

**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION**  
**MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF THE**  
**MINISTER'S ADVISORY COUNCIL ON SPECIAL EDUCATION**

**Wednesday, February 17, 2010**

**8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.**

**Huron Room**  
**MacDonald Block**  
**900 Bay Street**  
**Toronto, Ontario**

**Members**

John Wilhelm, Chair  
Jean-Baptiste Arhanchiague  
Susan Blekkenhorst  
Jennifer Cantello Daw  
Joanne Cripps  
Tracy Grant  
Ruth Jones  
Dr. Arlette LeFebvre  
David Mason  
Alison Morse  
Lois Parkinson  
Marlene Pike  
Raoul Romain  
Marianne Saade  
Robert Savage  
Joe Trovato  
Linda Ward  
Lynn Ziraldo, Past Chair/Advisor

**Members Absent**

Sabeena Ali  
Bonny Cann  
Warren Kennedy, Vice-Chair

**Non Voting Members**

Jane Cleve, MCYS  
Christine Hughes, MCSS  
Mary Iannuzziello, MOHLTC

**Non Voting Members - Absent**

Jane Cousens, MTCU

**Ministry of Education Staff**

Alain Broux, Acting Council Secretary  
Teckla Bryson  
Barry Finlay  
Michel Laverdiere  
David Moore  
Christine Riedel  
Joanne Lee  
Julie Williams

**Invited Guests**

The Honourable Leona Dombrowsky, Minister  
Mark Fam, Deloitte Inc.

**ITEM****Chair's Remarks****John Wilhelm**

The chair welcomed members and Ministry staff to the meeting. He noted the following:

- Minutes from the last meeting will be distributed today. Members were asked to send their approval to the Chair and Secretary by e-mail.
- Shared letters that were posted on the repository. Members were invited to share letters from their constituencies as well.
- Minister Wynne wrote to MACSE to express her thanks for the Council's work during her tenure as Minister of Education.
- Noted the Olympics as a source of pride as a standard for inclusiveness in Canada. He noted the cross country Para Olympian, Brian McKeever (the 1<sup>st</sup> blind person to participate); Rick Hanson (a torch bearer); and that Canada's first gold medalist at the 2010 games was inspired by his brother who has Cerebral Palsy.
- Congratulated members Robert Savage, who was a torch bearer, and Council advisor Lynn Ziraldo who will bear it in March.

**ITEM****Special Education Update****Barry Finlay**

Barry Finlay, Acting Director of the Provincial Schools Branch, provided an update.

- During his temporary assignment as acting director of the Provincial Schools Branch, Julie Williams will be the Acting Director of SEPPB.
- When Cabinet shuffles are announced, the Ministers change portfolios immediately. Regular ministry business is slowed to an extent as the new Minister and new Minister's Office staff are briefed, and new relationships are formed. Some of Minister Wynne's staff will stay for a short time to support transition.
- Tracy Odell, former Manager with SEPPB, has been appointed as new director of the Accessibility Program Design and Delivery Branch with the Ontario Ministry of Government Services. David Moore, from the Assistant Deputy Minister's Office, is acting manager while the position is posted.
- Bill Wyman retired as a senior policy advisor in December. Interviews are in progress to recruit a successor.
- No decisions have been made yet about special education funding for next year. The grants for 2010-2011 will be announced before the end of March.
- Noted recent media reports about the Toronto District School Board's claim of a \$20 million shortfall in special education funding and a letter from GTA area special education superintendents concerning funding.
- Risk of injury in the workplace continues to be a concern, including where work place violence may arise from a student unintentionally injuring others. Recent amendments to the *Health & Safety Act* will have an impact.
- The analysis and review of SIP and SEA continues. Recommended changes for 2010-11 include 15 percent dedicated to computers and removing the \$800 deductible. Assistive Technology continues to be an important tool and it is important that educators are properly training to effectively deploy the equipment.
- Also recommended for 2010-11, \$6 million for ABA staffing support to be permanently incorporated into school board funding. \$10.8 million dollars is being allocated to boards to support children with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) to fund at least one behavioural expertise professional in each boards.

