



Special Education Advisory Committee SEAC 20-09

Virtual MS Teams

Thursday, May 20, 2021 – 6:00 p.m.

MINUTES

SEAC Members

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

Regrets: R. Collver.

Recorder: P. Curran.

Resource Staff

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

Guests:

Present: J. Gemmill, ITS Staff, J. Cassidy, Behaviour Counsellor, R. Staats, Principal Leader of Indigenous Education and Equity.

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

Moved by: C. Brady
Seconded by K. Jones

THAT the SEAC 20-09 Agenda for Thursday, May 20, 2021 be approved as circulated.

CARRIED

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

(a) System Principal Leader of Indigenous Education and Equity R. Staats

Ms. Staats introduced herself to the Committee and gave a brief overview of her professional experience. She noted her excitement and happiness at joining the Grand Erie team and invited committee members to reach out to her for indigenous topics related to special education. She is very pleased to see the level of support Indigenous students are receiving across the district. She thanked everyone for inviting her and wished all a wonderful meeting.



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- (b) A Day in the Life of the Behaviour Counsellor (BC) J. Cassidy / J. White

Ms. White introduced J. Cassidy, who will speak about her role as a Behaviour Counsellor.

There are five BC who are aligned with the school resource teams that each provide support to approximately 15 schools.

Ms. Cassidy shared the tiered model of intervention for BC and explained that a toolkit was developed for Tier One generalized interventions and some professional development was also provided for classroom staff including Behaviour Management Systems (BMS) Training. All BC receive this training and teach approved and safe containment interventions as well as prevention and positive support strategies. BMS

Students who are still struggling are brought to the attention of the Resource Team which is attended by BC. At these meetings, behaviour and BeSafe plans are developed as well as leveled responses to student behaviour and. BC will model and assist with implementation of strategies. At times BC will work with Lead Education Assistants to assist school staff in carrying out these plans.

May set up a class wide reward that all students can earn for changed behaviour and no student is identified as requiring modification strategies.

Behaviour Counsellors attend all resource team meetings

Integral to understanding student behaviour is the identification of which behaviour function is underlying the student's actions. Students exhibit certain behaviours to get their needs met by seeking social attention, to gain access to tangible items or preferred activities, to escape or avoid demands and activities and to seek or avoid sensory input.

When introducing something new it is important to recognize students may initially resist. BC help classroom staff understand this and work through the transition.

Student behaviour does not remain static but fluctuates in response to what is happening in that student's life. This may cause students to move between tiers as their personal situations change and / or their life situation becomes less safe. BC role is to help students problem-solve to increase their stability and enhance achievement and hopefully reduce the escalation of situations.

1. How Many Students Do You Support in a Week?

Ms. Cassidy noted BC typically, provide Tier 2 Support to 7 or 8 students weekly, but it depends on the time of year and how many referrals they currently have on their caseload



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At the Tier 3 level they may work with 1 to 3 students with behaviour needs in one week. Depending on the complexity of the situation, they may stay at the school, working with the student for the week modelling and modifying the strategies.

2. How Many Students Do You Support in a Year?

Ms. Cassidy noted In the Tier 2 category there are usually 35-40 in a year, but this number fluctuates through various years.

Due to changes in the Special Education model, BC have inspired the building of classroom capacity and encouraged teachers or special education staff to pose questions to BC, typically in the Tier 1 level. This is a proactive approach and generally reduces the escalation to Tier 2 strategies. However, when necessary, approximately 20-25 students are referred to the Resource Team annually.

3. How Do Schools Access Your Support?

Ms. Cassidy advised schools request BC services through a Resource Team meeting although urgent situations arising at a school could also prompt a referral.

Team members will offer suggestions to assist with the student and the situation.

Staff ensures they collect as much information as possible from parents.

Schools may also contact BC to obtain a direct consultation for school staff regarding advice or suggestions on behaviour management.

4. Describe a Day in Your Work Life

Ms. Cassidy explained the day begins with developing a schedule for the day, while maintaining flexibility for last minute school meetings or school requests for help.

