



Special Education  
Annual Report

2012-13

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# Introduction

The Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board (BHNCDNB) Special Education Department is committed to every student in our school district. We strive to inspire and support learning by assisting in creating safe, healthy, inclusive and engaging Catholic environments. Our mission is to provide opportunities for challenge and choice as we prepare all of our students for success in life.

The Annual Report was compiled from information provided by members of the special education department and community partners. It has been reviewed and approved by the BHNCDNB Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) on June 12, 2013 and the Trustees of the BHNCDNB on June 25, 2013. The Annual Report will be submitted to the Ministry of Education by July 1, 2013 and posted on the Board website.



## Special Education Plan

In accordance with Regulation 306, each school board is required to prepare and approve a report on the special education programs and services provided by the board and to submit it to the Ministry. Each board is required to maintain a Special Education Plan, review it annually, amend it as needed to meet the current needs of students, and submit any amendments to the Ministry for review.

This year, the Special Education Plan has been reviewed and updated and will be submitted to the Board, SEAC and the Board of Trustees in September 2013 for approval. The plan will then be sent to the Ministry of Education for review. The plan will be available on the Board website on October 1, 2013.

## Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)

In the past school year, the BHNCDNB SEAC initiated a campaign to invite new community members to join SEAC. The results have been positive; however, SEAC will continue to seek additional community members in 2013-14. The membership of SEAC for 2012-13 was as follows:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization</b>
Dennis Blake	Trustee Representative
Bill Chopp	Superintendent of Education
Catherine Custodio	Haldimand-Norfolk Children's Aid Society
Colleen Demarest	Parent Representative (Norfolk)
Krista Emmerson	Parents for Children's Mental Health
Jill Esposto	Brant Children's Aid Society
Carmen McDermid	Student Achievement Lead - BHNCDNB

Tracey Taylor	Development Services Manager, H-N REACH
Paul Sanderson	Contact Brant
Heather Shisler	Lansdowne Children's Centre
Terre Slaght	Principal of Continuing Education, BHNCDSD
Lisa Stockmans	Parent Representative (Norfolk)
Dianne Wdowczyk	Woodview Children's Centre
Teresa Westergaard-Hager	Norfolk Association for Community Living
Susan Yates	Brant County Health Unit

Throughout this past school year, representatives from various community agencies presented an overview of the mandate of their agencies. This will continue in 2013-14 as new members will have the opportunity to present information on their respective agencies.

Principals/Vice Principals and special education staff from five elementary schools presented their school profile, including special education needs. The presentations outlined school support for all students and students on Individual Education Plans. A discussion on gaps and needs followed each presentation. This process will continue in 2013-14 with an additional six schools presenting.

#### **The SEAC schedule for 2013-14:**

September 11, 2013	February 12, 2014
October 9, 2013	March 19, 2014
November 13, 2013	April 9, 2014
December 11, 2013	May 14, 2014
January 8, 2014	June 11, 2014

## Leadership Transition

The transition of leadership in the Special Education Services Department has continued throughout the 2012-13 school year. The Student Achievement Lead: Special Education has assumed leadership in the following areas:

- Elementary special education programs and services
- Secondary special education programs and services

The Principal of Continuing Education will continue to provide leadership to the Behaviour Services Team, as well as the hiring of staff for the Special Education Department.

# Programs and Services

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## System Special Education Resource Teachers (SSERTs)

The four SSERTs have been assigned to School Networks to support and enhance student achievement. Their role is to collaborate with school teams and community agencies, building capacity among elementary and secondary teachers, SERTs, educational assistants and parents by providing in-services within the Networks and in the community (Parents as Partners, IEP, and IPRC process). The focus this year has been to better understand the learner by exploring multiple intelligences, student profiles, the student with a learning disability, assessment, and evaluation (i.e., HELP, CCAT).

The System SERTs assist in the development of student profiles through assessment, observations and program recommendations. Each Network was provided with an average of 55 assessments. The assessment process included Ontario Student Record (OSR) search, test administration, dialogue with school team, data collection, consultation with Board Psychologist, preparation and organization of results and recommendations through written report, and the presentation and sharing of the results with school team and parents (up to 10 hours per assessment). This valuable information could result in the development of an Individual Education Plan (IEP) and possibly the formal identification of the student (IPRC). The SSERT reviews and supports the school team in preparing IPRC paperwork and packages. This process ensures appropriate placement and student success.

Transitioning is an area of focus for this team. Assistance is provided when planning and implementing entry into school for students with high needs, as well as transitioning into secondary school and beyond. This liaison with community agencies, school teams and parents helps to ensure a seamless transition for students with specific needs.

Through resource creation and information sharing, school teams have been supported in building capacity, maintaining consistency, and facilitating communication with parents. This facilitation contributes to the ongoing building of parental confidence in the Board.

Assessments	Gifted Screens	IPRCs (school or system level)	Presentations	Staff trained on the HELP (teachers, EAs, ECEs)	SEA Support Letters granted	Case Conferences
197	41	159	62	50	10	59

## Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Currently there are 32 students identified as hard-of-hearing and 43 students with central auditory processing/auditory processing disorder (CAP/APD).