- SEPPB is preparing an update to its response to the Auditor General's 2008 report on special education.
- MOHLTC continues to lead development of a 10 year strategic plan for mental health and addictions. The paper MACSE provided to the Minister is informing the ministry's contribution to the development of the plan.
- Coordination of services as set out in PPM 149 have not been completed by all boards by January 31, but discussions are taking place and boards are working through the process diligently.
- The draft *Learning for All K-12* is continuing to gather speed. The ministry continues to receive a very strong positive response to the document and continues to engage stakeholders to build on the momentum the draft has generated.
- The *Caring and Safe Schools* document is nearing completion.

#### Discussion:

- The risk assessment process is a content-specific, interactive approach. Children's needs vary, resulting in complex needs by boards.
- Information will continue to be gathered concerning SEA, but boards will have greater flexibility to deploy resources to meet their needs.
- The Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA) was at the table when the Health and Safety Act was amended.
- The letter from GTA superintendents reported in the press concerning funding has not been received. Once it has been received and reviewed, the ministry will respond.
- Dr. Douglas Willms' suggested approach to funding allocations addresses 12 factors applied to exceptionalities. He has validated the factors as having an impact on student learning. Introduction of a new approach to funding allocations would be phased in gradually.
- Lynn Ziraldo will circulate information on the Caring and Safe Schools conference being held on April 29.
- The risk assessment rubric will be released with the school board funding announcement for 2010-2011. Council will be advised.
- More information about SALEP will be requested from the Student Achievement Division.

#### **Re-appointments to Council**

- There is a new process for appointments and re-appointments to MACSE. All prospective appointees must apply on-line through the Public Appointments Secretariat (PAS). Six members of Council who are eligible for re-appointment have indicated their willingness to serve another term. SEPPB has sent a letter to organizations where there are vacancies to call for applications by individuals, who must then apply through the PAS.
- If SEPPB has recommendations on how to communicate the available positions more effectively, Council will do their best to share.
- Council Advisor suggested sharing the information through the website.
- The Acting Council Secretary will circulate a list of Council members that notes their current term. The information is also available on the Public Appointments web site.

## Preparation for the Minister

All

Council reviewed the key points to be made with the Minister:

- Council supports continued enveloping of special education funding.
- Council fully supports *Learning for All K-12* and is anxious to see it go forward. It is a valuable resource even in current draft form.
- Council will be focusing on transitions and the health review today.
- SEAC and mental health continue to be on the Council's agenda.

### ITEM

### Minister's Remarks

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky

The Minister of Education, the Honourable Leona Dombrowsky, made brief remarks on ministry activities and responded to questions. Highlights included:

- The Minister introduced herself and noted that her background includes serving as a school board trustee and a member of a SEAC. She thanked MACSE for its work, adding that the advice Council provides is important to her and to the government.
- She reflected on her time as a SEAC board member where discussion focused on serving students with special education needs.
- The ministry's agenda focuses on student success and closing the gap. Supporting the sector to increase achievement and strengthen an inclusive system are priorities.
- MACSE "has its ear to the ground" and she looks forward to receiving the Council's advice.

The Chair welcomed the Minister and offered a few comments.

- MACSE works diligently to support the system's capacity to help children achieve their potential. Council believes that maintaining the enveloped character of special education funding is important.
- Council enthusiastically supports the draft *Learning for All K-12*.
- Council recently sent advice concerning mental health and building SEAC capacity to the former Minister. Today's meeting will be focusing on transitions and the Student Health Support Services (SHSS) review being lead by the Ministry of Health.

### ITEM

### Learning for All

Julie Williams

Julie Williams, Acting Director with SEPPB, updated Council on the draft *Learning for All K-12*.

