



SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT

Wednesday, January 16, 2019, 7:00 pm
Trustees' Committee Room
133 Greenbank Road
Ottawa, Ontario

- Members:** Rob Kirwan (Community Representative), Rob Campbell (Trustee), Christine Boothby (Trustee), Lyra Evans (Trustee), Cathy Miedema (Association for Bright Children), Dragos Popa (Association for Bright Children, Alternate), Katie Ralph (Autism Ontario, Ottawa Chapter), Mark Wylie (Down Syndrome Association), Linda Barbetta (Learning Disabilities Association of Ottawa-Carleton), Ian Morris (Ontario Associations for Families of Children with Communication Disorders), Donna Owen (Ottawa-Carleton Assembly of School Councils), Jim Harris (VOICE for deaf and hard of hearing children), Terry Warner (VOICE for deaf and hard of hearing children, Alternate), Sonia Nadon-Campbell (Community Representative), Susan Cowin (Community Representative), Catherine Houlden (Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation, Teachers), Jean Trant (Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation, SSP), Kimberly Elmer (Ottawa-Carleton Secondary School Administrators' Network), Nancy Dlouhy (Ottawa-Carleton Elementary Operations Committee), Nancy McLaren Kennedy (Professional Student Services Personnel)
- Staff and Guests:** Lynn Scott (Trustee), Michele Giroux (Executive Officer), Dorothy Baker (Superintendent of Curriculum Services), Peter Symmonds (Superintendent of Learning Support Services), Stacey Kay (Manager of Learning Support Services), Amy Hannah (Principal of Learning Support Services), Wendy Jewell (System Principal, Curriculum Services), Jenny Dewan (Vice Principal of Learning Support Services), Katrine Mallan (Manager of Board Services), Nicole Guthrie (Board Committee/Coordinator)

1. Call to Order

Chair Kirwan called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

2. Approval of the Agenda

Moved by Christine Boothby,

That the agenda be approved.

Chair Kirwan requested the addition of two items under member information, a trustee-hosted special education forum and the District website.

Moved by Christine Boothby,

That the agenda be approved, as amended.

Carried

4. Member Information

4.1 Kimana Mar, OCDSB Student and Special Olympian

Ms. Mar, a student in the General Learning Program (GLP) at Sir Guy Carleton Secondary School, spoke to the committee about her experience in the GLP.

Ms. Mar explained that the GLP organized in 5 groups: A (all first-year students), B, C, D (a mix of all grades), and E the co-operative learning group which is comprised entirely of senior students, grade 12 plus. She noted that she is in the latter group and attends a regular co-op placement at Shopper's Drug Mart as well as classes at the school.

Ms. Mar noted that the GLP has helped her build confidence and taught her important life skills. She noted that many graduating students have secured paid employment as a result of their work placements.

Ms. Mar informed the committee that she is also a decorated Special Olympian and competes in level 4 gymnastics for Team Canada. She has had the opportunity to compete at the provincial, national and international level and will be traveling to Abu Dhabi to compete for Team Canada in March 2019.

In response to a query from Executive Officer Giroux regarding Kimana's elementary school experience, Ms. Mar noted that she has been an OCDSB student since kindergarten at Broadview Public School. She noted that when her younger sister began school at Broadview PS, school became a happy and memorable experience. The two walked to school together and had a ritual of waving to one another as they passed on the stairs each day. She made many friends at Broadview PS and her grade 8 year was a highlight of her academic career.

Ms. Mar explained that after transition meetings with Ms. Houlden, she chose to attend high school at Sir Guy Carleton SS rather than Nepean High School with her peers because she wanted a change and new experiences. She noted that she knew she had made the right decision

when at the end of her first month at the school she was awarded the student of the month.

Ms. Mar noted that she is able to pursue her athletics seriously thanks in part to funding she receives from Sports Canada and as a result is required to report on her training activities and setting weekly goals. She noted that she trains six days a week.

The committee members congratulated Ms. Mar on her many accomplishments and wished her success.

4.2 Trustee-Hosted Special Education Forum

Trustee Boothby advised that she and Trustee Ellis will host a Special Education Forum on 21 February 2019 at Sir Guy Carleton SS. The event will run from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. and will feature an open house style forum where parents can attend and discuss their experiences.

Trustee Boothby explained that she anticipates the evening will also feature a resource fair of local associations and organizations to provide parents with information.

She noted that the forum is still in the planning phase and that she and Trustee Ellis will share more details as they become available. She encouraged the members to save the date and to pass along the date to others in their organization.

4.3 OCDSB website

Chair Kirwan noted that he had difficulty finding the SEAC page on the District's website and expressed the view that the contact information for the SEAC organizations and its members should be listed on the page.

