

REPORT

Special Education Advisory Committee

- *Minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee meeting September 10, 2014.*



**Special Education Advisory Committee Minutes
Education Centre
September 10, 2014 – 12:00 p.m.**

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Michael Lewis, Chair of the Rainy River District School; Shelley Dion, Kenora-Rainy River District Child & Family Services (video conference); Allan McManaman, Superintendent of Education; Kelly Forbes, Special Education Administrator; Lorraine Gauthier-Stromberg, Kenora-Rainy River District Child & Family Services (video conference); Donna Chief, Seven Generations Education Institute Representative;

REGRETS: Christie Gushulak, Community Living-Atikokan; Gwen Barlow, Confederation College; Allene Perruse, Community Living-Fort Frances & District;

STAFF: Sandra Ward, Recording Secretary; Sarah Irwin-Gardner, Mental Health Leader

1. Call to order

The meeting was called to order by Lorraine Gauthier Stromberg at 11:59 a.m.

2. Disclosure of Conflict of Interest

There was no disclosure of conflict of interest.

3. Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved by Mike Lewis and seconded by Shelley Dion.

4. Confirmation of Minutes

Approval of the minutes of June 11, 2014 as circulated was motioned by Shelley Dion and seconded by Mike Lewis.

5. Business Arising from Minutes

There was no business arising from the minutes.

6. New Business

The Special Education Administrator started by introducing and welcoming Donna Chief, the new Aboriginal Education Leader and representative for Seven Generations Education Institute.

- a) Presentation – Sarah Irwin-Gardner, Mental Health Leader
Mental Health Supports – Strategies have been developed and a steering committee will be moving ahead in key areas. There is also a committee with community group partners who can provide additional supports. A mental health champion will be identified in each school and they will be provided with additional supports and PD opportunities. There will be a large focus on suicide prevention.

Guidelines will be developed and there will be professional development workshops for educators.

- Safe Talk; ASIST Training; Mental Health First Aid Training



Response guidelines will be developed for school administrators to use, if a school community experiences tragic loss.

The Mind Up Program will be implemented at Mine Centre School as a pilot site. This program teaches self-regulation skills. Resources have been purchased for all schools and all grades going forward. The pilot site will be used to ensure the program is effective prior to implementing it at all schools.

The Mental Health Leader is part of a regional Suicide Prevention Committee being led by Firefly. The group is open to anyone who is interested in participating. The Mental Health Leader indicated she could put Lorraine Gauthier in contact with the group to get a representative from the Atikokan area working with the Committee.

- b) The meeting schedule for the year was reviewed and no changes were made.
- c) The Committee Activity Schedule was reviewed and no changes were made.
- d) A new parent representative for the committee is required. The Special Education Administrator indicated that she would advertise for a representative in the school newsletters with an explanation of what is required. Parents of special needs children would then be asked to submit a letter of interest. If there are multiple people interested, a name would be drawn to pick the representative. All those present were in favour of this process. The parent representative may not be in place for the next meeting but possibly by November.

The Superintendent of Education will approach Tanis Fretter, Integrated Services Manager (Children's Services Lead) about having a representative from their organization join the Special Education Advisory Committee.

- e) Special Education Administrator's Report

Kelly Forbes, Special Education Administrator for the Rainy River District School Board, highlighted a couple of points from her September report.

BMS Training will take place for Educational Assistants and high needs schools will be targeted.

There was a great deal of work done over the summer on transitions for Special Education students. We have a lot of new students with high needs that needed to be set up in our system, with the main focus being on student safety.

Jennifer Cooper, Behavioural Therapist has been added to the School Board staff.

Alternative transportation has been accommodated for all students as needed.

7. Correspondence

- a) Policies Under Review

If anyone has any issues with the policies in the package, please forward them to Kathie Zatulsky at kathie.zatulsky@mail.rrdsb.com, by September 19th. Any concerns will be brought to the attention of the Policy committee.



MAIN OFFICE : 522 SECOND ST. E., FORT FRANCES, ON, P9A 1N4 Telephone: (807) 274-9855 FAX (807) 274-5078 Toll Free 1-800-214-1753

- b) Letter – Lakehead District School Board
Re: Speech/Language services – The Rainy River District School Board is not experiencing these issues.
- c) Letter – Halton District School Board
Re: School Health Support Services –The Rainy River District School Board is not experiencing these issues.
- d) Letter - Halton District School Board
Re: Mandatory Special Education training for OCT graduates
- e) Letter - Greater Essex County
Re: Support for extending the teacher education program to two years
- f) Peterborough Victoria Northumberland and Clarington Catholic District School Board
Re: Supporting recommendations regarding mandatory Special Education qualifications
- g) Thames Valley District Schools Board
Re: Support for letter written by Halton District School Board regarding mandatory Special Education training for OCT graduates.

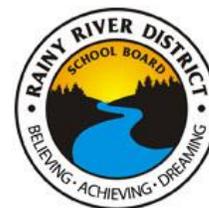
All letters are addressed to the Minister of Education with regard to supporting the requirement of an initial teacher education program to include Special Education Part 1, with the move to a two year pre service program.

8. **Future Meeting**

The next Special Education Advisory Committee meeting will be Wednesday, October 8, 2014.

9. **Adjournment .**

The meeting was adjourned at 12:32 p.m.



Special Education Administrator's Report – Sept. 10, 2014

2014-15 Professional Development Days

Planning for the Professional Development Days for Educational Support Personnel (ESP) is well under way. The ESP group will be offered Professional Development related to Mental Health and Well-Being, Behaviour Management Systems, Literacy and Numeracy Supports, Assistive Technology, Diabetes Management, etc.

Supports for Students with Assistive Technology

The Technology Coaches are currently working on a plan to help ensure that the assistive technology that has been prescribed for students with special needs is deeply embedded in classroom practice. Through the Learning for All project, the Technology Coaches will be making iPads available to Special Education Resource Teachers and provide them with training on how they can be better utilized to assist students with their individual needs. The Special Education Resource Teachers will be working in the classrooms and share their learning with the classroom teachers, EAs and students.

Staffing

All schools received their allocations for Educational Assistants (EA) and Communication Assistants (CA) in June. The amount of EA and CA time allocated to the Board remained similar to that of last year. However, with the unexpected arrival of many students with special needs, more EAs have since been allocated to schools. The plan to have Later Literacy EAs in schools in the New Year still remains. With that said, the needs of students with intense special education needs remains a priority.

The Rainy River District School Board has a new Behavioural Therapist, Jennifer Cooper. Jennifer has had a busy start to the school year with many referrals received thus far. She has been helping school staff create and maintain effective transition plans for students with various special education needs, including Autism Spectrum Disorder.

SERT Meetings

SERT Meetings will be working a little differently this year. Instead of having all the SERTs attend meetings together, the Special Education Administrator will be offering training and assistance at each of the schools specific to each school's needs. This will allow the SERTs more individual time to address as student specific concerns.

Special Needs Strategy Regional Information Session

The Special Education Administrator, along with the Superintendent of Education, will be attending the regional information session for the new Special Needs Strategy in Thunder Bay. Senior staff members and program directors from a number of organizations who serve clients with special needs will be attending the meeting. The Special Needs Strategy will outline the provincial direction on how to improve services for children and youth with special needs and their families.

Mental Health

Through a tendered process, the Rainy River District School Board has formed a partnership with Kenora Rainy River Child and Family Services to offer further counselling support to students in need. The team is still working on the logistics of how the services will be offered in a smooth and effective manner. Through this process, two and a half additional counsellors will be available to Rainy River District School Board Students in all communities.