### Services provided include:

- Hearing Awareness in-service and presentations
- IEP consults on modifications and accommodations
- SEA equipment acquisition
- Equipment in-services
- Equipment maintenance and monitoring
- Monitoring classroom environment
- Case conferencing
- ITSO (Itinerant Teachers of Southern Ontario) participation
- SWITO (South Western Itinerant Teachers of Ontario) participation
- Interpreting audio logical reports
- Programming for students
- Ongoing communication with teachers, EAs and support staff regarding students
- Providing resources to school staff, students and parents
- Assessing students for their support needs
- Pre/post teaching
- Acting as a support and referral source
- Attending IPRC to support student identification of Communication: Deaf and Hard of Hearing
- Liaising with family and other agencies
- Assisting student and family in connecting and networking
- Attending parent interviews

### Hearing Awareness In-Service

The in-service was designed for teachers, educational assistants and SERTs with main streamed hard-of-hearing students. There were 15 participants who experienced the effects of a mild hearing loss while performing a specific academic task common, in many classrooms. The participants read an audiogram and understood the basic implications for language development and its impact on academic and social success. The participants discussed a variety of strategies to address the language and overall communication needs of hard-of-hearing students. The participants had an opportunity to trouble shoot basic difficulties with hearing aids. They were shown how FM systems and cochlear implants function.

## Vision Impairment

During the 2012-13 school year, individualized orientation and mobility programming was implemented for 23 students in 14 different schools. The primary role of the orientation and mobility educational assistant includes teaching students who live with vision loss or vision impairment, the skills to travel safely, efficiently, gracefully and independently, with or without a mobility device, in any environment. Further involvement of the orientation and mobility educational assistant includes observations, consultation with school staff, and goal setting for Individualized Education Plans. Direct one-on-one orientation and mobility training was provided for numerous students, educational assistants, early childhood educators and teachers.

Additional resources for teachers and support staff were provided including documents from CNIB and an environmental accessibility checklist created by the Brant Haldimand Norfolk



Catholic District School Board orientation and mobility educational assistant. Peer awareness presentations using vision simulators were also delivered in several schools.

The role of the orientation and mobility educational assistant also facilitates collaboration between service providers and schools. As a result, ten new referrals to The W. Ross Macdonald School were submitted in 2012-13 to complete a functional vision assessment. The objective of the functional assessment is to build teacher capacity when instructing students who are blind or visually impaired. Additionally, three new referrals were also submitted to CNIB to ensure students living with vision loss or vision impairment are supported in their home environment. Furthermore, the orientation and mobility educational assistant completed three environmental analysis reports, in collaboration with school staff, to implement accessibility standards for students who are blind or visually impaired. Necessary changes to the physical and social environment of these three schools were implemented, including the marking of stairways. Recommendations, guided by the principles of universal design for the built environment, will also be implemented in the new St. Pius X School.

This year the St. Mary Catholic Learning Centre also had the privilege of hosting the second annual orientation and mobility gathering for orientation and mobility instructors across the province to collaborate and share resources.

## Specialized Equipment Amount (SEA)

### Overview of SEA Support

At the Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board, students with special needs are supported with equipment via the SEA process. Recommendations for special equipment are forwarded on behalf of students to the SEA team who then review and process each claim, organize items recommended (including specialized equipment outside of technology) and then arrange for, and/or provide the necessary training.

All items for SEA are ordered through the SEA team who then coordinate with the Information Technology Department to ensure the needed hardware and software are installed. The SEA team also reviews emerging technologies and their application to special needs students.

The SEA team is conscious of the amount of technology and specialized equipment in the system and is at all times looking to utilize efficiencies in the system, including the recycling of equipment. The SEA team has created and maintains a database of equipment which can be referenced when items for students are needed. This helps in terms of reducing costs and increasing the speed of SEA claim processing.

### Training Services

The Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board SEA team has endeavoured to build capacity among teachers and students in the area of assistive technology. The philosophy that assistive technology is good for all but essential for some is vigorously employed here. All students requiring training in assistive technology are trained alongside their teacher(s) and classmates. This method allows for capacity building in our schools in that a “room full of experts” can help each other to use the technology.

To ensure understanding, a two-step training process is used. The first step includes all parties (teachers, students, educational assistants and parents) where a general training of software use is provided. Step two in the process involves individual session(s) which take place within



two weeks of the first session. The second step session(s) review the basics previously learned and then focus on achieving student learning expectations within the context of the Individual Education Plan.

### Specialized Equipment Amount Claims

To date, there have been 83 SEA claims processed and implemented. These include students with assistive technology requirements, deaf and hard-of-hearing needs, and students who require specialized equipment (such as standing frames, bikes and chairs).

Students who received assistive technology were trained along with their classmates and teachers. To date, 450 students have been trained in the use of Kurzweil. Twenty teachers were also trained in Kurzweil alongside their students.

