last paragraph.

Trustee. Collver asked to have Grand Erie DSB Trustees, MPP Bouma and MPP Barrett receive copies of the letter.

Superintendent Thompson asked to have the letter shared with other Ontario SEAC.

Moved by: L. Boswell
Seconded by: K. Jones

THAT the letter regarding EQAO test AT Barriers be sent as amended and include copies to Grand Erie DSB trustees, Brant MPP and Haldimand Norfolk MPP and, if possible, other Ontario SEAC.

CARRIED

(c) Book Club – Pride and Prejudice by Sarah General

L. Thompson

Superintendent Thompson reminded members of the book club and advised she does not yet have a date for the review.

Any SEAC members who would like her to purchase a copy of the book for them should please notify the recording secretary and we will ensure books will be made available for them.

(d) Survey Monkey

W. Rose

Chair Rose noted a document will be shared with members in the next few days following review by the Special Education Management Team.



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(a-2) Virtual Summer Programs

L. Boudreault

Ms. Boudreault explained the board is considering summer programs 2021 offered virtually to assist SEA students through LEARNStyle, the board's SEA training company.

The following four options are under consideration:

1. Enhancing literacy skills using assistive technology, focusing on written output and reading comprehension.
2. Application of writing and comprehension strategies to tackle questions that may be encountered during academic assessment.
3. Math exploration and practice using assistive technology and technology tools while learning strategies to support comprehension, math thinking and problem solving.
4. Computation, problem-solving strategies and basic coding concepts and robotics for students with an Autism diagnosis.

(a-3) Additional Tier 3 Supports

K. Mertins

1. Psycho-educational and Speech-Language Assessments will be conducted in early July, but the number of assessments will be limited due to the intensive nature of the testing Staff are taking this opportunity to back fill some of the assessments for students who are on the wait list.
2. Attendance Counsellor intervention in late August will focus on early re-engagement of the most vulnerable students and families.

(a-4) Mental Health Services and Supports

P. Bagchee

Ms. Bagchee shared that additional funding will allow for summer Mental Health supports and services for students .

1. Social Worker Services during July and August
Mental health support will continue over the summer. It will also be available to students in the summer school and Camp Sail summer program. Staff will discuss in home coping and wellness strategies and assist students and families with community agency connections and resources. Social Workers will provide transition support to families and the students returning to in-class learning.
2. Child and Youth Workers
Support the Summer School Transition Program.



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3. Mentally Healthy Return to School (potential class)

Resources for parents and presentations which include Q&A. Increase educator and school board staff understanding of mental health literacy.

P. Boutis asked how staff planned to meet the similar needs of students not in specialized classes. Ms. Boudreault advised they had to concentrate the supports in places where they knew a larger number of students would be in need and reminded members that summer programs are also dependent on how many staff will be reenergized enough to work over the summer.

4. Student Success and Mental Health Wellbeing Collaboration

Grand Erie was successful in receiving a Focus on Youth grant. This will be made available to approximately 25 Brantford / Brant County students. Geographically this is a high-compensatory area. Student Success will be supporting credit recovery or credit updating, or connections to paid employment or pre-employment. Selected students must participate in mental health literacy program.

The grant period is from May to August, but mental health supports will extend into the school year.

(a-5) Input from SEAC

Special education management team asked members to respond to two questions when they consider the target groups for the summer programs, supports and services outlined.

1. What areas of focus should we intensify in our planning so that students have the most opportunity for personal growth?

P. Boutis – how to address the similar needs of students who are not in these particular classes?

Dr. L. Scott – In the future, could the programs focus on all neurodevelopmental disorders instead of just ASD?

L. DeJong – is there flexibility of consideration for those students who may get missed, i.e., without ASD diagnosis, but who present with similar challenges, self-regulation needs, etc. and who would benefit from these strategies?

A. Detmar – would like to see Mental Wellness offered across the board because even students who have not been identified have been impacted.



