

# Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting

Wednesday, May 20, 2020

11:45 p.m. WebEx

## MINUTES

**PRESENT:** Joel McCartney, Cochrane Temiskaming Resource Centre / Chair  
Kim Bordignon, Cochrane Temiskaming Children's Treatment Centre / Vice-Chair  
Heather Demers, The Lord's Kitchen  
Ellen Renaud, North Eastern Ontario Family and Children's Services  
Billie Richer, VOICE for Hearing Impaired  
Stan Skalecki, NCDSB Trustee  
Daphne Brumwell, Superintendent of Education  
Catherine Hoven, Special Assignment Teacher  
Katie Mundle, Special Assignment Teacher  
Mackenzie Carrier, Community Living Timmins  
Jean Ethier, Education Services Officer / Recorder

**EXCUSED:**

Ron McInnis, NCDSB Trustee  
Mark Lionello, Canadian Mental Health Association

**1. Welcome and Prayer**

Joel McCartney welcomed everyone and led the group in prayer.

**2. Approval of Agenda**

MOVED BY: B.Richer

SECONDED BY: H.Demers

THAT the agenda be approved as presented.

CARRIED.

**3. Approval of Minutes**

MOVED BY: M.Carrier

SECONDED BY: K. Bordignon

THAT the minutes of April 29, 2020 approved as presented.

CARRIED.

#### **4. Special Education Plan 2020-2021: Recommended Amendments**

A discussion about recommended amendments to the Special Education Plan for the 2020-2021 school year took place. The following suggestions were made to see if there was a way for a built in system to improve communication between external agencies and the special education teacher. Offer focused programming for hard of hearing students with special attention to FM system needs.

The 2020-2021 Special Education Plan is currently being completed and a draft of the plan will be sent to the SEAC committee for review prior to the June meeting.

#### **5. MASCE Template**

The MASCE template was shared with the committee. Any additional suggestions were added. This information will be sent off to the Ministry on May 21<sup>st</sup>. 2020

#### **6. Special Needs Classrooms**

##### **6.1.1 Criteria for Admission**

We are in the process of creating a protocol and criteria for admission to our special education classes. We have also reviewed the allowable class sizes based on the identification make-up of the students in the class. It would appear that our program at St. Jerome would be capped at 6 students as most, if not all students have a diagnosis of ASD. For the other two programs, up to 16 students are permitted as they are programs serving students with different exceptionalities. Efforts have been made to reach out to our colleagues in other boards for some ideas. From what we can see, the criteria for such classrooms seems to be fairly flexible allowing boards to make the best decisions necessary for students. All 3 classroom programs continue to be considered "board" programs in which students from all local schools could be considered for admission. We will share the criteria at our next meeting. The schools currently offering the classroom are St. Joseph in South Porcupine, St. Patrick in Cobalt and St. Jerome in Kirkland Lake.

A committee member suggested a presentation from each classroom explaining the needs of the students be made to the committee during the 2020-2021 school year.

##### **6.1.2 Review of 2019-2020 Programs**

Meetings have been set with each school team to discuss the successes and challenges of this first year of special education classes. A summary of these discussions will be shared at our next meeting.

#### **7. Learning At Home**

##### **7.1.1 SBCI EA Duties**

The School Board Co-Operative Inc. is a non-profit organization that helps school boards maintain healthy workplaces. They are also very helpful with navigating issues related to worker's compensation. Each year, they collect and analyze a variety of data sets for school boards, including things like staff absenteeism rates. During this time of Covid-19, they have been collecting information about a variety of other issues, including how support staff is being utilized. A copy of the summary of EA Duties was included in the package sent to members this month.

##### **7.1.2 NCDSB Guidelines for EAs**

Based on the summary provided by SBCI and the results of the survey conducted by our board, a set of guidelines was created for our EAs. Many thanks to Katie who was able to take the information and design a beautiful document to share this important information.

## **8. Staffing 2020-2021 Update**

Work continues on the allocation of EAs for the 2020-2021 school year. Based on the Special Education Audit results from last June, it was suggested that we needed a more rigorous and specific process to allocate EAs. Most boards in Ontario focus largely on providing EA support only to those students who have significant medical, physical, safety or behavioural needs. This transition has been difficult for many of our schools as we have always focused much of our EA supports on academics. We continue to help schools understand which students are most in need of supports from an EA and which students need to access other support services in our schools (i.e. Resource Teachers & CYWs). We also recognize that there is a continued need to support teaching staff in better meeting the needs of students in the classroom through modifications and accommodations. Finally, we are seeing that greater emphasis on providing the necessary supports to EAs so that they can engage in supporting students with OT, PT, SLP and Adaptive Skills needs more regularly and effectively is necessary. We hope to have decisions made about allocation of EAs by the end of June. The Empower program is continuing in the schools that currently have it and additional support is offered to Empower teachers.

## **9. Collection of data on new High Needs FDK Registrants for September 2020**

Each year we collect data about new FDK students who will require specialized supports in order to successfully begin school. Where possible, we also like to pre-order any equipment that might be needed so that it is available as soon as the student begins school. This is a bit of a leap of faith as we would not be able to return it should the student end up not coming to one of our schools. We are currently aware of 1 student at ECCS, 1 student at Pope Francis and 5 students at St. Jerome (2 of which are identified with ASD or in the process of being and 1 of whom is non-verbal with Down Syndrome). Transition meetings are being planned with families and community agencies that are involved.