5. Action/Discussion/Information Items

5.1 Report 18-113 Measurement Report on Learning

Your Committee had before it Report 18-113, providing an overview of student achievement for the 2017-2018 school year and the 2018-2019 Board Improvement Plan for Student Achievement and Well-Being (BIPSAW).

During discussion, and in response to questions the following points were noted:

- Success has been made in recent years with a data support model which pairs Research, Evaluation, and Analytics Division (READ) staff with superintendents in an effort to build school teams' capacity to access, use, and interpret multiple sources of data;

- READ staff works with the school team to support their understanding of school data and provide support throughout the year as schools gather and analyze evidence of student learning and well-being;
- READ staff also work to support data analysis and interpretation at the District-level and based on that analysis, the team produces the Annual Student Achievement Report (ASAR);
- The ASAR measures progress in student learning across multiple sources of data, literacy, numeracy and pathways for all students as well as monitoring the outcomes for specific groups of students;
- The District reports specifically on students in special education, Indigenous, English Language Learners (ELL), low social economic status (SES) and gender;
- The READ team has focussed on the presentation of data to better interpret the story the data tells. The intersections of the identified groups allow senior staff to ask different questions of inquiry to better direct focus;
- The Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) data for the 2017-2018 school year indicated that the District was the same as the provincial average in one area, above the provincial average in seven areas, and below the provincial average in two areas. The BIPSAW looks at the areas of decline in more detail and suggests specific strategies to address those areas;
- EQAO data also informs the District's progress towards narrowing achievement gaps for groups of students identified as underserved by the system;
- Significant gains have been made for students who self-identify as Indigenous and students with special education needs (excluding gifted). The widening of the achievement gaps for ELL and gender reinforces the need to identify and implement strategies to better support these students;
- In response to a query from Ms. Miedema regarding the data for special education and whether or not there is any differentiation between special education students who are identified through the Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) or those with an Individuation Education Plan (IEP), Superintendent Symmonds indicated that the EQAO data for special education students would be based on those with an IEP as the accommodations provided for students during EQAO testing are based on an IEP. He noted that a gifted, learning disabled (LD) student, who is provided with assistive technology would be counted in the special education category as a result of their IEP;
- The District analyses data beyond the EQAO results and explores contextual and attitudinal factors and their potential link to achievement outcomes. Differences in enjoyment of and confidence in mathematics were identified;

- Making mathematics enjoyable for students and finding ways to help students believe they are capable math learners will be important for narrowing gaps in mathematics;
- In response to a query from Trustee Lyra Evans regarding the time it takes for a student who is new to the District to become a part of the average in terms of standardized testing, Executive Officer Giroux advised that she would discuss the question with the READ team;
- Trends noted from the analysis of the data are presented within the executive summary as well as the co-hort analysis;
- The information on Indigenous students only factors those students who have self-identified. Credit accumulation for Indigenous students is also available within the ASAR data. One of the District's areas of success has been with Indigenous students where the gap is narrowing;
- The District is working on a plan for the collection of identity-based data which would apply to all students and would investigate issues of race, ethnicity and identity. The District's first step will be the collection of the data and to eventually report the information based on the Ministry standards. A report outlining the District's progress to date will be presented at the 4 February 2019 Committee of the Whole meeting. Based on the proposed data collection timeline, data collection will begin in the fall of 2019 and a detailed analysis of the data would not be available until 2021;
- The data support model endeavours to extract key segments of data which are of significant importance to inform strategies at the District level. It also serves to inform School Learning Plans (SLPs) to assist individual students;
- Smaller data sets are used by the school teams to guide professional development and focus on particular subject areas. The District strives to establish standards and parameters for the collection and assessment of data which permit focused interventions using common sets of data. At the school level, administrators can investigate specific learners with co-horts to inform SLPs;
- In the case of an inquiry for a specific LD learner, an administrator would have to review the data student by student and compare that to the IPRC information;
- In response to a query from Trustee Lyra Evans, Superintendent Symmonds noted that the District is on par with the provincial average for special education learners as a percentage of overall enrolment;
- The District does not have access to the data collected by other school districts and rarely compares to another specific school district. The District does a comparison to the provincial average in the ASAR;
- EQAO testing is curriculum based and is intended to ensure equity of access for public education in Ontario. Schools within the District are

not compared to others. EQAO data is not the sole information source;