**The table below details the training completed:**

Grade	School	Students Trained	Teachers Trained	EAs Trained
5	Holy Cross	29	1	
9	Holy Trinity	2		
5	Jean Vanier	26	1	
5	Notre Dame, Brant	26	1	
4	Notre Dame, Caledonia	28	1	
5	Notre Dame, Caledonia	30	1	
6	Sacred Heart, Langton	28	1	
7	Sacred Heart, Langton	28	1	
7	Sacred Heart, Paris	21	1	
6	St. Basil	35	1	
5	St. Frances Cabrini	26	1	1
9	St. John's College	1	1	
4	St. Joseph's	30	1	
6	St. Joseph's	23	1	
2	St. Mary's, Hagersville	20	1	1
4	St. Michael's, Dunnville	16	1	
3	St. Peter	16	1	
6	St. Stephen's	24	1	
4	St. Stephen's	19	1	
4	St. Theresa	22	1	
Totals		450	19	2

## Applied Behaviour Analysis Program Services

During the 2012-13 school year, the Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) Program Lead, carried a caseload of 38-40 students with Autism Spectrum Disorder. This included eight students involved in the Connections for Students model. The role of the Lead included classroom observations, consultation with school staff to problem-solve and troubleshoot, assist with goal setting for Individual Education Plans, provision of strategies, and to act as a liaison between schools and community agencies. As a member of the transition team for the Connections Students, support was provided to principals, teachers and families during transition to school, and following discharge from Intensive Behavioural Intervention programs.

Professional development provided to staff included a half-day training session to all educational assistants on the use of Applied Behaviour Analysis strategies in the classroom. Further professional development was provided to all secondary educational assistants on the principles of Structured Learning and the use of ABA strategies.

To build teacher capacity, an information session was given to seven classroom teachers and nine Special Education Resource Teachers of non-verbal or minimally verbal students using Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) and the utilization of Boardmaker software for their students. A presentation was given to all educational assistants and all Special Education Resource Teachers on the use of figurative language, multiple meaning expressions and indirect requests, and the impact of this vocabulary on the students they work with. Peer awareness presentations about Autism Spectrum Disorder were given in several students' classrooms.

Membership of the ABA Networking Group for the South West Region and attendance at a provincial ABA Learning Day were areas of professional development for the role of the ABA Program Lead. Committee involvement for the ABA Program Lead included the Local Autism Implementation Committee at Haldimand Norfolk REACH, the Hamilton-Niagara Regional Autism Intervention Program (HNRAIP) Education Committee, and the HNRAIP Regional Advisory Committee.

## Gifted Education

Gifted supplementary modules were offered through the Special Education Services to provide opportunities and challenges to extend learning and leadership skills of those students identified as Intellectual: Gifted. The modules were created to enhance classroom curriculum. Students from Grades 4 to 8 were brought together to experience extended learning on a variety of topics.

Students attended designated modules including Science Matters (Structure and Mechanisms, Chemistry, Biology), Robotics ('hands on' creation of a robot and a visit to the Toyota plant to experience robotics in the workplace), Writers' Workshop (publishing a book with text and pictures), Float Your Boat (Skills Ontario – each team designed and built a two-person cardboard boat used for racing and measuring weight capacity), Academic Challenges (University of Windsor Math Contest and various academic challenges in Math, Language, Science, general knowledge), Altitude (**A**chieving **L**eadership **T**hrough **I**ntegrating **T**eamwork **U**nity **D**edication and **E**mpowerment) Program at the University of McMaster and attending the Me to We inspirational speaker presentation by Spencer West.

Participation in the modules promoted higher-level thinking, problem solving, collaboration, leadership and creativity. It was evident that these students enjoyed the many learning opportunities and applied their skills to the modules in an extraordinary way.

Supplementary Gifted Modules	Total Sessions	Gr. 4	Gr. 5	Gr. 6	Gr. 7	Gr. 8
Altitude Program (MAC) 'Young Authors' Academic Challenges	7	18				
Altitude Program (MAC) Robotics Science Matters Academic Challenges	7		17			
Altitude Program (MAC) Robotics Float Your Boat (Skills Canada) Academic Challenges	7			15	12	
Altitude Program (MAC) 'Float Your Boat' (Skills Canada) Photography/Computer Design 'Me to We' – Spencer West	8					17
Projected New Students 2013-14		22	1			

## Speech and Language Services

The Speech-Language Pathologist team has provided the following support services to students and staff of the Board during 2012-13:

- assessment (56 students) and/or consultation (23 students) presenting a variety of communication challenges, including nonverbal students and students with speech sound production problems, voice and nasality concerns, stuttering difficulties, poor understanding and/or expression of language (vocabulary, concepts, grammar, social communication issues);
- screening of sound awareness skills (emergent literacy) for:
  - at-risk Grade 1 students (60) in marker schools
  - at-risk Grade 1 students (25) in schools with teachers new to Grade 1;
- home and/or class programming suggestions, as needed;
- management of students involved with outside agencies for speech language services:
  - Brant and Haldimand Norfolk Preschool Speech and Language Programs (37)
  - HNHB and SW Community Care Access Centres (181)
  - Technology Access Clinic (13);

- professional development presentations, including:
  - 'PECS' (Picture Exchange Communication System) for seven classroom teachers and nine special education resource teachers (SERTs)
  - 'Boardmaker' training for seven classroom teachers and nine SERTs
  - planning 'Selective Mutism' PA Day presentation for Board staff and community partners
  - 'Phonological Awareness' development/screening/activities for all JK/SK teachers and early childhood educators
  - 'As Clear as Mud' (using figurative and indirect language) for all elementary and secondary educational assistants, as well as all SERTs; and
- recommendations for SEA (specialized equipment amounts), as needed.