Typical activities include:

- Calling or emailing parents, schools, community resource agencies, etc.;
- Classroom visits to observe and gather data;
- Developing recommendations and behaviour support plans;
- Creating materials to support implementation of strategies and plans;
- Meeting with parents, school staff;
- Participating in the implementation of new plans alongside staff using a gradual release model;
- Providing Professional Development for school staff and provide Behaviour Management Systems Training;



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- Developing resources that staff can access through the Staff Special Education Professional Learning Environment.

5. How Does your Role Support Students in the Classroom?

Ms. Cassidy noted BC determine how they can help students learn Self Regulation and the importance of following rules which impacts the feeling of group inclusion.

They help teachers understand the function of behaviour that students use to get their needs met, so teachers realize the actions are not personal. It helps create a calmer classroom environment.

BC support the development of effective behaviour as when the classroom stress is lower it creates a learning environment where everyone feels more comfortable, safe and engaged.

An Antecedent, Behaviour, Consequence (ABC) Function chart is used for collecting information on a short-term basis, usually no more than 10 days.

Chair Rose thanked Ms. Cassidy for attending and sharing this important information with Committee members.

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

W. Rose

(a) Ratification of Minutes April 22, 2021

Moved by: J. Trovato
Seconded by: M. Gatopoulos

THAT the minutes for SEAC 20-08 be approved as circulated.
CARRIED

(b) Grand Erie's Special Education Plan 2020-21 – Final

L. Thompson

Superintendent Thompson responded to several suggestions previously provided by P. Boutis.

- Develop a guide to the Special Education Plan to help parents more easily navigate the document. It was suggested that SEAC members could work on this task if they wished to create a document such as this.
- Standard 3 - The option for parents to pay for their own assessments arose from a previous suggestion from SEAC so will remain in the document.
- Standard 4 –The words “above or” were removed from this statement as the board does not modify subjects or courses above the actual curriculum. However, the statement will be modified to make it more accurate.



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The link on page 33 to the Ministry's special education page, will be more meaningful if moved to the beginning of the Standard.

www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/speced.html

- iv. Standard 7 – the chart listing specialized health support service agencies is somewhat unwieldy. The Recording Secretary will reformat it to correct the places where words were broken.
- v. Standard 8 – the word “allowable” with respect to the categories of exceptionalities is old language and will be removed.
- vi. Standard 9 – the second paragraph was deleted as it referred to specific special education placements as the P1 Guiding Principles for Special Education will be changing. A new overarching statement may be developed to replace the deleted paragraph.
- vii. Standard 10 – with respect to including the phrase “as applicable” in reference to an IPRC decision, the language will be reviewed and amended if necessary.

Trustee Sloat noted P1 Special Education Guiding Principles is currently out for review as listed on our agenda for comments to be returned by May 27, 2021.

Superintendent Thompson will remove the list of Guiding Principles and replace it with a live link to the policy.

Members would like to have a future discussion on the parent guide that was mentioned above.

Trustee Sloat mentioned the London District office gave Grand Erie's Special Education Plan a glowing review and we have kept it current over the years. There is a Green Guide Book available from 2017. http://edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/policy/os/onschools_2017e.pdf

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

“THAT SEAC recommends the Board approve the 2020-21 Special Education Plan, as amended, for submission to the Ministry and uploading to the Board's website.”

CARRIED



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(c) SEAC Committee Member Input – Survey Monkey Feedback

W. Rose

Chair Rose thanked everyone for their input and noted she had put together a chart which she and Vice-Chair will review with Superintendent Thompson and the Special Education Management Team (SEMT) to create a road map for next year.

The document <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/R78MD8H> will remain open for SEAC members who may like to submit an idea over the summer. Alternately please send mail to her directly at dee.rose@me.com

Topics that have come forth to date include:

1. Parent and school partnerships and student education.
2. Transition for students with special education needs who are
 - a) Just entering elementary school
 - b) Just entering secondary school
 - c) Just leaving secondary school for the community, post-secondary education or the workplace.
3. Experiential Workplace opportunities and Preparation for Employment.
4. Transition for youth who are finishing school.
5. Human Rights Code
6. Developmental coordination disorder and its impact