## **10. Agency Reports**

### **NEOFACS - North Eastern Ontario Family and Children's Services**

NEOFACS staff are continuing to work virtually from home until at least May 31, 2020 during the Covid19 pandemic. Staff have been able to reach out to clients via email and are offering sessions through ZOOM or over the phone. The staff are utilizing their extensive knowledge and creativity in finding ways to engage and support the children. Online parenting programs and group services continue to be encouraged as a way to support the needs of the client. There is a possibility in the future to continue with online virtual services as it allows smaller communities to access additional services.

### **Cochrane Temiskaming Children's Treatment Centre**

Currently offering in virtual care services and the majority of the clients have declined the services at this time. The decline is due to the parents struggling to cope with academics and the needs of the child. There is an opportunity to include virtual parenting groups in the future, which allows smaller communities to be serviced. A feeding group has started for parents and the results are positive, a sensory information group may soon follow.

## **Cochrane Temiskaming Resource Centre**

There are currently no reported cases of Covid 19 in any of the CRTC residences. A virtual infant development program is currently offered to support the needs of any families who may be struggling at this time. The Infant and Child Development Program is an early intervention program that serves families of children from birth to school age entry who may have delays or are at risk for delays in development. The risks may include complications during pregnancy, labour or delivery, prematurity, Down syndrome, cerebral palsy, sensory impairments or a disadvantaged home environment. A referral can be made by contacting any of the Developmental Consultants at our Head or Satellite Office locations.

## **The Lord's Kitchen**

The Lord's Kitchen has changed the service style and has switched to a take-out only option. There has been a 50% drop in families utilizing the service. Food services in conjunction with the Anti-Hunger Coalition are being offered on Thursday, Saturday and Sunday from 4:00pm to 5:30pm. The Food Bank is providing milk, fruit to help with any additional needs.

Proper PPE is being provided to all the volunteers to ensure the safety of the volunteers and community members.

## **VOICE for Hearing Impaired**

May is Speech and Hearing Awareness month. Voice usually offers a Summer Camp in August as a parent getaway and for kids to connect. The Summer Camp not been cancelled as of yet. The previously scheduled VOICE conference in May has been rescheduled for October 2, 2020.

## **Community Living Timmins**

The transition to online virtual services have been made since the majority of childcare centers are currently closed. Community Living is working closely with the few remaining childcare centers that have remain open for emergency services. Webinars are currently being created for educators; however, there is some difficulty in reaching some of them. Care calls are also being placed to parents for children who may be struggling and who may have questions during the pandemic.

## **9. Date of Next Meeting**

June 17, 2020 at 11:45am via WebEx/Teleconference

## **10. Other Business – Nil**

## **11. Adjournment**

MOVED BY: J.McCartney  
THAT the meeting be adjourned at 12:50 p.m.  
CARRIED.

## DIGITAL LEARNING INFORMATION:

# Educational Assistants



## DO'S



- Ensure you have been added to the Digital Platform of the classrooms you support as a collaborator, not just as a member. You need to be able to add content to support your work. However, this should always be done in consultation with the teacher.
- Embrace new learning! Take advantage of the online training and courses being offered.
- Participate in your school's staff meetings.
- Maintain daily communication with the teacher(s) to share successes and challenges experienced by students and provide feedback about the Learning at Home program delivery in order to inform adjustments to the program and next steps for the student's learning plan.
- Support students and parents with Google Read and Write and help them navigate any challenges with the Digital Platform. If you are unsure how to help, be sure to reach out to a SAT or other colleagues to support yourself.
- Work with students through a variety of methods including Google Meet, email, telephone and other means to deliver the program as determined by the teacher(s). Ensure parents are aware of this contact.
- Ensure you understand the teacher's expectations prior to answering questions, offering support or giving feedback on assignments. Seek clarification when needed. This is particularly important with feedback. You want to be sure that the student has completed the assignment accurately and in the manner expected by the teacher. Feedback to encourage or motivate is different than feedback regarding achievement of expectations. Feedback regarding achievement is the role of the teacher.
- Provide consistent support and check-ins to ensure the ongoing engagement and success of students and to remove any barriers encountered in the distanced environment for students.
- Direct parents to discuss programming, questions, concerns and issues with the teacher.
- Notify the Principal when a difficult social/emotional concern is encountered in a conversation. The Principal will engage the appropriate member of the team.
- Support each other! Stay connected! Reach out to your colleagues and troubleshoot together!

## DON'TS



- Refrain from one-on-one video meetings with students.
- Do not offer feedback to students without first knowing the expectations of the task. As indicated above, feedback regarding achievement of the expectations is the role of the teacher.
- Avoid focusing on the things we cannot control.
- Do not create your own classroom on a platform.



## POSSIBILITIES

- Connect with small **groups** of students through video. Please use Google Meet or e-Hub to do so. Do not use Facebook, FaceTime or Zoom.
- Facilitate support in alternative program areas as determined by the teacher and/or RT (e.g. social skills, self-regulation, communication, life skills, OT, etc.) by telephone, email or video.
- Support the preparation of individualized learning materials for students such as individual activity schedules, visual aids/picture cues, task analyses, visual schedules, social stories, etc.
- Coach students in executive functioning skills necessary for success in Learning at Home, specific to academic work assigned by the teacher (e.g. task initiation, time management, planning, prioritizing, etc.)
- Make videos or visual task analysis of life skill activities (tying shoes, brushing teeth, using a toaster, etc.)
- Connect with other EAs to share ideas, highlights and discuss training modules.
- Share a read-aloud through a shared video.
- Create a nook on the teacher's digital platform where you post motivational info, tips and information specific to your role that you would like to share.
- In consultation with the teacher, share links and videos that an individual student might benefit from. This could include a mindfulness activity, an art activity or motivational video that a specific student would enjoy or benefit from.