## Behaviour Services

### Social Worker Services

Social Workers provide support to students with social/emotional issues, which negatively affect student success, and also serve as a resource to school administrators, teachers, child and youth workers, the school resource officer, and chaplains to deal with student concerns. Social workers receive and assess all behaviour services referrals (excluding those to the behaviour therapist) and direct them to the appropriate system support. They address attendance concerns, consulting with administration, communicating with parents, and preparing prolonged absence reports, when necessary. Social workers respond directly to crises in the school community. If students need greater support than what can be provided, a referral to community agencies is facilitated. At the secondary level, the social workers participate on the student success team and attend the weekly meetings that focus on students at risk. They support students who access alternative education programs and are responsible for writing action plans for students serving long-term suspensions.

This year, the Social Workers have trained administrators, educational assistants, and teachers in Non-Violent Crisis Intervention, delivered a presentation on anxiety to secondary school teachers and assisted with two school-based Speak Up grant activities.

The schools are serviced in the following manner: one Social Worker is responsible for 19 elementary schools and one secondary school and the second is responsible for 11 elementary schools and two secondary schools. Below outlines the 2012-13 data for each Social Worker:

Secondary school student referrals/contacts	91	140
Elementary school student referrals/contacts	45	25
Presentations to staff	1	2
Presentations to students	2	4

## Child and Youth Worker Services

Child and Youth Workers support children and youth who face emotional and behavioural difficulties, providing guidance and skill-building programs that assist children to deal with areas such as social skill development, anger management, conflict resolution, coping strategies, peer awareness, bullying, self-esteem, and behavioural challenges.

Emotional and behavioural development is provided through individual student counselling, group counselling (consisting of 6 to 8 week sessions) or class sessions (consisting of 6 to 8 week, weekly presentations), and restorative practices.

Child and Youth Workers also provided guidance, support, recommendations and feedback to teachers, support staff and families.

	Individual Support	Group Support	Class Support	Presentations to Staff
Assumption College and feeder schools	59 students	5	8	
St. John's College and feeder schools	79 students	1	11	3
Holy Trinity and feeder schools	46 students	2	3	
Totals	184 students	8	22	3

## Behaviour SERT Programs

### Tools for Life Program

The Tools for Life program is the foundation of character development, conflict resolution and peacemaking programs, anti-bullying programs, restorative justice and circles programs. The lessons are directly integrated into subject curriculum. Strategies for assessment and reporting are provided. The lessons are oral, interactive and engaging and students respond with enthusiasm. The program is built on 40 developmental assets of building blocks for healthy development. The program assists students in achieving social competencies such as planning and decision-making, interpersonal competence, cultural competence, resistance skills and peaceful conflict resolution. Students are encouraged to make choices and to think about how the choices will impact not only themselves, but also others around them. The program is based on common language that is universal for all students and allows everyone to work out conflicts in a consistent manner.

The Tools for Life program has been implemented in two or more primary classes in four Haldimand schools and eight Brantford schools throughout the year. The classes are taught over a five-month period, including seven to ten lessons, with some extended lessons, depending on the grade level. Teachers are trained and receive strategies and skills to share with staff members to build capacity.



During the 2012-13 school year, the Behaviour SERT completed the following:

	Schools	Classroom Teachers	Prep Teachers	Students	Number of Presentations to school and board staff
Haldimand	4	11	0	229	4
Brantford	8	20	2	447	8
Board Staff Presentation					2
<b>Totals</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>676</b>	<b>14</b>

### Behaviour Therapist Services

The Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board Behaviour Therapist carried a caseload of ten students per month. The caseload was reviewed at monthly allocation meetings. The primary focus of involvement was to build teacher capacity to respond to significant behaviour issues in the classroom. The therapist provided an assessment for each referred student that included observation, data and information collection, meeting with staff, and communicating with parents and community agencies. Strategies, recommendations and necessary resources were provided. Follow-up support to demonstrate, troubleshoot and support staff with implementation occurred. Developing/editing school safety plans were completed as required. The Behaviour Therapist also provided brief consultations for various other behaviour concerns within a classroom on an as needed basis.

The behaviour therapist communicated frequently with parents to gather information, to provide support and dialogue between home and school, to help families access community-based services and to participate in doctor's assessments or appointments, as required.

Forty-one students were referred and received support during the 2012-13 school year, including 40 brief consultations. Twenty-three written behaviour recommendations were completed as well as 65 consultations with parents. Consultations with classroom teachers, resource teachers, educational assistants, and administrators occurred during school visits. In April 2013, release time was provided in order to support collaboration with five teachers. With focus on capacity building and direct support in schools, support was delivered in the classroom. Two presentations were provided to school teams on topics related specifically to the needs of students in the building.

## Mental Health Services

As part of the Ministry of Education Mental Health Initiatives 'Open Minds, Healing Minds', the Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board has entered into partnerships with Woodview Mental Health and Autism Centre; Haldimand Norfolk REACH; and Hamilton, Niagara, Brant, Haldimand and Norfolk Community Care Access Centre.

### Reaching Out to Kids in School Program - ROKS

#### Partners

- Woodview Mental Health and Autism Centre
- Haldimand Norfolk REACH

The partnership was developed in the spring of 2012 to support students JK to Grade12 who are experiencing symptoms of mental health problems and whose daily life is being negatively impacted.

Support can be provided in a variety of formats to accommodate and best support the student, family and school staff. The type of service offered will be determined in collaboration with the school, student and family. Support can be provided to students and families throughout the year, not just the school year.