- Ms. Houlden highlighted the continued need for and value of the inclusion of locally developed data within the ASAR. Executive Officer Giroux noted that the District has begun to focus on evaluating the success of its special education programs. The District received funding for a project at Crystal Bay Centre for Special Education and Clifford Bowey Public School as a result of a request for measures that were more appropriate for these schools;
- Executive Officer Giroux indicated that she would approach the READ Team with the request for locally developed statistics;
- The BIPSAW is informed by the quantitative and qualitative evidence of student learning and well-being taken from provincial, district and individual schools data sources;
- Learning support consultants (LSCs), multi-disciplinary team members and mathematics coaches are also assigned to the superintendency team;
- Concepts of number and problem-solving skills were identified as areas requiring intensive focus;
- The gap continues to widen for ELL students and strategies must be developed to address the concerns;
- The District has had success utilizing the evidence-based program MindMasters 2. MindMasters is a mental health promotion resource offered through the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario (CHEO) that helps children to develop social and emotional skills through relaxation, positive thinking and mindfulness;
- The District plans to build socio-emotional skills in the early years to specifically address: attachment, self-regulation and resilience. Collaborative problem solving is a strategy school teams are using to build these skills;
- The District is working with School Mental Health ASSIST on the concept of self-regulation along with other materials to support mental health and well-being;
- The District is building a collective understanding on the subject of self-regulation through learning modules;
- Schools are addressing the need for staff to build attachments or relationships with the student. Positive attachment enables the student to feel safe and comfortable in their learning environment;
- Many SLPs include student mentoring and peer support as an identified strategy to improve well-being;
- Indigenous students often require a member of their own community with whom to form an attachment. The Indigenous Education Advisory Council is discussing attachment and work has begun to ensure partnerships with the community at all school sites; and

- While the District focus is on mathematics and well-being, the focus for each school site may differ depending on the data. The SLP can match the student need with the educator need in order to best serve students.

5.2 Member Orientation

a. Committee Meeting Procedures: A guide to understanding the roles and responsibilities of SEAC at the OCDSB

Manager of Board Services, Katrine Mallan, provided an overview on the roles and responsibilities of SEAC at the OCDSB.

During the presentation and in response to questions the following points were noted:

- Regulation 464/97 mandates each district school board to have a Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) and outlines the responsibilities of the committee providing clarity for the committee's role;
- SEAC members engage in collaborative and fulsome discussions with OCDSB staff in order to advise, advocate, and provide informed recommendations to the Board on matters that fall within its terms of reference;
- Policy P.019.GOV, Special Education Advisory Committee, outlines the details of the OCDSB SEAC;
- SEAC reports to the Board through the Committee of the Whole (COW);
- SEAC meeting reports are received and approved by the COW. After the receipt of the report, any trustee, including those not appointed to SEAC, may put a motion from SEAC on the floor for discussion by COW. If carried at COW, the motion is then recommended to the Board;
- The SEAC Chair is responsible for facilitating the meeting and maintaining a respectful atmosphere;
- The Ministry of Education has published a useful resource document for managing difficult discussions with regard to special education, *Shared Solutions: A guide to Preventing and Resolving Conflicts Regarding Programs and Services for Students with Special Education Needs*;
- According to P.010.GOV, Community Involvement on Board Standing Committees, SEAC may appoint a member and an alternate to be a non-voting representative to the COW and the COW Budget;
- The SEAC representative is entitled to participate in the discussion and debate, but may not vote on or make amendments to motions;

- The District has no appointed Indigenous representatives;
- Ms. Nadon-Campbell noted that she will discuss the possibility of an Indigenous observer attending SEAC at the next meeting of the Indigenous Education Advisory Committee (IEAC); and
- The District is unique in its accommodation for a non-voting SEAC representative on COW and COW Budget.

b. Learning Support Services Department Overview

Superintendent Symmonds provided the following overview of the Learning Support Services Department:

- A vast majority of students with special education needs are supported in the regular classroom;
- Learning Support Services (LSS) is led by Superintendent Symmonds assisted by System Principal (Amy Hannah), System Vice-Principal (Jenny Dewan), Manager of Learning Support Services (Stacey Kay), Supervisor of Speech and Language Pathology (Maya Rattray), Manager of Mental Health and Critical Services (Petra Duschner), Supervisor of Psychology (Tim Hogan), and Supervisor of Social Work (Karthryn Langevin);
- The 1.0 FTE Board Certified Behaviour Analyst and the 1.0 FTE Applied Behavioural Analysis Coordinator positions are funded through the Ministry's Education Program Other (EPO) grants specifically for autism;
- The 3.0 FTE Social/Emotional Learning Teachers (SELTs) were added as a result of the extension agreements with the Federations, through Local Priorities Funding (LPF);
- The 11.0 FTE Blind Low Vision Itinerant Teachers are shared with the Ottawa Catholic School Board (OCSB) through a cost-sharing agreement;
- The LSS team and central support staff are also responsible for well-being. There are a total 29.5 FTE Psychologists to support the entire District;
- The Orientation and Mobility Specialist increased to 1.0 FTE in 2018-2019 has been an important addition to the LSS team and helps blind or low vision students to travel within and to and from school independently and safely;
- Learning Support Teachers (LSTs) and Learning Resource Teachers (LRTs) report to the school principal but are supported by the central LSS staff. LSS has input into the allocation of school-based supports. Specialized program class teachers are assigned to the school;

- LSS provides a range of programs, supports, and services for all exceptionalities from specialized class support to support in the regular classroom; and
- The PAAC on SEAC Resource Guide(2016) is a valuable resource for SEAC members and includes information on effective meetings, meeting members needs, and setting annual goals. The PAAC on SEAC website has links to training videos which members may watch for additional information and learning.