- Thanked MACSE for its support and committed to keeping Council updated.
- The ministry continues to meet with 11 lead boards and work with affiliate partners. A key message is to build *Learning for All K-12* into *Education for All*.
- *Learning for All K-12* is still viewed by some as a "special education resource."
- Sample PA Day activities will support activities in 2010-11.
- Teacher federations are eager to provide comment.
- Comments are welcomed through the lead boards and there is also a link on the CODE website.
- The final draft will be brought to MACSE prior to release (anticipated in spring 2011).

Discussion:

- Julie will speak to Student Success and the Literacy and Numeracy branches about ensuring that *Learning for All K-12* is replicated in their materials.
- The School Effectiveness Framework and Board Improvement Plans will support ongoing improvement going into the schools and there is an opportunity for linking *Learning for All K-12* to that.
- The new PA day memo has been issued and includes early learning.

**ITEM**

**Early Learning**

**Julie Williams  
Michelle Braakman (ELPPB)  
Joanne Lee**

Julie Williams, Acting Director with SEPPB, Michelle Braakman, Early Learning Planning and Design Manager with the Early Learning Policy and Program Branch (ELPPB) and Joanne Lee, Senior Policy Advisor with SEPPB, updated Council on the early learning program. Highlights included:

- Michelle Braakman gave a brief overview of the Early Learning Program and where it was heading. (Presentation available)
- She noted the Pascal Report's vision for early learning, a summary of the recommendations, what the research tell us, the government commitment, the key components of integrated extended day, local partnerships, current status, and key considerations.
- The early learning initiative provides students with seamless approach to their learning. Curriculum is being developed with a paper anticipated in the spring that will combine the junior kindergarten and senior kindergarten program.
- Extended day will be led by early childhood educators (ECEs) and will be fee based.
- Actively out in the field training principals and reaching out to teachers, early childhood educators and boards to help support team building and to give everyone the opportunity to review a draft document supporting the initiative.
- Joanne Lee spoke about the Early Learning Program in regard to Special Education, highlighting current programs and services and the expectations for 2010-2011. (Presentation available)
- The goal is seamless service delivery and support is being sought from a reference group as preparations continue for Year One. The reference group is co-chaired by Sandy Palinski.
- There are long ranging considerations with children who have special education needs and ensuring continuity of service. Boards will be looking to partners to help find ways to make that work. SHSS are another component that will help to support children as they move into the program.
- The Council chair asked members to let him know if there is a representative from MACSE who would like to join the reference group.

Discussion:

- It remains to be determined if the early learning initiative will result in a higher need for special education services. At the moment there is criteria on available space and impact on local child care needs.
- The Early Learning Division is looking on how to involve parents and improve communication.
- ECEs are registered with the college of early childhood educators. Is there a roles and responsibilities issue? Early learning will be delivered using a team approach in the classroom where each professional contributes expertise. The curriculum will have a high level description of this. The extended day portion of the program will be led by ECEs.

- A full day program depends on the needs of the child and is an ongoing conversation. SEPPB is presently working with lead boards on gathering assessment and intervention best practices.
- Responsibility for screening was raised. It remains to be determined whether this will continue to be a municipal health responsibility. Michelle undertook to consult colleagues and get back to Council.
- ECEs are employees of the board. There have been no conversations at this point whether there will be additional special education training for ECEs.
- There is no significant change anticipated about how students are supported in relation to special education.
- The Council chair noted that multidisciplinary staff enriches the learning environment. This also enhances the opportunities for re-thinking the approaches to service put in place.

