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**SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
Tuesday, March 22, 2022 – 1pm  
Teams Meeting**

**Members:** Kevin Greco (*Superintendent of Education*), Bill Chopp (*Trustee*), Laura Bergeron (*ad hoc*), Tara Buchanan, Nil Woodcroft, Brandi Bertling, Marissa Lechowicz, Lorraine DeJong

**Regrets:** Lauren Freeborn, Christina Ferrell, Annmarie Kraus, Shannon Korber, Shannon Mason

**Resources:** Carmen McDermid (*Student Achievement Lead: Special Education*), Shannon Mason (*Principal Lead: Special Education Staffing*), Kerri Lomax (*VP, Secondary*), Patti Mitchell (*Parent, County of Brant*)

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**1. Land Acknowledgement**

Superintendent Greco led with a land acknowledgement.

**2. Opening Prayer**

Carmen McDermid shared an opening prayer.

**3. Approval of Agenda**

Approved: Patti Mitchell

Seconded: Tara Buchanan

THAT the Special Education Advisory Committee approves the agenda of the March 22, 2022, meeting.

**4. Approval of the Minutes**

Approved: Nil Woodcroft

Seconded: Tara Buchanan

THAT the Special Education Advisory Committee approves the minutes of the February 15, 2022, meeting.

**5. Correspondence**

**5.1 Letter to Minister Regarding SIP Funding**

Several SEAC committees have written to the Minister of Education regarding Special Education funding shortfalls. In response, the Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board's (BHNCD SB) SEAC Chair and Vice Chair drafted a letter to send to the Minister. This letter was shared with the committee, in which Trustee Chopp will take to the Board of Trustees to seek approval for the letter to be sent.

**6. Budget Consultation Survey Input**

The BHNCD SB budget survey was sent to the SEAC committee. Committee members were invited to share their input by completing the survey.

**7. Community Agency Updates**

### **Brandi Bertling – Haldimand-Norfolk CAS**

The amalgamation project is still underway and is anticipated to be official April 1<sup>st</sup>. Hopeful for a clear vision going forward and new images and signage will start to be released. Employees are still wearing masks and buildings are unlocked allowing easier access for all.

### **Lorraine DeJong (for Annemarie) – Lansdowne**

The autism services Entry to School program has officially started. This is a 6 (six) month program running for half days, 5 (five) days/week. Lansdowne staff continue to wear masks and ask parents to wear masks, but it is not required. Lansdowne is busy hiring new employees with the expansion into the Haldimand-Norfolk area.

### **Nil Woodcroft – Haldimand-Norfolk REACH**

Beginning next week Haldimand-Norfolk REACH will be at full capacity staff within our work locations. The EarlyON centres are open again. Currently planning for summer programs. Happy to share Bramble Retreat has re-opened and will be providing overnight respite again. The autism unit is moving forward with the Entry to School program in Simcoe.

### **Patti Mitchell – Parent, County of Brant**

No parent correspondence to share.

Special Olympics will remain wearing masks for the winter/spring games and hopeful the summer games will be without masks. The Special Olympics are looking for volunteers. Information will be posted on the Facebook page. Looking forward to the Police vs Special Olympics basketball game coming up.

### **Tara Buchanan – Community Living Brant**

An update was shared about Belonging Brant. This is a trillium grant associated with Community Living Brant but a reminder that it is open to anyone in the community and it runs until September 2023. Everyone is encouraged to look on social media for updates on initiatives associated with this grant. The Supported Employment program continues to run at full capacity.

### **Bill Chopp – Trustee**

Committee members were asked to complete the budget survey and reminded their feedback is extremely helpful.

## **8. Reports**

### **8.1 Superintendent of Education**

Superintendent Greco shared an update on COVID protocols. The Board, as always, takes direction from the local Public Health Units, and the Chief Medical Officers to maintain the health and safety for all students, staff and volunteers. As such, masks are no longer mandatory within our facilities but still available for those who wish to wear one. Communication was sent to Principals to assist with conversations around this update.

There has been confirmation of funding for the Summer Transitions Program for students with Special Education needs. Last year this funding helped the Board complete over 40 assessments during the summer as well as provide individualized transition programming for students.

The Right to Read inquiry launched by the Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC) has provided 157 recommendations some of which are to the Ministry of Education and school boards on how to address systemic issues affecting student literacy. The Boards student achievement and special education teams will review the recommendations. Data is already available from all grade ones being screened for phonemic awareness, hopefully putting the Board in good standing with the recommendations.

Looking forward to reviewing the funding status for next school year Special Education.

## 8.2 Student Achievement Lead

The Student Achievement Leader shared an update on Bridge the Gap program. This program provides a screening tool that will assist in understanding a student's level of reading, and how to assist. Coffee chats are being held to share troubleshooting techniques amongst staff.

The professional development training at the March Community of Practice meeting was on the C-Pen ReaderPen from Bridges Canada. This device is currently on trial with the Special Education Resource Teachers to see if students will benefit from it. The device can read text aloud in English, Spanish, and French.

April is busy with Entry to School case conferences, grade two Canadian Cognitive Abilities Test (CCAT), and Community of Practice meeting. On April 2<sup>nd</sup> is World Autism Day where everyone is encouraged to share stories and celebrate this day. It is important to families to hear these successes.

A reminder to everyone to check out the Boards Twitter page for Special Education: @BHNSpecialEducation. It's a great way to see the latest news, what is to come, and more.

## 9. Closing Remarks/Adjournment

No closing comments. Meeting adjourned at 2:01pm.

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**Next meeting date, time, location:** April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2022 – 1pm, Microsoft Teams