



**Best Start Network  
Summary Notes  
Friday, February 20, 2015  
1:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.  
The Waterfront Centre**

**Present:** Debbie Myers, Jodi Guilmette, Karen Davis, Lita Barrie, Brenda Bax, Judith Bishop, Chris Borst, Jessica Bryson, Karen Calligan, Karyn Callaghan, Shawn Chisholm, Andrew Debicki, Ruth Doherty, Marni Flaherty, Paula Forbes, Ivana Fortino, Sylvie Gravelle Aisling Higgins, Pauline Kajiura, Lisa Kiriakopoulos, Laura Lukasik, Laura Martindale, Grace Mater, Colin McMullan, Sandra Parker, Lorraine Robinson, Wanda St. Francois, Sharon Stephanian, Cheryl Velenosi, Dean Younger

**Guests:** David, Glen Cooke, John Pedder, Jeff Moore, Sarah, Cameron (Mohawk Student)

**Regrets:** Dorothy Barr-Elliot, Don Jaffray, Jean Clinton, Sgt. Jon Alsbergas, Mat Goodman, Paul Johnson, Rocco Gizzarelli, Shirley McCoy

	<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Discussion/Decision</b>	<b>Action</b>
1	Welcome/Introductions/ Review of Meeting Notes/Declaration of Conflict of Interest	<p>Debbie welcomed everyone to the meeting. As a number of guests are with us today, round-the-table introductions were made.</p> <p>There were no declarations of conflicts of interest noted.</p> <p>If there are any modifications to the January 16, 2015 minutes, please let Joyce know.</p> <p>Item # 4 on the agenda – Best Start 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations was deferred to the April meeting.</p>	
2	School Boards Presentations	<p>The two English School Boards (Catholic and Public) are presenting this afternoon. It is hoped that the French School Boards will present at a later date with regards to Francophone services.</p> <p>Sharon and Ivana provided the context for their presentation on the Board’s approach to supporting young parents. They indicated the information will integrate what is happening in schools with resource staff and how it is connected with the community. The Boards work in partnership with community agencies to best serve young parents. The guests will provide the day-to-day information and inspirations of what is happening in the school boards. The presentation will build upon the presentations which occurred at the January Best Start Network meeting. They will also discuss alternative programs, adult education and the barriers and challenges they are hearing from young parent students.</p>	<p>Please see the presentation slides for additional information.</p> <p>Please e-mail Ivana or Sharon if you have any suggestions on how, as a community, we can provide support and remove barriers for young parents.</p>

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		<p>Sarah, a teacher at Grace Haven – The Salvation Army, indicated that the school board works with the Salvation Army to provide child care, community supports for young parents and education via the school board. Education is provided Monday to Thursday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Typically, 5 students graduate every June. Generally there are 30 students at any given time and about 60 in total throughout the school year. The students are transitioned to other programs. The intake process is continuous and the students work independently at their own pace. Workshops are offered to support parenting needs. Other classes, such as addictions and pre-natal classes, are provided for those students who require them.</p> <p>John, a teacher at St. Martin’s Manor – Catholic Family Services, stated a similar program is offered through the Catholic Board. There are 2 teachers on-site and they tap into other school resources as needed. There is an alternative program offered at St. Jean de Brébeuf Catholic Secondary School. A good relationship has also been developed with St. Thomas More Catholic School. The girls are encouraged to contact the school once they know they are pregnant. Many drop out and then it is difficult to get them back into the system. There is cross-collaboration between Grace Haven and St. Martin’s Manor. Grace Haven has a wonderful art program. Subsidized child care is available on-site. Some students have children in the child care centre and are going to Mohawk College. Attachments are built into the school day through access to resource personnel such as addiction counsellors and others who support the development of healthy relationships, etc.</p> <p>Sharon indicated that the students’ needs are met in the location that can best meet their needs. There is a great deal of collaboration with community programs and services. It is a great example of seamlessness between programs. The key to the provision of secondary school supports is flexibility and what programs make the most sense and how the school boards can best support the student.</p> <p>Ivana indicated the school boards have created safe, inclusive environments where a significant adult is in the building with whom the young parent students can consult. Through a grant, Student Success Teachers are able to reach out to students who are struggling, not only academically but also to help with any underlying issues. Attendance is generally a flag when someone starts to not attend school. Students are connected to a guidance counsellor who remains their counsellor for the entire 4 years they are in school.</p> <p>There are school alternative programs unique to each board; one is in the school and one is outside in the community (i.e. Wilma’s Place).</p>	