#### The program provides the following services:

- Individual clinical intervention for the child/youth with involvement of the family.
- Group intervention for children and youth who may benefit from this type of modality.
- Access to other services offered by the children's mental health agency (e.g., Tele-psychiatry).
- Individual or group-based parent skills training.
- Consultation with school personnel regarding strategies that may be useful for specific students in the classroom, as well as more broad-based consultation and education regarding children's mental health issues.
- Information sharing and facilitating referrals to community resources that may augment or better suit the child/youth and family's needs.



**The following are the report data provided during the 2012-13 school year**

***Provided by Haldimand-Norfolk REACH from September 1, 2012 – May 5, 2013***

- 11 referrals have been received from BHNCDSD.
- 2 have been “non-admissions”, one transferred to another Board, and one parent was not interested in the service when contact was made.
- 12 children/youth are currently open and active (some of these were carried into this period).
- 17 children/youth referrals have been closed during this period.
- 4 children/youth are currently waiting for service.

***Provided by Woodview Mental Health and Autism Centre from September 2012 – May 1, 2013***

- 28 referrals were submitted
- 5 referrals were opened in other Woodview programs
- 4 referrals were non-admits (unable to contact, no longer wanted services, no shows)
- 7 referrals are currently open and active
- 3 referrals have been closed this school year
- 9 referrals are waiting for service

***Other services provided***

- 2 school consults
- 1 parenting group presentation on ‘anxiety’ for Our Lady of Providence parent council
- Provided two training sessions on anxiety and ADHD for EA and support staff
- Currently involved in a pilot project called Wrap-Around at Holy Cross School

ROKS staff have been supporting the champion schools and have been in-servicing the Make a Difference document.

ROKS workers presented the Making a Difference document to SERTs in January 2013 and at a PA day to secondary school teachers on May 14, 2013. ROKS workers delivered an evening presentation about children with anxiety to the parents at St. Michael’s in Dunnville on May 8, 2013, and presented workshops on mental wellness to Grade 10 girls at Holy Trinity on May 24, 2013. ROKS workers informally consult on a regular basis with principals and teachers while working at schools.

**Mental Health & Addictions Nurses**

**Partnerships**

- Partner Community Care Access Centre Hamilton, Niagara, Brant, Haldimand Norfolk

The key component in meeting the goals of the Ministry initiative for supporting students with mental health issues was the creation of the partnership to provide mental health and addiction nurses to students in our school Board.

The program partnership was approved in May 2013. The outlined services within our schools or home setting are to be provided year round.

**Services include the following:**

- Comprehensive mental health and addiction assessment, care planning, intervention and referral
- Provide 'return to school' support through direct referral from in-patient unit, section class or emergency department
- Medication review
- Safety planning
- System navigation
- Follow-up with the youth justice system
- Provide education for students and staff regarding mental health and addiction issues.

## Suicide Prevention

To continue the effective work that is being done to support students with mental health and addictions issues, one-time funding was provided to all school boards, School Authorities, and Provincial and Demonstration schools, to support professional learning opportunities to build capacity in the area of suicide prevention.

School boards were encouraged to train key school board professionals who have responsibility for mental health and addictions in the board, and that the training be of a nature to continue to build capacity. The goal is that once trained, these individuals will have the necessary skills and knowledge to use a train-the-trainer approach and systematically conduct training sessions for educators and professional support staff working in schools across the Board. This approach will enable more educators to be trained at minimal cost to recognize and prevent the immediate risk of suicide in students presenting with suicidal thoughts and behaviours.

Our school district has registered two Social Workers in the ASIST Training for Trainers and they will receive instruction in October 2013. Likewise, the district has registered one Student Success Teacher, one guidance counsellor and one school chaplain in a Safe Talk Training for Trainers program; they too will receive training in October 2013. Together, this team will support the implementation of a systematic training plan for Board employees.

On May 2, 2013, a multi-disciplinary district team attended the Peel District School Board annual School Psychology Conference related to youth Suicidal Behaviour and the Schools. A keynote address related to current evidence-based practices in prevention, intervention and postvention was delivered by David Miller, Associate Professor of School Psychology at the University at Albany, State University of New York. Represented at this workshop were trustees, superintendents of education, elementary and secondary administrators, student success, guidance, and social workers. Our Board is currently developing an administrative procedure which will address school-based prevention, risk assessment, intervention and postvention strategies.

# Professional Development

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## Community of Practice Meetings

Throughout the 2012-13 school year, 38 Special Education Resource Teachers (SERTs) and three Secondary Special Education Department Heads participated in seven Professional Development days to enhance teacher practice when working with our identified and highest needs students. The key topics included effective Individual Education Plan (IEP) development, assessment and reporting, additional technology training in Kurzweil, Smart Ideas and WordQ, enhancing effective literacy strategies, and improving transitions for all students. SERTs and Department Heads were introduced to the Making a Difference document to assist with building teacher capacity in the area of Mental Health Literacy. Guest speakers Dr. J. St. Pierre, Douglas McCarthy and Justin Hines shared their expertise and experiences in the areas of selective mutism, calm communications and the power of motivation. These speakers provided invaluable information on how to strengthen our abilities to work with students who depend on us to reach their potential.

## Technology Support and Capacity Building for Special Education Staff

Special education staff (consisting of Special Education Resource Teachers, System Special Education Resource Teachers, Educational Assistants and Special Education Administrators) experienced focused training on multiple occasions, specifically in the use of Kurzweil and WordQ. This group, as part of technology training, also received training in the use of You Tube, video editing and database use as they pertain to special education program delivery. This group was also supported by the Special Education Technology Team when questions with regards to technology use and uses arose, and/or specific technology instruction was requested.