5.3 Memo 19-001, Western Area Accommodation Review - Specialized Program Class Relocations

Your committee had before it Memo 19-001 to provide information on specialized program class relocations as a result of the Western Area Accommodation Review.

During the discussion and in response to questions the following points were noted:

- The District is moving into the final phase of the Western Area Accommodation Review and several specialized program classes required relocation as a result;
- Class openings include an intermediate Behaviour Intervention Program (BIP) at Glen Cairn Public School and a primary/junior BIP at Sir Winston Churchill Public School;
- Class closings include the junior/intermediate BIP at J.H. Putnam PS and the junior BIP at John Young Elementary School;
- DSP and BIP congregated classes present a heavy load on a school. Therefore, their placement requires careful consideration;
- In response to a query from Trustee Boothby regarding the reduction of transitions by moving specialized programs to high schools with grades 7-12, Superintendent Symmonds noted that there is currently no BIP at a 7-12 school. There are many other specialized program classes at secondary schools and it can be problematic to have too many specialized program classes at one location. The placement of specialized program classes at the secondary level is a challenge due to accessibility. Students who require specialized program placement often require additional transitions as a result of the placement. LSS are mindful of the issue and work to minimize, where possible, the impact of the transitions;
- The utilization rate of secondary schools with grades 7-12 sites is generally high and many elementary level specialized program classes will be aging into secondary. Finding a location for the specialized program class cohorts as they age out of elementary is challenging;

- Class openings and closings are carefully considered by LSS with assistance from the Planning Department. Glen Cairn PS and Sir Winston Churchill PS have the space necessary to accommodate the students;
- The majority of the students in the BIP at John Young ES were in grade 6 and would have naturally transitioned. The shift precipitated the need for an additional intermediate site in the far west zone to accommodate the J.H. Putnam PS students, the John Young ES cohort and new and future students. All of the impacted students will be informed of the transition and their placement.

6. Department Update

Superintendent Symmonds advised that LSS hosted a department meeting, with a focus on equity in December 2018. LSS advocates for and works toward meeting the needs of all District special education students with a goal of equitable outcomes and services.

The LSS team participated in activities led by the Culturally Responsive & Relevant Pedagogy team from Curriculum Services to examine equity and what it means to the department and how it impacts the daily work.

Superintendent Symmonds noted that LSS is currently reviewing the Quality Program Indicators (QPI) document and it will be presented for discussion by SEAC at an upcoming meeting.

Superintendent Symmonds advised that SEAC will have an opportunity to provide ideas and suggestions for the operational review at the 13 February 2019 SEAC meeting to help inform the report that will be presented to the COW in early March.

6.1 Special Education Plan (Standards)

a. The Board's Consultation Process

During the discussion and in response to questions the following points were noted:

- The revised text will include language to reference the latest version of the QPI document;
- The QPI document will be structured using the same elements of the professional learning cycle highlighted in the BIPSAW. The QPI document will be divided by exceptionality and will feature best practices, resources, tools and tips for school staff;
- LSS envision the District's QPI document to be housed online and continually updated and added to;

- The original QPI document, created in 2014, was only for specialized program classes. The revised QPI document will reflect all exceptionalities;
- The Special Education Plan is a Ministry requirement. The Special Education Report, while also required, is a general, abridged version of what may be included in the plan and an overview of the program and services offered by the District. Both the report and the plan are due this year. The report may include links to the plan. A review of the plan must be completed first as informs the report; and
- Trustee Boothby commented that the language of the standard ought be revised to be more readily understood by parents.

b. Early Identification Procedures and Intervention Strategies

During the discussion and in response to questions the following points were noted:

- Early identification procedures and strategies ensure that the necessary supports and services are available to students at all levels. Issues may present at any age or stage and if identified early enough the trajectory of student success can be altered. Early identification impacts the allocation of appropriate resources and responses;
- Support within the system evolves and changes as the LSS continue to learn how to best support the needs; and
- Reference to the Ontario Special Needs Strategy will be removed.

7. Adjournment

A motion to continue the meeting past 10:30 p.m. was defeated. The meeting adjourned at 10:31 p.m.

At adjournment, the following items remained as unfinished business:

- Special Education Plan (Standards)
 - Early Identification Procedures and Intervention Strategies
- Review of Special Education Advisory Committee Report
- Committee Reports

Rob Kirwan, Chair, Special Education Advisory Committee