



**ALGOMA DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD
SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (S.E.A.C.)**

MINUTES OF MEETING
October 17, 2023
DT Walkom/Teams
12:00 Start Time

Present: S. Kitts (North Shore Tribal Council), P. Mick (Member-At-Large), M. Tuomi, (Autism Ontario) M. Barbeau (Community Living Algoma)

Trustees: S. Evans

Staff: B. Vallee (Superintendent), C. Phillips (Recording Secretary), K. Viita (System Administrator)

Regrets: E. Torresan (Algoma Family Services), A. Gauthier (Thrive Child Development Centre), H. Whitley (Trustee)

Meeting called to order following our reflection. With the approval of Chair Mick, Superintendent Vallee to facilitate the remainder of the hybrid meeting.

1. Welcome

2. Round Table - Introduction of members, staff, and guests.

3. Approval of Agenda and Minutes

- Approval of Agenda. Moved by S. Kitts. Seconded by M. Tuomi. All in favour.
- Approval of Minutes (September 12, 2023). Moved by M. Tuomi. Seconded by M. Barbeau. All in favour.

4. Correspondence:

Thames Valley- re: Grants for Student Needs (GSN)

- Outlined areas of concern including replacement staff for absences, temporary student accommodations (e.g. portables), Educational Assistant wages, Special Education funding, statutory benefits, IT infrastructure and devices, and transportation.
- TVDSB feels that expanding boards are struggling to accommodate their special needs students financially. Hoping the Ministry will address the problem.

Thames Valley – Letter to Leece re: Special Education Funding Shortfalls

The letter states that funding is not meeting Special Education needs. Overall, TVDSB's Special Education expenses are budgeted to exceed the Grant for Student Needs by \$3.4 million in 2023-24 (consistent with the prior year). Additional resources are required to successfully meet the needs of special education students. S. Evans believes that we should write a letter in support of Thames Valley, in the past we have and feel that it a perfect opportunity for SEAC groups to get the message out that our special need students require more funding.

Thames Valley- Special Incidence Portion (SIP)

- SIP funding for full-time student has only increased marginally over the last many years, while the costs of hiring and retaining qualified staff have risen significantly. SIP funding for the 2022-2023 school year provides up to a maximum of \$28,803 per full time (1.0 Average Daily Enrolment) eligible student per year. SIP funding therefore provides only 26% of the funding required to provide the additional support necessary for the health and safety of the eligible student and their fellow learners. Appropriate funding allows these students to be present and access the Ontario curriculum in meaningful ways in our schools. B. Vallee stated that we have received many letters from school boards wanting support for an increase in SIP funding. For this year, the Ministry will not require claims to be submitted but will be providing SIP funding based on a formula. Algoma District School Board staff are pleased as SIP claims are very labour-intensive and pull staff away from their regular duties for several weeks each year.

5. Presentation/Discussion: *Project SEARCH (Julie Hodkinson, SEAT)*

- Project SEARCH began in 1996 at the Cincinnati Children's Hospital, has grown to include a presence in 48 U.S. states, and internationally Project SEARCH is a school-to-work transition program designed to increase employability skills for students between 18-21 years of age presenting with a developmental delay or intellectual disability.
- The goal of the program is that, following completion interns will be able to obtain competitive employment in an integrated setting that is year-round (not seasonal) and at least 16 hours per week at a competitive wage. This data is tracked as part of the program model.
- Ministry of Education approached Boards to establish Project SEARCH sites; provided some initial funding for licensing and some other start-up expenses.
- Project SEARCH is a partnership program. The education partner (ADSB) acts as the licensee and provides the educational component, a community partner (CLA) provides a skills trainer and job development coaching to secure employment upon completion, and a host business (SAH) provides on-site classroom and placement opportunities within it's organization. A steering committee with representatives from all partners meets regularly to guide the program implementation.
- Project SEARCH follows the school year calendar. A classroom is established on-site at the host business. Students begin with a three-week orientation/on-boarding process required for them to be "badged". Students participate in three placements of 8-10 weeks duration over the course of the school year, with "consolidation" blocks in between each placement. Classroom work takes place at the start and end of each day. Job development meetings are held periodically throughout the placements to help interns build their readiness for future employment.
- This is a "competitive" program. Interns apply to the program and participate in a skills assessment day prior to being accepted. Interns are between 18-21 years of age (still eligible

to be students) and have a developmental delay or intellectual disability. Interns must also agree that participation in Project SEARCH will be their final year of secondary school as they will seek employment after completing the program.