## NTIP - Technology Capacity Building

All new teachers were trained in the use of programs that would directly affect special needs students in their classrooms. New teachers were trained in the use of:

- WordQ
- Desire to Learn (Learning Management System)
- The Ontario Educational Resource Bank (classroom resources for teachers)

Teachers also were given time for more individualized sessions by their principals.

## Kindergarten In-service – Teacher and Early Childhood Educator

Professional development in the areas of phonological awareness, fine motor skills and alternate curriculum for six different domains were provided to all Kindergarten/ELKP teachers and all early childhood educators.

We have provided Professional Development, training and resources to school staffs (teachers, SERTs, support staff and principals) to monitor and assess the progress of students who do not access the Ontario Curriculum. To date, every educational assistant, early childhood educator and kindergarten teacher has received Professional Development on the Hawaii Early Learning Profile (HELP). On-going collaboration with multi-disciplinary teams from the community and parents has also been a focus with the goal of selecting and creating alternative programs and skills from all of those who know the child the best.

## Educational Assistants Training

All elementary and secondary educational assistants participated in six Professional Development days throughout the school year. Topics were chosen based on recommendations to support their own Professional Development and to provide support with respect to meeting the unique needs of the students with whom they work.

### **Professional Development included:**

- Faith Formation – Dr. Thomas H. Groome – ‘Discover the Joy of our Faith’
- Back Wellness – the importance of good body mechanics, posture, physical fitness and self-responsibility
- Mental Health Awareness – Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS), Anxiety, ADD, ADHD
- Non-Violent Crisis Intervention
- Calm Communications – Douglas McCarthy
- The HELP – A4 (Assessing Achievement in Alternate Areas) Ministry initiative
- Structured Learning
- Fine Motor skills
- Phonemic Awareness – The Importance of Clear Language
- Technology – Kurzweil, WordQ, Smart Ideas
- ABA Strategies
- Motivational Speaker – Justin Hines, “Achieving your Goals and Living your Dream”

## Elementary Principal Training

Elementary Principals received information in the following areas related to their School Improvement Plan and impacting student achievement:

- Interpreting Canadian Cognitive Abilities Test (CCAT) results and how to use this data to meet the needs of individual students.
- The HELP Curriculum was introduced to assist schools with programming and goal setting for students not accessing the Ontario Curriculum.
- Support and training was provided to principals during transition to school, and following discharge from Intensive Behavioural Intervention programs.

## Secondary Teacher Training

### Learning Disability Focus

All secondary teachers in Brant, Haldimand and Norfolk participated in a session that targeted the profile of a student with a Learning Disability (LD). This session provided by the Special Education Department Heads and the System Special Education Resource Teachers focused on characteristics of these students according to the Ministry of Education and examined the main components of the IEP. A demonstration was provided on how to access information about the identified students in their classrooms. A resource was provided outlining instructional and assessment accommodations in order to further build teacher capacity. During the collaboration session, teachers were provided the opportunity to review student data from their classrooms and discuss the possible ways to improve student achievement.

### Learning Disability Lead Focus Group

The Board has approved its 2012-2015 Strategic Plan providing strategic direction for the next three years. One goal outlined in the Plan is to increase levels of student achievement for secondary students in the area of literacy. A focus was to refine teaching practices when teaching students identified with a learning disability. The Religion Department will be the leaders in each secondary school in providing for equity and inclusion of all students with identified needs. Twenty-three teachers from the Religion Department were selected to lead this focus with support from the Special Education Department.

A two-day in-service was held that focused on supporting the success of all students in a classroom, in particular those in the open Religion courses, and especially those who have a learning disability.

## Special Projects

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### Reading Upgrade Project 2012-13

#### Reading Upgrade

Reading Upgrade is a powerful, effective program that has the capability to assure students develop reading abilities. Reading Upgrade can be used as a preventative tool and measure for students showing early signs of literacy challenges or as an intervention tool.

#### Selection Process

- Applicable to any student in Grades 2, 3, 4 or 5. The student may be identified, on an IEP or simply at risk according to their June 2012 DRA score (12-20).
- Potential candidates must complete a pre-test and score between 30% and 70%.
- Students who meet the criteria are nominated by the school SERT.
- A committee reviews the nominations and selects 100 students to participate in the program.

### Delivery Model

- Each student in the program is provided with an individual Reading Upgrade license, purchased by the Special Education Department.
- Students are to use the Reading Upgrade program a minimum of three times a week for 20 minutes each session, per five day cycle.
- The program is a supplement provided in addition to the daily classroom literacy block. It is critical that the daily guided reading time provided by the classroom teacher is not replaced or interrupted.
- The school SERT will deliver the Reading Upgrade intervention instruction to a maximum of two students per session.

### Student Passport to Success

- Each of the 50 levels has a page that explains the expectation for that level.
- SERT records the date, percentage, achievement level, and comments on the student’s strengths, weaknesses and areas where intervention is needed.
- SERTs are to share reports and information collected in the passport with the classroom teacher on a regular basis.

