

REPORT OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

November 11, 2019
6:35 p.m. - 9:08 p.m.

MEMBERS

C. Thamavonga, Association for Bright Children (by phone)
A. Morse, Easter Seals Ontario (by phone)
B. Harvey, Epilepsy Support Centre
P. Cook, Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario
M. Cvetkovich, Children's Aid Society of London and Middlesex
J. Wright, Community Services Coordination Network (CSCN)
T. Grant, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Network
S. Young, London Autism Developmental Disabilities
J. Gritzan, Thames Valley Children's Centre
S. Thomson, Thames Valley Council Home and School Associations
J. Bennett, Trustee
L. Pizzolato, Trustee
B. Yeoman, Trustee (by phone)
S. Grabstas, Vanier Children's Services
D. Shore-Reid, Learning Disabilities Association London
B. Mai, Association for Bright Children

ADMINISTRATION AND OTHERS

R. Culhane, Associate Director
A. Canham, Superintendent of Special Education
A. Leatham, Learning Supervisor
R. Ferrara, Learning Supervisor
T. Birtch, Secondary Principal
M. Phillips, Secondary Principal
S. Smith, Corporate Services

Regrets: S. Lawrence Farrants, B. Furac, L. Turner-Otte, M. Barbeau

1. Call to Order

Chair Bennett called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m. in the London Room at the Education Centre.

2. Confirmation of Agenda

The agenda was approved on motion.

3. Conflicts of Interest

None declared.

4. Welcome

a. Thames Valley Council of Home and School Associations

Chair Bennett introduced S. Thomson and provided a brief background, welcoming her to SEAC.

b. Autism Ontario

Chair Bennett reported that S. Lawrence Farrants is a newly appointed SEAC member who will be introduced at the next SEAC meeting.

A. Canham introduced Principal M. Phillips and welcomed him to SEAC.

A. Canham introduced Superintendent L. Nicholls and Learning Supervisors K. Auckland and M. Stanley providing a brief background.

5. Report of the Previous Meeting

The report of the 2019 September 9 Special Education Advisory Committee meeting was provided for information.

6. Business Arising from the Minutes

None.

7. Behaviour Management Systems Workbook

A. Leatham presented for information the Behaviour Management Systems (BMS) workbook. It was noted the development of the BMS workbook was a collaborative effort between TVDSB staff and the Ontario Educational Services Corporation(OESC).

The BMS training is mandatory for educational assistants (EA) and teachers in Developmental, Transition and Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) self-contained classrooms. Teachers on Special Assignment (TOSA) are also BMS trained. It was noted the course is 8 hrs with a 3 hour re-certification.

Questions of clarification regarding next steps, evacuating classrooms, tracking BMS certified staff, making the guide available to every teacher, guiding questions, intervention strategies, student containment and risk factors were answered by Administration.

In response to a question it was noted there is a debrief after every containment, noting BMS is a way to be proactive in avoiding the necessity to contain a student.

8. Behaviour Program Review Update

A. Leatham presented for information the Special Education TVDSB Mental Health Behaviour Program review. The tiered approach to the prevention and intervention framework was outlined, noting the majority of students fit Tier 1 or 2.

A. Leatham detailed the program goals, recent achievements/completed actions, strategies, system updates and next steps.

Questions of clarification regarding student voice, Transition classes self-contained classes for students with behavioural exceptionalities, sharing information for future teachers of students, parent involvement and service summaries completed by TOSAs were answered by Administration.

In response to a question it was noted that it is often the practice of staff to seek out opportunities to integrate students from a Transition class into a regular classroom.

9. After School Skills Development Program

A. Canham provided an update on the After School Skills Development Program (ASSDP) grant. It was noted the program will run one day a week for students with ASD over the next 3 years. Next steps, locations and timelines were detailed. It was noted the funding cannot be used for transportation.

A. Canham provided details on the partnership with the TVDSB Early Years program, Special Education department and childcare providers. TVDSB staff (Educational Assistants, Speech and Language Pathologists, and Board Certified Behavioural Analysts) will implement the ASSDP with the ASD children identified.

Questions of clarification regarding students with externalizing behaviour, the length of day some students can tolerate, the age range of students that will participate, program implementation, government guidelines for the program, and the number of students the pilot will impact were answered by Administration.

In response to a question it was noted the staff at every site running the program will receive Peer Mediated Social Skills (TRACKS) and Applied Behavioural Analysis (ABA) training. The program will be tailored meet the individual needs of each student.

10. Early ID Update

A. Canham presented an update on Early Identification and Intervention. He provided information on an automated system to assist educators in gathering information and documenting intervention strategies for the Early ID process. A. Canham reported the system was piloted in four schools last month.