**ITEM**

**Special Education Advisory  
Committees (SEACs)**

**Julie Williams  
Christine Riedel  
Fausto Iannialice**

Julie Williams, Acting Director with SEPPB, Christine Riedel, Education Officer with SEPPB and Fausto Iannialice, Data/Research Analyst with SEPPB updated Council on Special Education Advisory Committees (SEACs). Highlights included:

- Reviewed MACSE recommendations for building capacity of SEACs. (Presentation available)
- Provided ministry updates on work plan, minister memo and SEAC e-learning website.
- A work plan has been developed to respond to recommendations.
- A memo has been prepared and is in approvals.
- Christine Riedel has been identified as the SEPPB contact in all SEAC communication.
- SEPPB review of SEAC e-learning website through consultations, focus groups and survey; implementing current feedback mechanism on webpage; and utilizing webpage as an effective communication tool between SEACs and ministry.
- SEAC chairs have been asked to register themselves with Christine to ensure memos and updates from ministry regarding special education are copied to them and accessible through the site.
- SEPPB recently acquired a French Education Officer who will be working on this initiative.
- Asked for clarification/purpose of MACSE recommendation for reviewing and providing a list of special education stakeholders to ensure that all associates and organizations are listed.
- Work plan will include consultations with SEACs, school boards, MACSE, and relevant stakeholders re: communication, e-learning SEAC website and training resources. Asking MACSE for their input about consultation questions.
- Regional Office staff and MACSE members reminded of the role they can play in supporting SEAC training.
- Proposing a link on the SEAC site to the MACSE Repository public page.
- The Council chair proposed to hold a teleconference to obtain feedback on the draft consultation. Christine to meet with Alison to discuss possible dates. He also noted that the Council would have time at the next meeting in June to continue discussions.

**ITEM****Question and Answers  
Three Ministries**

Christine Hughes (MCSS)  
Jane Cleve (MCYS)  
Mary Iannuzziello (MOHLTC)

Christine Hughes, Manager with the Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS), Jane Cleve, Manager of Special Needs with the Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS) and Mary Iannuzziello, Program Consultant with the Ministry of Health and Long-term Care (MOHLTC) provided updates in advance. Highlights of questions and answers discussion included:

**Discussion:**

- Jane Cousens, Senior Policy Advisor with MTCU was unable to join us but provided us with copies of their update. Council was asked to review and forward questions to the Council secretary within two weeks.
- MCSS's focus is in the developmental services area and where they are with new legislation.
- Concerns about the communication strategy and working harder to get the message out.
- AODA material was excellent but has an error in the DVD. They have learning disability under intellectual disability. Christine will forward concern to department handling the DVDs.
- Jane Cleve represented MCYS on behalf of Susan Capling. The focus of the update was on School Health Support Services, Connections for Students, Support for children with special needs to access the Early Learning Program, and Child and Youth Mental Health.
- MOHLTC is working collaboratively on the School Health Support Services Review.

**ITEM****Review of School Health Support Services**

Mark Fam, Deloitte Inc.

Mark Fam, from Deloitte Inc., presented an overview of the project and approach to consultation:

- An overview of the project team, background and plan was provided. (Presentation available)
- Reviewed the stakeholder consultation plan, provided a preliminary overview of the evaluation framework, and discussed next steps and upcoming project activities.
- Contact information was provided for further questions.

**Discussion:**

- A baseline will be refined with input from the field and stakeholders. Coordination of service delivery is in scope for the review, funding is not. The survey will be available mid-April.
- A focus group is being held in each of the private school and home schooling communities. Deloitte is open to suggestions as they arrange to with other constituencies.
- Council was invited to share their perspective around roles, good models and the issues they identify relating to school health services.
- The SHSS review final report is anticipated by July 31 and consultation will follow. The consultation process should be in September, not August. The Council chair will formalize this advice in a letter to the ministry.



**ITEM****Transitions****All**

Ruth Jones led a discussion about making transitions more effective. Highlights included:

- Concerns about transitions and what effective transitions look like.
- Making transition planning a requirement.
- Community collaborations.
- PPM 140 addressed students with ASD.
- The Ministry of Education released a guide concerning transitions in 2002.