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- P. Bagchee – advised the Ministry direction was clear that our role is targeted intervention.
- L. Boudreault – staff had to concentrate the supports according to funding requirements and in places we know a larger number of students are in need in order to divide the funding most efficiently. Will work on cases where one or two students are located to develop a more individualized plan for the last couple of weeks in August.
2. What concerns might parents have with the summer programming and return to school that we must consider?
- W. Rose – is accessibility to technology a concern?
- L. Boudreault – learnStyle does a great job and will contact each family before the program starts to ensure technology is working correctly.
- L. DeJong – Parent concerns could include care of siblings, as it's summer and there are limited summer camp options so supporting their child for assessments could be a barrier.
- K. Jones – with parent concern over school and class stability would like to see more transition time for every family.
- L. Boswell – how many psycho-educational and speech language assessment will be done during the summer.
- K. Mertins – it is too early to know which staff have existing commitments, as well they all need a break and some holiday time. Once we determine staff availability the number of assessments that can be completed will be determined.
- R. Collver – wanted to congratulate everyone who responded so well to the changing environment. She asked for a recap of virtual programs during this past year.
3. Recap of Virtual Programs offered during 2020-21
- L. Boudreault reported there were approximately 28 students in the SEA technology program and 24 students in the Autism coding program. She noted registration was initially higher, but that some families had planned vacations whose children did not end up participating. It is important to keep that in mind for this summer.
- L. Boudreault and K. Mertins left members with a reminder that the operation of summer programs or summer assessments is also dependent on how many staff are available and / or re-energized enough to work over the summer. An update on the viability of summer programs and assessments will be provided to SEAC.



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- (b) Draft Grand Erie's Special Education Plan – 2020-21 L. Thompson

Members were asked to review the draft plan which includes previous SEAC input and which will be returned for final approval at the May SEAC meeting before presentation to the Board of Trustees.

Members were asked to provide any additional input for consideration to the recording secretary no later than Monday May 10, 2021 by 4:00 p.m.

The current version is posted on the Grand Erie website if members want to use it for comparison.

P. Boutis noted the document is large and very wordy and could be difficult for some parents so asked if a summary could be made for parents to review and then consult the plan if they wish more information.

- (c) Board Achievement Plan Mid-Year Update L. Thompson

The Student Achievement Plan was updated and sent to the Board of Trustees at the end of March.

The focus this year is on the continued implementation of the renewed model in special education, implementing fulsome Tier 1 supports in classrooms before considering the implementation of Tier 2 and 3 strategies. By necessity, there is an added focus on providing strategies to support students with special education needs who have chosen to learn virtually.

A new focus in the Board Achievement Plan is on student well-being. Updates on strategies to support students to develop social-emotional well-being were shared.

Staff received anecdotal evidence from secondary students who shared they were more at ease sharing ideas and thoughts in MS Teams breakout rooms than they were in classrooms.

Teachers reported breakout rooms as very beneficial for teaching small groups.

- (c-1) Rick Hansen Foundation Partnership K. Mertins

One of the unexpected outcomes following the overwhelming success of the RHF Ambassador presentations organized for Grand Erie's Accessibility Awareness month in December 2020 was the development of an Accessibility Certificate for students enrolled in the Construction Specialist High Skills Major program. D. Elkema, Teacher Consultant Student Success was instrumental in organizing this learning opportunity which is now available across the province.,



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- Ms. Mertins will send the program flyer to the recording secretary for sharing with SEAC.
- (d) Remote Learning R. Collver
- Trustee Collver reported a call she received from a parent whose child was in a remote learning class. She asked for a refresher on how we support parents and students who are teaching / learning remotely.
- Superintendent Thompson indicated that the Ministry of Education provided messaging following the last return that clarified we needed to look at student need for in-person learning on a case-by-case basis before determining which model of learning will best support the child. .
- Students who take part in remote learning will be offered both synchronous and asynchronous lessons based on students' learning styles determined by working with families to discover which is most appropriate for them.
- Ms. Boudreault informed members the board purchased additional Lexia Learning (literacy) licences and TeachTown (for students on the Autism Spectrum) in anticipation of a greater need occasioned by an increase in or a return to remote learning. Lexia can be tailored to individual student needs.
- Ms. DeJong questioned if support was available for all students or limited to students in Self Contained classes.
- J. White advised staff is currently working to establish a triage method with school administrators. The distinguishing differences begin with identified students in Self Contained classes, then profiling students with pervasive needs, then students in regular classes with needs. Students will receive individual case by case evaluation this time around.
- E-1 Other Business W. Rose**
- (a) Educational Assistants (EA) Allocation 2021-22 – Draft Board Report J. White
- Ms. White reviewed the criteria for allocating Educational Assistants reminding members the role is to support classroom learning. She reviewed the outline of the three areas used to help allocate EA support which include 1) medical/physical needs; 2) safety and supervision requirements and 3) Communication Autism. Classroom capacity is also a factor on allocation.
- The primary goal of educational assistant support is to help students develop independence. Educational assistants are assigned to schools in a shared support model, though it is recognized that some students will require direct support based on their individual needs.