Educators are provided a list of standards used to identify skills requiring improvement. For each skill identified corresponding intervention strategies are recommended to address: self and social development, communication, language and literacy, cognitive and conceptual development, and physical development.

R. Ferrara advised the list of skills has been refined to provide more focus on each skill.

Questions regarding student criteria for Early ID, Early ID for gifted students, the timeline for assessment completion and the age criteria for skills development were answered by Administration.

In response to a question Administration reported, this new method will provide consistency. It was noted the skills will change in each grade as the developmental expectations change with age.

Additional questions regarding Early ID may be sent to A. Leatham by email.

11. LD Pilot Update

R. Ferrara provided an update on the four-year pilot project noting the funding will cover the cost of the teacher, the Learning Support Teacher (LST), EA and Speech and Language Pathologist.

In response to a question it was reported with recent Government funding eight new spots were created in the program as of 2019 September.

12. System Updates

a. Operational Plan

A. Canham presented for information the 2019-2020 TVDSB Operational plan, outlining the goals and strategies relating to Special Education.

It was noted progress reports will be provided to SEAC in the new year.

b. Special Education Staffing

A. Canham provided an update on staffing. He advised that as a result of the agreement ratified with CUPE Provincially, there will be an increase in full time EAs to support students.

Questions of clarification regarding casual EAs were answered by Administration.

In response to a question it was noted staff absences have decreased since EAs have been assigned to schools.

c. PPM 163 / Use of Service Dogs by Students and Staff Procedure

A. Canham presented for information the Policy/Program Memorandum (PPM) 163 School Board Policies on Service Animals.

A. Canham advised that by 2020 all schools are required by the Ministry of Education to have a procedure for the use of a service animal for students noting TVDSB has an existing procedure that will be updated.

Questions of clarification regarding the type of animals, the type of documentation that will need to be provided, the difference between service animals and companion animals, and incorporating the National Service Animal Registry (NSAR) Public Access Test (PAT) were answered by Administration.

13. SEAC/Departmental Priorities (Standing Item)

A. Canham presented the results from the group activity completed at the 2019 September 9 SEAC meeting. A handout was provided. It was noted departmental priorities were added to the list. The committee will begin work on this list at the 2019 December 16 meeting.

14. Students on a Modified Day (Standing Item)

A. Canham reported on the number of Elementary students currently on a modified day program.

Questions of clarification regarding reducing the number of student on Individual Education Plans (IEP) and the number of suspensions, were answered by Administration

In response to a question it was noted if a student is on a modified day after three weeks a review is completed. This is a recent change as a result of a recommendation from SEAC.

15. Special Education Plan (Standing Item)

A. Canham advised work on this will start in 2020 January.

16. Correspondence (Standing Item)

a. Conseil Scolaire Catholique Providence Letter #1

A. Canham presented for information a copy of a letter from the Conseil Scolaire Catholique Province School Board to Minister Lecce. The letter expressed concern about the recent changes to the Provincial funding model for class size averages with the announcement of mandatory e-learning and the devastating impact this will have on students with special education needs. A copy was provided to the committee prior to the meeting.

b. Conseil Scolaire Catholique Providence Letter #2

A. Canham presented for information a copy of a letter from the Conseil Scolaire Catholique Providence Board to Minister Lecce in support of Bill 44, Education Amendment Act (Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder). A copy was provided to the committee prior to the meeting.

c. Conseil Scolaire Catholique Providence Letter #3

A. Canham presented for information a copy of a letter from the Conseil Scolaire Catholique Providence School Board to Minister Lecce expressing concern about the recent changes to the Provincial funding model for Autism services and the impact that it will have on children, families and school boards. A copy was provided to the committee prior to the meeting.

d. Ecole Catholique Centre - Est

A. Canham presented for information a copy of a letter from the Ecoles Catholique Centre-Est School Board to Minister Lecce expressing concern about the recent changes to the Provincial funding model for class size averages and mandatory e-learning courses. A copy was provided to the committee prior to the meeting.

17. Other Business

In response to a question, the process for requesting information was reviewed by Administration.

18. Forum: Association Updates (Round Table)

Round table updates were completed. Committee members highlighted some of the events and activities planned by their various organizations in the coming weeks. As a follow up to the meeting, event flyers will be emailed out to the committee members as they are received by Corporate Services.

19. 2019-2020 Meeting Dates

Through discussion it was determined the 2019 October 4 meeting that was cancelled will be rescheduled for 2019 December 16, 6:30 p.m.

20. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:08 p.m. by motion.

Recommendations: None.

Joyce Bennett
Chairperson