### The Data

Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Male	Female	Identified	Non-Identified
4	51	25	8	3	66	25	27	64

## Learning for All - Classroom Profiles

*Learning for All, K–12* is a resource guide that is designed to share information with educators about evidence-based and research-informed educational approaches including Assessment for Learning, Universal Design for Learning and Differentiated Instruction. The guide identifies knowledge of students’ learning needs, styles and preferences as the first and most important step to improving student achievement.

In response to this guiding principle, the Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board has created resources and tools on Multiple Intelligence (MI) to assist teachers in gaining more knowledge of their students. This information can help teachers to build student and class profiles.

### Highlights of the Project...

#### Student Engagement

An online Multiple Intelligence (MI) survey has been created exclusively for Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board students in Grades 3 to 12. The students can access the survey in their schools and immediately discover their learning preferences and needs. The classroom teacher can also view the results of each student’s learning profile.

## Student Voice

The creation of the MI poster and tracking bookmark have been instrumental in helping students better understand and articulate their learning strengths and needs. It has been reported that the MI survey and resources assist intermediate students in choosing elective courses at the secondary level based on their learning preferences and interests.

## Teacher Capacity

Teacher in-services on the MI initiative have been offered at elementary and secondary Professional Developmental (PD) days, staff meetings, 1:1 coaching, and Professional Learning Communities (PLC). Analyzing the data and how the information can assist in planning and delivering instruction and assessment has been the focus.

To date, 16 elementary schools have been in-serviced on the MI tool which includes over 130 teachers, principals and educational assistants. In-services were also conducted during secondary Professional Development days, and career and civics teachers were in-serviced 1:1. The MI initiative was offered at both elementary and secondary Professional Development days with full attendance in all sessions offered. Each participant received resources to assist in planning and delivering instruction and assessment.

## Transitioning into School (Kindergarten/ELKP)

We recognize how critical the transition into Kindergarten is for many of our young students who have special needs. The partnership between parents and agencies can assist with getting to 'know our learners' and further promote a seamless transition. This process was enhanced by the following initiatives:

### Entry into School Meetings with Community Agencies

Entry into School meetings were held at Haldimand-Norfolk REACH (12 students presented) and Lansdowne Children's Centre (LCC) (17 students presented and seven flagged students) in February 2013. It was at this time, with parent consent, that the agencies provided valuable information regarding the new students entering our system who have concerns. The resource teachers provided student background, strengths and needs, agency involvement (e.g., speech, OT, PT), diagnosis (if applicable), and a report summary of helpful information and contacts. The Student Achievement Lead and the System Special Education Resource Teachers attended and dialogued about each student to gain a better understanding.

### 'Parents as Partners' – Community Connections

The Parents as Partners workshops are designed to support families with the transition into kindergarten. The series of four workshops were hosted at both Haldimand Norfolk REACH (Townsend) and Lansdowne Children's Centre (Brantford). Topics for these workshops included Preparing for Kindergarten, Communicating for Success, How Kindergarten Programs Support Students with Special Needs, The Parent Role in the Individual Education Plan (IEP), and the Identification Placement Review Committee (IPRC) process. Parent attendance was overwhelming this year – over 28 families registered in Brantford and approximately 14 families in Haldimand and Norfolk. Two System Special Education Resource Teacher representatives attended all workshops to support the presenters (as informal and formal support), to enhance parent confidence and to build new partnerships as we prepare for a seamless transition for our kindergarten students into school.



## Parent Resources

In an effort to build capacity and develop parent trust, a Case Conference Guide for Parents was created and distributed.

## Case Conference – The TEAM

Case Conferences were attended by parents, Student Achievement Lead, SSERT, accepting school team, agencies and daycare providers. At this time, the student was introduced and information was collected. It was also an opportunity for parents to share and meet the school team.

## Visits – ‘Getting to Know You’

Daycare and classroom visits were arranged by the school team and system staff, with parent consent, as needed.

## Individual Education Plan (IEP) Review

The improvement of IEPs was an ongoing focus this year. A portion of every Community of Practice meeting was devoted to improving our practices with regards to writing effective, updated IEPs. The IEP Committee met three times to brainstorm and create a variety of tools to support their colleagues in the development, management and critical review of IEPs.

In response to the Ministry IEP Audit that was completed in 2012, the Special Education Department has committed to conduct a yearly internal audit as a means to monitor progress and areas of need.

For this year’s audit, IEPs for students identified with a Learning Disability in Grades 3, 6 and 8, as well as Connections students, have been collected.

Grade 3	Grade 6	Grade 8	Connections
6	45	66	4

Information gathered from the audit will help set goals and provide a basis of instruction for the 2013-14 school year.

## Individual Education Plan Parent Survey

As part of the continued efforts of the Special Education Department to improve programs and services, a parental/guardian survey was provided to all parents/guardians of students who are on an Individual Education Plan. The survey examined the IEP process for the district. The survey was provided to all parents/guardians in hard copy, as well as the ability to complete it on the Board website using Survey Monkey.

Overall the respondents were satisfied with the IEP process in the school district. The survey results and the abridged comment section will be available on the Board website on July 1, 2013.

## A4 – Assessing Achievement in Alternative Areas

A4 is a Ministry of Education initiative aimed at improving the achievement of students who, because of their special education needs, do not access the Ontario Curriculum (achievement is derived from alternative programs, courses, skills and curriculum) or whose program is created from a combination of alternative programming and expectations from the Ontario Curriculum. As a lead board chosen by the Ministry of Education, the Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board is committed to helping every student achieve. Our goal is to enhance teacher practices in assessment, data collection and reporting to parents on the achievement of students accessing alternative curriculum.

