



Minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee meeting held on September 22, 2020 at 5:30 p.m. via Microsoft Teams Meeting.

Present:

Administration: Theresa Bitonti, Special Education Coordinator
Jody Weller, Superintendent of Education

Trustees: Barbara McCool
John Willemsen

Associations: Marie Derosier, LDAO, Member
Tracy Hanzlik, Nipissing First Nation
Mary Grise, Parent Representative, Member
Jeannie Boissonneault, NDSS, Member

Regrets:
Dan Lachance, Community Living, Member

1. PRAYER

Theresa Bitontil led the committee in prayer.

2. ROLL CALL/TRUSTEE ATTENDANCE

Roll call was completed.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Moved by John Willemsen and seconded by Mary Grise THAT the agenda of Tuesday, September 22, 2020 be approved as presented.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Moved by Mary Grise and seconded by Barbara McCool THAT the minutes of June 11, 2020 be approved as presented.

5. NEW BUSINESS

a) Presentation

i) Special Education Summer Learning and Transition Program

- This year, the Ministry of Education provided school boards with funding specifically to continue supporting students with special education needs throughout the summer months.
- Theresa Bitonti, Coordinator of Special Education along with Diane Dech, Tamara Bass, Cheryl Stewart and Cathy Verardi, Teachers of the Special Education Summer Learning and Transition Program, presented to the committee.
- NPSC hosted a virtual summer learning programming for students with multiple exceptionalities during the month of July – early August. The program offered hands-on, synchronous learning activities using Google Meet. Sessions included activities such as baking, dance, crafts, music, and physical activities, all of which emphasize participation, turn-taking and following directions. There was no fee for students to participate and all materials required for participation in the program were provided to the students/families.
- In addition to this virtual program we were excited to be able to host a two week, in-person, transition to school program prior to the students' return in September. This transition program was designed based on the student participants and their individual needs to assist them in returning to the classroom environment in the most seamless way possible. Transition activities included scheduled visits to the classroom and school, visual schedules and picture books to prepare students for school, practicing physical distancing measures and proper hand-hygiene measures, as well as hands on engaging crafts.

ii) Mental Health & Well Being Transition Program

- The Ministry of Education also provided school boards with funding in order to maintain regulated mental health professionals to provide direct support to students on existing caseloads and to respond to crisis situations during the summer months. Also, boards received funding to support a virtual summer learning program, as well as, an in-person transition back to school programs and/or support in the two weeks prior to the start of the 2020-21 school year for students with mental health concerns.
- Trish Tessier, Mental Health Lead and Bryan McCutcheon, Behaviour Management Counsellor, presented to the committee.

b) 2020-2021 School Reopening

i) Jody Weller provided an update to the committee on the re-opening of NPSC schools and facilities, to include the following:

- September 1st – 3rd, 2020 NPSC staff participated in designated professional development days regarding Health & Safety, Mental Health & Well-Being, Anti-racism, and Anti-Discrimination & Revised Mathematics Curriculum.

- Staggered Entry - The Ministry of Education permitted school boards to stagger students' entry as they transitioned back to school this year. A staggered start allowed for a gradual return of students, and provided time for learning and adapting to new routines and safety practices. Staggered dates for elementary and secondary students varied according to their grade.
- Virtual Learning – The NPSC virtual elementary school will begin as soon as possible with communication to parents well underway. Staffing is nearing completion and instruction will soon begin. Instruction and consist of both synchronous learning (students working with a teacher in real time) and asynchronous learning (students engaging in learning activities independently), over the course of the day and number of minutes of instruction varies by grade. The NPSC virtual elementary school currently offers English, French Immersion and an LAC classroom. Our virtual learners at St. Joseph-Scollard Hall have begun their studies and have been in contact with their teachers.
- Community Partners - Regular meetings between the North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit and district school boards have been ongoing over the summer months and September. Other meetings with OKP and Hands have also been occurring in order to determine best practices and processes for the provision of therapy within schools to be safely resumed.

c) SEAC Action Plan 2020-2021

The 2019-2020 SEAC Action Plan was distributed to SEAC for their reference and review for October's meeting

6. UPDATES

a) Parent Guide

Marie Derosiers shared that the collaborative work of SEAC on updating the Guide to Special Education for Parents will be temporarily paused. This item was deferred.

7. CORRESPONDANCE

a) MACSE Community Collaboration Form

The MACSE Community Collaboration Form was shared with the committee. Jody Weller will collate responses received from SEAC members and submit to the regional representative by the due date of October 2, 2020. The collated document will also be shared with the committee.

8. INFORMATION ITEMS

a) Board Report

- i) Superintendent's Update: Refer to "New Business" item B.
- ii) Coordinator's Update: Refer to "New Business" item A.

iii) Secondary Curriculum Lead Update: N/A

b) Association Reports

- i) Community Living – Dan Lachance, Member
NIL
- ii) Nipissing First Nation – Tracey Hanzlik, Member
NIL
- iii) LDAO – Marie Derosier, Member
NIL
- iv) Parent Representative – Mary Grise, Member
NIL
- v) NDSS – Jeannie Boissonneault, Member
NIL

9. QUESTIONS & ANSWERS / OTHER

NIL

10. DATE OF NEXT SEAC MEETING

The next SEAC meeting will take place on October 13, 2020 at 5:30 p.m. using Microsoft Teams.

11. ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Mary Grise and seconded by John Willemsen THAT the meeting of September 22, 2020 adjourned at 7:37 p.m.