(d) Special Education & Mental Health Summer Program Offerings – Update

L. Sheppard

1. In Person Summer Programs Review

- i. Summer School Transition Program (SK to Grade 3)
- ii. Hello Classroom Program (Autism and Life Skills Self Contained)
- iii. This is My New School Program (JK/SK with Autism and/or pervasive needs)

2. Introduction of Virtual Summer Programs

School staff may nominate students to any of these programs which each require a minimum of eight students to run. The board has summer literacy funding to support these programs, but there is also some additional SEA funding that will allow any interested student to be accommodated.

i. Assistive Technology Leadership Camp (G 4-12, grouped by division)

This is a five-day camp implemented through LearnStyle scheduled for mid-August which includes two hours of daily instruction aimed at increasing students' independence, confidence and self-advocacy. Students will create a personal profile website which will house all their own aha discoveries about technology and learning strategies. The



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benefits they have gleaned will transition with them back to the classroom.

ii. Technology Journeys in Math (Grades 4-8)

This program is also hosted by LearnStyle and runs for two hours each day for five days at the end of August. The overall goal is to help students increase independence, confidence and self-esteem while developing positive outlooks towards math. Students will build a private math journal website where they will record their strategies, technology tools, digital manipulatives they've learned and some self reflection, all of which they will be able to take back to the classroom.

iii. High School Transition Program (Grade 8)

Also hosted by LearnStyle, this five-day program runs two hours each day. The goal is to help students learn how to manage their workload and how to stay on top of their responsibilities and tasks and how to become more proficient at reading and writing. Students explore tools and strategies that will help them have more success at high school. They will have opportunities to investigate tools around organization Family support is important to staff collaborates with families to ensure student willingness to participate is evident. The program runs through the summer.

iv. High School Assistive Technology Drop-Ins (Grades 9-12)

This is a one-hour micro sessions provided by LearnStyle that occur over a two-week period. Designed to equip secondary students with strategies to utilize assistive technology to increase their independence. Geared to students involved in technology and approximately 10 programs are offered including job seeking, resume creation, creating / delivering presentations, study skills, creative writing, research, etc.

v. Reading Skills Development through LEXIA (Grades 2-8)

Some Grand Erie students already use LEXIA, but this summer specific teachers will be hired to monitor those in the Reading Skills Development program. They will check in on the work students have done. The program is geared to students who indicate a gap in their reading skills and will run through the summer so requires a solid commitment from families for their children to participate.

Members were very supportive of these programs that will assist students prepare for September and it was noted by Ms. Staats noted Lexia is administered daily by EA's in all Six Nations elementary schools.



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3. Summer Mental Health Support Programs P. Bagchee

As discussed at the last meeting, Social Workers will provide short term counselling over the summer. Attendance Counsellors will return to work earlier this year to allow them to reach out to families/students virtually and in person where chronic absences were noted.

Also developing a series of family support resource presentations available toward the end of August. Currently, three have been developed “Heading Back to School – Make it Successful, Make it Fun” (elementary); “Heading Back to School – Tackling Anxiety – Elementary” and “Heading Back to School – Tackling Anxiety – Secondary”

The “Focus on Youth” program supports mental health for students who have credit gaps or may require help developing employment skills.

Over the summer Educational Assistants will have an opportunity to learn the Shanker Self Reg Framework.

Ms. Bagchee clarified the understanding the presentations will take into account both adaptive anxiety and problematic anxiety and will include school-based strategies, home-based strategies and connections to community resources.

- D-1 New Business** **W. Rose**

- (a) Special Education Funding 2021-22 – GSN Highlights L. Thompson

- i. Priorities & Partnership Funding (PPF, Previously Transfer Payment Agreements)

PPF are specified short term one-time funds not included under Grants for Student Needs. For the 2021-22 school year, Grand Erie received \$214,179 for special education supports and \$337,220 for mental health supports.

These funds are allocated for continued COVID 19 funding support. School boards are limited to spending only one half the allocation at the beginning of the year and must wait for government approval before spending the other half, if deemed appropriate or notification that it will be taken back. The funds may be used in any way to offset COVID impact, e.g., staffing, resources. Staff are still in discussion as to the best use of this funding.

