



Northeastern Catholic District School Board

"Living our Catholic Faith to shape success for all of our learners"

SEAC Meeting **(Special Education Advisory Committee)**

Wednesday, February 17, 2016

11:45 a.m.

Catholic Education Centre

MINUTES

PRESENT: Kay Gaffney, North Eastern Ontario Family and Children's Services / Chair
Kim Bordignon, Children's Treatment Centre
Val Toner, Community Living Timmins
William (Bill) Russell, The Lord's Kitchen
Billie Richer, VOICE for Hearing Impaired
Elizabeth King, NCDSB Trustee
Fred Salvador, NCDSB Trustee
Daphne Brumwell, Superintendent of Education
Catherine Hoven, Special Assignment Teacher
Louise Madore, Administrative Assistant / Recorder

EXCUSED: Joel McCartney, Cochrane Temiskaming Resource Centre / Vice-Chair
Mark Lionello, Canadian Mental Health Association
Beth Nowak, Cochrane District Social Services Administration Board
Natalie Parnell, Timmins Family Counselling Centre
Judy Piché, Education Services Officer / Recorder

GUEST: Erin Albert, Resource Teacher – St. Paul School

1. Welcome and Prayer

Kay Gaffney welcomed everyone and led the group in prayer.

2. Approval of Agenda

MOVED BY: L. King
SECONDED BY: V. Toner

THAT the agenda be approved as presented.
CARRIED.

3. **Approval of Minutes**

MOVED BY: K. Bordignon
SECONDED BY: V. Toner

THAT the minutes of January 20, 2016 be approved as presented.
CARRIED.

4. **Presentation: Empower in Primary**

Daphne Brumwell introduced Erin Albert from St. Paul School, who gave a presentation on the Empower Reading Program in primary schools. Erin Albert explained the history behind the program which was developed by the Learning Disabilities Research Program of Hospital for Sick Children. She used a slide and video presentation to explain the strategies used to teach struggling readers. She provided details of the goals of Empower Reading which are to teach struggling readers to use strategies to decode words and understand text, allow the students to experience success and gain confidence, and help the students become independent readers and to read for learning and pleasure. She further explained that the class is 80 minutes in duration which takes a lot of stamina from a student. She incorporates breaks and is always looking for ways to keep the student motivated and active during class time.

Erin demonstrated strategies of the five Empower Decoding Strategies:

- Sounding out Strategy
- Rhyming Strategy
- Peeling Off Strategy
- Vowel Alert Strategy
- SPY strategy

There are 110 lessons in the program and she is currently at lesson 41. Elizabeth King inquired whether four students in the class is too many. Erin Albert explained that the program does allow for five to six students at a time but since this is a pilot project she preferred working with four students. She currently has three students in her class as one student moved away. A summary of the program was distributed.

Daphne Brumwell explained that we are now looking at purchasing the program for use in many of our schools. Erin Albert mentioned that she receives excellent support. The trainer can video in with her during a lesson and will give her feedback via email.

Kay Gaffney stated that this was very exciting and an excellent program.

5. **Learning Together – Transition Planning for Students with Special Needs**

Catherine Hoven circulated information on the Transition Plan and explained that the school principal is responsible for ensuring that student transition plans are developed, implemented and maintained in accordance with Ministry guidelines. She explained the difference between an IEP for an identified student and an IEP for a student waiting to be identified. She further explained that the school works with parents and gets input from outside agencies. The IEP is kept in the student's Ontario Student Record (OSR).

The handout prepared by Catherine Hoven outlined the types of transitions:

- Initial entry to school
- Between grades
- From one program area or subject to another
- When moving from school to school or from an outside agency/facility to a school
- From elementary to intermediate or secondary school
- From school to the next appropriate pathway

Catherine reviewed a sample Transition Plan. The top section of the plan provides personal and academic information of the student. The bottom box provides the teacher with additional personal information of the student such as likes, dislikes and hobbies. She explained that this part of the Transition Plan assists the teacher to establish a rapport with the student the first time they meet in September, and she finds this to be a very positive first step.

6. Junior Kindergarten Registration Update

Daphne Brumwell was pleased to report that for the first time since 2009 we have had the highest number of registrations for Junior Kindergarten. We already have 125 students registered and we usually have less than 100 at this time. She stated that Holy Family had 10 students register and they normally only have a couple. St. Anne English Catholic School had a lot of registrations, particularly in French Immersion. Sacred Heart in Timmins had 26 registrations. She is hoping that we will have at least 153 new registrations for the next school year.

Catherine Hoven inquired whether or not the increase in registrations is due to the daycare in our schools. Daphne Brumwell believes that it has made a huge difference. She stated that parents get to see the schools and staff and it has a very positive effect.

Elizabeth King wondered whether or not we could tract numbers through the Health Unit. This is a method used successfully in Iroquois Falls. Daphne Brumwell explained that this is more difficult in larger communities.

Billie Richer stated that the French board addressed a letter to her daughter inviting her to visit the school. She wasn't impressed with the way they had obtained her daughter's name. Daphne Brumwell explained that there is a privacy issue when obtaining names.

7. EQAO Results 2014-2015

Daphne Brumwell shared the EQAO results for 2014-2015. She explained that the First Nation students are students that have self-identified. There are other students that would fall in this category but haven't self-identified. Daphne Brumwell reviewed the data. A copy of the statistics was given to the members. She further explained that we continue to work hard to improve our students' achievement. Kay Gaffney suggested that perhaps we should do away with testing. Daphne Brumwell disagreed and mentioned that testing is the best thing that has happened in education. It was suggested that this would be an excellent topic of discussion for a future meeting.

8. Agency Reports

Bill Russell stated that everything is running well at The Lord's Kitchen. Grocery items are going up. They see a steady crowd coming through.

Kay Gaffney handed out information on a current campaign called "Building a Snowman". This campaign makes people aware of the need for foster homes, students in need of care, and volunteers. People dress up a snowman in their yard and personalize it. For additional information you can contact NEOFACS. She also circulated information on Autism Awareness Month which is held in April. The campaign must sell 50 t-shirts to place an order. Elizabeth King inquired as to how many students in our board are diagnosed with autism. Kay Gaffney commented that the public board has quite a few classes for students with autism. Catherine Hoven explained that many parents chose that board for their child because of the class sizes. They have a maximum of 8 students per class. Catherine Hoven explained that as of March 2015 we had a total of 18 students with autism and we had 8 students assigned in multiple categories. Overall we are looking at 26 students across the board.

9. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place on Wednesday, March 23, 2016 at 11:45 a.m. at the Catholic Education Centre or via video conference.

10. Other Business - Nil

11. Adjournment

MOVED BY: V. Toner
THAT the meeting be adjourned at 1:01 p.m.
CARRIED.