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The board no longer has a Transition EA but it will be included in the report until the position is no longer applicable.

R. Collver asked if the role of the EA is being reviewed.

J. White advised staff is currently updating the role description of the EA with CUPE as this exists within their contract language. New language will be more aligned with the shifting operational needs of the renewed model.

R. Collver asked where funding for the temporary EA come from.

J. White advised with permission they can hold back some funding in case there is student fluctuation over the summer.

The draft report will be presented to the Board of Trustees on May 10 and she invited any questions or input from members.

F-1 Standing Items

W. Rose

(a) Policy/Procedures Out for Comment

P. Curran

Members were advised to send any comments about F7 Disclosure of Wrongdoing (Whistle-Blower) and SO14 Equity and Inclusive Education to kathryn.giannini@granderie.ca by April 30, 2021

(b) Trustee Update – Current Board Activities

T. Waldschmidt / R. Collver

1. T. Waldschmidt

- Leading and Learning in Pandemic - Prior to March / April Break, all special education teachers, Educational Assistants and Learning Resource Teachers were able to receive their first COVID vaccine. The Brant County Health Unit has extended this offer to all staff who work or live in Brant County to join the cancellation list. Hope to work with both public health units to extend the vaccination to all Grand Erie staff.
- GEPIC presentation April 22/2021 by Ann Douglas on Parenting in a Pandemic. This will be recorded for viewing by anyone who had a conflict with the time. Ms. Douglas is a featured speaker on CBC and is the author of two parenting books.
- GEPIC presentation April 29/2021 by Dr. Pamela Rose Toulouse on Indigenous Education and Reconciliation. Dr. Toulouse is a Professor at Laurentian University and a 3M National Teaching Fellow. This presentation will also be recorded for those who are unable to view at the time.
- Many days of significance including national volunteer week; please check out our Twitter and re-tweet comments. [@gedsb on Twitter](#)



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- We are revising our multi-year strategic plan and Trustees and senior administration will be gathering system wide feedback. He will be inviting a SEAC representative to participate in a working group. He and Trustee Collver will bring more information closer to the date.
- This week launched the Grand Erie mobile app for parents and staff which will provide a hub with all school related information in one place. Includes calendar, news, updates, transportation information and access to school social media.

2. R. Collver

- Thanked everyone for the remote learning as we know it has been a challenge for everyone.
- Grand Erie is reducing our carbon footprint through the implementation of solar panels and increased use of controlled lighting and heating. We are doing our best to help save our planet.
- Thank you for completing the survey; we are waiting for Ministry grants to be released so this year's budget can be finalized.
- Trustees were very pleased to learn some of our staff could access vaccinations on a priority list.
- Grand Erie received \$10 million to upgrade schools and support buildings and to create some outdoor classrooms.

G-1 Information Items

W. Rose

(a) SEAC Representative – Strategic Plan Participants

L. Thompson

Superintendent Thompson reported that W. Rose and L. DeJong each volunteered to participate in a working group to support the review and renewal of Grand Erie's Multi-Year Strategic Plan.

(b) SEAC Membership Update

W. Rose

Further to an update from last month regarding attendance requirements Ms. Rose advised two members have been absent without notice and will each receive letters that their membership has been forfeited.

A plan for recruitment will be discussed at a future meeting.

H-1 Community Updates

W. Rose

(a) Woodview Mental Health and Autism Services

A. Detmar

1. Their agency is currently closed to foot traffic two weeks, but clients can still be seen virtually. Appointment format will be reassessed at the end of two weeks.

Call the office for appointments. A new flyer is being developed.



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2. Mental Health week is May 3-7; the Brantford staff have partnered with the Haldimand Norfolk branch. Stay tuned to Woodview's social media and watch for virtual events.

I-1 Correspondence W. Rose

(a) None. W. Rose

J-1 Future Agenda Items and SEAC Committee Planning W. Rose

(a) SEAC Goal Setting W. Rose
None.

K-1 Next Meeting W. Rose

(a) Thursday, May 20, 2021 | MS Teams

L-1 Adjournment W. Rose

Moved by: K. Jones

Seconded By: M. Gatopoulos

"**THAT** the SEAC 20-08 meeting of April 22, 2021 meeting be adjourned at 8:02 p.m."

CARRIED