- ii. Grants for Student Needs (GSN)

In previous years, mental health funding was in the form of an annual PPF (TPA) which left uncertainty as to continuation. Beginning in 2021-22 school year, Mental Health and Wellbeing will be built into the GSN



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so will be permanent funding in the amount of \$374,449. Under the new funding model it is now called “Supporting Student Mental Health” and has flexibility in how it can be spent.

The After School Skill Development program for students identified on the Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) was on hold for two years due to disruptions from labour disputes and COVID restrictions. This funding which is just over \$80,000 was also previously in the form of a PPF (TPA) and is now built into the GSN and will help support some of the summer programming that was previously discussed.

Contract Settlement Funding provides \$96,990 specific to the Professional Student Support Personnel to hire or rehire staff.

Ms. White also shared that the CUPE (Canadian Union of Public Employees) allocated funding equivalent to hiring 18 ½ additional Educational Assistants.

Additional GSN funding also allowed the increase of Learning Resource Teachers and the addition of another Self-Contained class. Further investigation will be the hiring of a Teacher Consultant for technology supporting students on alternative programming. Also looking at a secondary position to support those students on alternative programming with experiential learning opportunities and work preparation. Grand Erie will also be rolling out an Alternative Curriculum Guide.

The Board will also be implementing a virtual class to serve the entire board that offers opportunities for gifted and talented students. The process has not yet been fully developed.

All budget amounts and details will be posted to the board’s website once approved by Trustees.

Trustee Sloat asked about a new classroom in Multi-Handicapped classroom at Lynndale Heights School. Ms. White confirmed and noted the decision was made after the board report was sent in. Superintendent Thompson will follow up with next steps.

E-1 Other Business

W. Rose

- (a) Membership Update – New Member
Chair Rose introduced Lisa Nydam who agreed to be the Native Representative for Grand Erie SEAC.

W. Rose

Ms. Nydam expressed her pleasure at returning to the table, noting she had been a member briefly but had to resign due to personal challenges. She shared she is the Office Manager of the Ontario Disability Support Program in Simcoe and for 17 years also was a Child Protection Worker.



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She invited members with any questions about either topic to please contact her.

F-1 Standing Items **W. Rose**

(a) Policy/Procedures Out for Comment **P. Curran**

Members were advised to send any comments about current policy/procedures out for comment to kathryn.giannini@granderie.ca by May 27, 2021.

(b) Trustee Update – Current Board Activities **T. Waldschmidt / CA. Sloat**

1. T. Waldschmidt

- Welcomed everyone and especially Ms. Nydam, our newest member.
- Senior Management is working on the Multi-Year Plan and budgets

2. CA. Sloat

- The next budget meeting is Thursday, May 27th for anyone wants to follow
- The board received \$10,000,000 to update air flow systems.
- Two open concept schools will have walls installed.
- Awaiting Ministry decision in June as to the option of a virtual school for September. A different model will be used where the virtual school will operate from each school rather than as a separate academy.
- Some larger schools will likely use the quadmester system again.

G-1 Information Items **W. Rose**

(a) None

H-1 Community Updates **W. Rose**

(a) None

I-1 Correspondence **W. Rose**

(a) LDAO Circular – May 2021

Highlights include the notice that graduating students will be exempt from the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT) and a discussion on the disruption to learning of which we have learned Grand Erie's response to this concern.



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- (b) Ltr – Dr. C. Montgomery re: EQAO & OSSLT
Assistive Technology – May 12, 2021 W. Rose / J. White

Ms. White noted alternatives were not provided at the time although our Information Technology staff also tried to find a work around. This information may be new so SEMT will certainly look into these claims.

Chair Rose asked that SEMT keep SEAC informed and advised if necessary, we will continue to raise the issue.

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

- (a) SEAC Goal Setting W. Rose

Chair Rose thanked the Special Education Management Team and noted the anticipation of meeting for the purpose of planning.

K-1 Next Meeting W. Rose

- (a) Thursday, June 17, 2021 | MS Teams | 6:00 PM

L-1 Adjournment W. Rose

Moved by: M. Gatopoulos

Seconded By: T. Waldschmidt

“**THAT** the SEAC 20-09 meeting of May 20, 2021 meeting be adjourned at 7:49 p.m.”

CARRIED