- Transportation is the responsibility of the intern - getting to work every day is a required skill for future employment! Transportation training is provided as part of the program to interns that need to learn how to use city transit. Julie shared a great success story with this process.
- We have started our program with 4 interns. We expect that we will expand to 8-10 students in future, but wanted to start with a smaller grouping as we work through our first year of initial implementation.
- Lots of great successes with the initial start-up – we are looking forward to seeing how our interns progress as year one continues.

6. Member Organization Updates

S. Kitts (North Shore Tribal Council)

- Busy meeting with both Boards for SEAC
- Acting Education Manager in place.

M. Tuomi (Autism Ontario)

- Autism Ontario is providing some on-line learning opportunities:
 - Live Moderated Webinar Panel: Exploring and Engaging Autistic People's Experiences with Applied Behaviour Analysis
October 17, 2023, 12:00 - 1:30 PM
 - The Journey to Adulthood Discussion Workshop (for parents and caregivers of autistic youth ages 16-20)
Wednesdays, October 25 - December 6, 2023. 7:00 – 8:30 PM.
 - Autism Ontario Presents: Exploring Autism
October 26th, 12-1 pm

P. Mick (Member- At-Large)

- Nothing to report this month.

M. Barbeau- Community Living Algoma

- Shelley Moore five-part learning series with both Boards is coming up. Initial session is scheduled for early December.

7. Report from the Board (Trustees)

- At the Regular Board Meeting on September 19th, Sue Johnson was appointed as the Trustee for the Northern area. Trustees also heard a presentation in recognition of the National Day of Truth & Reconciliation from Alyssa Traves, Indigenous Education Lead, and an overview of our Summer Learning Programs. Board enrollment has also seen another increase and we are currently sitting at approximately 10, 500 students.
- On October 3rd, Trustees hosted the 25 Years of Service reception recognizing staff who have reached 25 years of service. A reception was held at Grand Gardens.
- This was followed by a Committee of the Whole meeting focused on School, System and Classroom Improvement and the ADSB strategic plan.
- On October 13th & 14th, the Northern Regional Conference took place in Sault Ste. Marie. Trustees received a presentation on our Trades Trailer. Indigenous Student

Trustees from across the province were included in the conference and participated in a workshop provided by Turtle Concepts.

8. Report from Administration (B. Vallee & K. Viita)

- **Transitions:** The Transitions process for Kindergarten students has moved into the final phase in which follow-up meetings for students are held at their schools during the autumn months. A meeting of all community partners usually takes place in the fall as well to review the process and identify any changes or adjustments that may need to be made for next year.
- **Professional Development Day (September 29th):** The September 29th PD Day was focused on *School Improvement Planning*. Teams had the opportunity will explore school and classroom data to determine commitments and engage in system learning. Individual school team members were able to reflect on their classroom data and the school commitments articulated in the morning to develop individual classroom improvement plans.
- **Professional Development Day (October 27th):** The October 27th PD Day will consist of a half-day of school Improvement work and a half-day on mental health. Staff will learn about effective strategies to use in the classroom and across the school to support student mental health & well-being. Topics addressed will include knowledge building about mental health vs mental illness, the educator's role and role stratification in supporting mental health, as well as mental health supports available in the ADSB and how to access these. Exploration of resources such as the *Mentally Healthy Classroom Reflection Tool* and a variety of other resources available will occur to support teacher planning. This session will also explore personal well-being and safe use of self in supporting others. Educational Assistants and Specialized Program/Classroom Teachers will participate in Behaviour Management Systems (BMS) certification on the October 27th PD Day.
- **Edsembli Special Education Suite for Administrators After-Hours PD:** K Viita provided an after-hours session on the use of the Edsembli special education suite for Administrators. This included information on how to generate IPRC documents and how to start a Non-exceptional IEP in the system.

9. Next Meeting:

- November 21, 2023. D. Fillmore will be our invited guest to provide an update on mental health supports and services.

10. Motion to adjourn: Moved by S. Kitts. Seconded by M. Barbeau.

Meeting adjourned at 1:30.