**Discussion:**

- Upper Grand DSB has best practices around transitions, an effective program to outreach to parents and a parent resource binder.
- Concerns around transitioning from elementary to secondary
- Union issues with transitions from grade 8 to 9. David to flag as a challenge and send comments in writing to the Council chair.
- MTCU website has a link to an update sheet. Council to have a look and send comments to the Council secretary.
- There is a lack of parental involvement in transitions that take place from Grades 7 to 12. Concern that there is seldom a real transition plan.
- Behaviour or emotional transition looks at environmental factors, overlap and a gradual preparation for the student as change can cause anxiety, etc.
- The Auditor General's report noted a need for greater accountability.
- Marlene to send a framework for essential elements to Ruth.
- Exciting to make changes around transition between grade 8 & 9, though it was noted that gifted students are exempt from the transition plan requirement.
- Students with very complex needs may require 2 to 3 years of planning to support transitions.
- Council's last paper on transitions will be circulated to members as a starting point for a new working group to begin at the next MACSE meeting.

**ITEM****MACSE Roundtable****All**

Members were asked to provide highlights from their sector. The Chair asked that members provide their highlights electronically to the Council secretary in advance of the meeting in future. These highlights will be posted on the MACSE repository.

**Pervasive Developmental Disorders/Autism (Jennifer Cantello Daw):**

- Some boards have challenges with software differences between elementary & secondary.
- Noted a project concerning differentiated instruction.
- Some schools have done a good job in implementing PPM 140.
- Supports needed for students with Aspergers Syndrome.
- Concern about accountability in relation to IEPs.

**Teachers' Assistants (Lois Parkinson):**

- Feedback is limited.
- Need standard training to be effective. PPM 140 and ABA strategies not sufficient.
- Work refusals pending. Not minimizing risk to injury.

Principals (Marlene Pike):

- Ontario Principals' Council (OPC), the Catholic Principals' Council of Ontario (CPCO) and l' Association des directions et directions adjointes des écoles franco-ontariennes (ADFO) sent out an e-mail with a brief description about MACSE. Input received.
- Central ASD team is very positive as well as the partnership with Eastern Ontario.

Medical Practitioners (Dr. Arlette LeFebvre):

- Obesity is a big issue for paediatricians.
- A recent Kaiser Family Foundation study has found that children average more than 7.5 hours each day on entertainment media.

Speech and Language Pathologists (Ruth Jones):

- Brings collaboration forms when in meetings with professional associations.
- Full day Early Learning program opportunities for language and literacy problems. Looking at how there will be a wrap around service and how we will support kids with special needs throughout the day.
- Hope that parent engagement will be enhanced.
- ABA training part of school based teams.
- IBI program will makes links for IEPs.
- A lot of talk around school health support services.
- A4 assessment tools positive. Recommendations with strengths and weaknesses at end of year.

Physical Disability (Alison Morse):

- Communication difficulties as French is compulsory. Can we follow up with Regional Office?
- Regional autism program around students with ASD and language impairments.

Trustees (Linda Ward):

- Issues include funding, medical needs of students, and the demands of parents. Some parents are looking to legal action as a remedy.
- Aware of dispute resolution program.

Multiple Exceptionalities (Tracy Grant):

- She contacts sector by e-mail, fax and phone.
- There are complex and diverse needs within this constituency.
- Provincial level interested in participating.

Gifted (David Mason):

- Suggested Council develop a map of where it sees Special Education going. The Council chair said he would take the idea to the executive committee and get back to Council.

Emotional/Behaviour Disorder (Robert Savage):

- He is in the early stages of cultivating relationships with his sector.

Psychologists (Joe Trovato):

- Bill 157 [*Education Amendment Act (Keeping Our Kids Safe At School), 2009*] and its regulations will have practical implementation issues.
- Expand ABC's of mental health.
- Expand the Ministry's website to assist high school teachers and parents.
- Use Survey Monkey in English and French.