### Building Capacity

Over the course of the past two years, we have provided Professional Development, training and resources to school staffs (teachers, SERTs, support staff and principals) to monitor and assess the progress of students who do not access the Ontario Curriculum. To date, every educational assistant, early childhood educator and kindergarten teacher have received Professional Development on the Hawaii Early Learning Profile (HELP). On-going collaboration with multi-disciplinary teams from the community and parents has also been a focus with the goal of selecting and creating alternative programs and skills from all those who know the child the best.

### Measuring Progress

The HELP was purchased as the A4 Tool of Focus in both elementary and secondary schools. HELP is a curriculum-based assessment and tracking tool for students exhibiting “typical” development and for students who may have developmental delays. Educators use this tool to measure student progress, achievement and further develop student programming in six domains not covered in the Ontario Curriculum; cognitive, language, gross motor, fine motor, social and self-help. The Brigance Transition Skills Inventory is also used as the A4 Tool of Focus in many of the secondary school programs. Both tools, the HELP and Brigance, connect to and guide the student’s program. Evidence of this is seen on the Individual Education Plan.

### Reporting of Data and Parent Confidence

On-going distribution and training of school staff on the use of charts, checklists and tracking tools to measure progress and achievement is done as a means to plan further instruction. Meaningful information and data about student progress is shared with parents and the multi-disciplinary team by means of consultation and alternative reports.

Currently 18 elementary and two secondary students are involved in the A4 Project based on criteria that included age, grade, developmental skills, Ontario Curriculum expectations and alternative programming. School staffs have embraced the HELP and are using this curriculum with other students whose needs could also be supported by the HELP.

## Supporting our Faith Journey

### Supplementary Retreats

As part of the ‘Supporting our Faith Journey’ program created by the Special Education Department, three retreats were held at St. Mary Catholic Learning Centre. The retreats were geared toward students with an intellectual disability, students with Autism who could make

transitions easily, and/or students who could benefit from a simplified supplementary 'hands on' program. The students spent an exciting and engaging day participating in a variety of faith-centered activities. This day was designed to help exceptional students increase their understanding as they prepared to receive the sacraments of Reconciliation, First Communion, or Confirmation.

**Each retreat provided the opportunity for the students to:**

- read and discuss the scriptural reading related specifically to the sacrament;
- learn about the sequence of events when receiving the sacrament;
- tour the church and highlight key symbols in the church;
- rehearse the steps involved in receiving the sacrament using visual representation and assistance from the priest;
- highlight specific vocabulary relevant to the sacrament through vocabulary BINGO, concentration, fishing for important vocabulary, etc.;
- engage in a modified, 'hands on' learning opportunity, incorporating drama (making and using character puppets) to help students gain a better understanding of the sacrament;
- use technology (iPad) to engage in religious games and puzzles to reinforce comprehension; and,
- take home a variety of 'hands on' activities, including a Parent Guide with instructions to further promote practice and repetition.

The retreats were well received and enjoyed by all. The students gained a better understanding of the sacrament, increased their confidence to receive the sacrament and experienced the opportunity to make new friends. Many of the students returned to their classrooms eager to share the day's events and activities with their peers.

## When Faith Meets Pedagogy Conference

In addition to providing our student retreats, we were invited to present at the 'When Faith Meets Pedagogy' conference in the fall of 2012 (Toronto). Our session was designed to share an overview of the three retreats and resources in an interactive way. This workshop was well received and many contacts from other boards have been made.

## Working Together Symposium

The "Working Together Symposium" is a bi-annual event where a group of community agency representatives meet to organize a one-day symposium to bring together parents, educators and service providers of children, adolescents and adults with special needs. The day is comprised of various workshops and guest speakers, presenting on a variety of topics around special needs, developmental and behavioural issues.

This year a System SERT was represented on the committee, attended all planning meetings, and acted as the liaison between the committee and the host location, Assumption College School. The Working Together Symposium took place on Saturday, February 23, 2013. There were approximately 270 registrants with 21 workshops offered in three different time frames. This year's program included two well-known speakers David Hingburger who was the keynote speaker and Dr. Duncan McKinlay who offered two workshops.

Members of the Special Education Services team presented two workshops on assistive technology. The workshops offered participants the opportunity to learn hands-on, how assistive

technology can bridge the gap in a student's learning and enable the struggling student to be more successful. The focus was on the use of Kurzweil, WordQ, and Smart Ideas.

## Policies and Administrative Procedures

In order to update student support for 2013-14 the following policies and administrative procedures are being reviewed and will be submitted to the Board Policy Committee in September 2013:

- Management of Student Medical Needs in School Policy. This is a new policy which will include the following revised administrative procedures:
  - Anaphylaxis
  - Concussion
  - Diabetes
  - Administration of Medication
  - Health Support in Schools
- P/PM 149 Community Partnerships Policy, and an additional administrative procedure for Establishing Working Relationships with Third Party Professional/Paraprofessional, will be added. This administrative procedure will address partnerships with community agencies not covered in P/PM 149.

June Szeman, Chair of the Board

Chris N. Roehrig, Director of Education

Prepared by Bill Chopp, Superintendent of Education