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		<p>Sharon discussed the traditional structure for high school which is 4 subjects and 70-minute classes. For some students, that structure works well and others benefit from the in-house alternative programs that are available in all secondary schools. The alternative programs look and feel differently and are tailored to the needs of the student. It could be ½ day in the alternative program and ½ a day in school or it could be ½ day in the alternative program and ½ day out of school in a community placement.</p> <p>Supervised Alternative Learning (SAL) is a provincial process that a young person goes through which allows the school boards to legally adjust them from a full-time to part-time basis. The Guidance counsellor and social workers help students determine the best fit for a program.</p> <p>Ivana shared information on Wilma’s Place which is an alternative education program for all students in the board. The material is provided to the student through an independent learning centre and offers a flexible timetable. Other community supports can be accessed. The student can be deemed full-or part-time. Some of the other supports found in schools are support closets that provide clothing, diapers, etc. and breakfast programs. There are some students who complete their 40 hours of community service by volunteering at the breakfast program and then have breakfast themselves after dropping their child off at the child care centre.</p> <p>The boards collaborate with the community on pilot projects such as the Nurse Family Practitioners Project which is a grassroots initiative with both boards participating and looking at ways to best meet the students’ needs. David shared information on the Nurse Family Practitioners Project. Sir John A. MacDonald and Cathedral are involved. Thirty-one percent of youth don’t have a family doctor. The project has an interdisciplinary approach that includes a nurse practitioner, addictions counsellor from Alternatives for Youth (AY), new women immigrant outreach, public health, newcomer health, Family Health Team, direct psychiatric support which they hope will be provided on-site in the future. Often physical ailments mask other issues, i.e.: mental health, etc. The program is well utilized.</p> <p>There are three secondary schools where child care is provided on-site. Students with a child are given first right of entry into the child care program. Child care subsidy is available and is a positive factor in helping young women to re-enter school. The intent is to build a community supporting young parents helping them balance their educational needs with family/personal needs.</p>	

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		<p>Glenn provided information on targetted supports for young parents. SAL allows greater flexibility for absenteeism (i.e. their child is sick). In other programs, there is a 15-day clause that if students miss that many days consecutively, they are no longer considered a student. Attendance expectations are different and there is a monthly check-in with a significant adult. A plan is developed and connections with community agencies are formalized.</p> <p>The Young Fathers’ Course looks at what it means to be a dad, what roles dads play, etc. Many of the students came from single families and have not had a father-figure in their lives. There were 23 students who took the Program in the first session while the original vision was directed at male students, some girls also took the course.</p> <p>The goal of SAL is to get students to attend more school. One class per day, per week to going back to traditional school is too big a jump for many students. SAL provides more direct adult contact and a scaffolding to return to traditional school. If the student is not coming to a school location, there are outreach teams that will meet the student in community locations such as Tim Hortons, library, etc. It is looking at the young person and their needs and comfort level.</p> <p>Jeff provided information on the Fast Track Program, PLAR and Hybrid night school. Fast Track began in September and many of the students are new moms. The culture of the classroom allows for flexibility. With the Fast Track Program, a student can earn up to 25 credits in one year and for older students, they don’t have to sit in a classroom with younger students.</p> <p>PLAR which stands for Prior Learning and Recognition is for students who haven’t been in school for a while and don’t have a lot of credits. It allows life learning to apply to their credits. To be eligible, the individual must be 18 or older and have been out of school for at least 1 year. The student is then assessed and can get up to 16 credits for life learning (i.e.: parenting a child, etc.) In the Catholic Board, PLAR can also happen on location at Angela’s Place, maternity programs, etc.</p> <p>Hybrid Night School is for students who have responsibilities (i.e.: sickness of a child, parental duties, appointments, etc.) It allows students to be in a classroom in person, however, the classes are also online. Students can watch a video of a teacher doing a lesson and keep up with assignments when they aren’t able to make the class in person.</p>	

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		<p>Ivana stated that St. Charles Adult Continuing Education offers a PSW (Personal Support Worker) and a culinary course that transitions the adults' learning into a shorter span so they can get into the workplace quicker.</p> <p>David shared a new program at Sir John A. MacDonald through funding received by MCYS. Seventy-seven percent of young teen parents are involved with child welfare. The Board pays for the teacher. It is for young parents who have difficulty being in school regularly. They have made the program as universal as possible. Some of the students are expecting, others have children who are in the program or in the care of the society. They have integrated the program so the students receive credits for learning and for interest-based learning (i.e. parenting). The program is staffed by a teacher and DECE and the classroom is child-safe and friendly. The program supports the student beyond the school classroom and provides learning opportunities on grocery shopping, banking, etc. with their child. The program is only 2 weeks old and will likely have 18 students (12 who weren't in school and 6 who are being transferred from regular school). The program provides the option of having the young mom attend school with her child in the same place. There is a high incidence rate of teen pregnancy in the north end so most students are from Sir John A. MacDonald but it is open to all students in Hamilton. The curriculum was developed locally. There is a nutrition program and clothing closet in the school. They are trying to integrate all aspects so that other students can see what it takes to be a parent. A number of barriers experienced by young parents were discussed.</p> <p>Young parents are a small percentage of the overall student population, however, it is important to build services around the needs of young parents particularly as it is affecting 2 lives at the same time. Targetting services and offering courses that can lead to employment in the care industry is key. Early Childhood Education could be an option as they have a vested interest in children through being a parent themselves.</p> <p>A thank you was extended to all the presenters.</p>	
3	Early Development Instrument (EDI) / Kindergarten Parent Survey (KPS)	Chris indicated that this is the 5 <sup>th</sup> city-wide implementation of the EDI. The implementation is different from the past. Previously, it was a research project of the Offord Centre and funded by MCYS. Presently it is being implemented through the Boards and the data gathering is being funded by MCYS. The roll-out will be at the provincial level first and then move down to the local level. The goal is to get the data as soon as possible, however, it will not likely be available until January 2016.	Please see the attached presentation slides for additional information.

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		<p>Now that full-day kindergarten has been implemented, it was noted that there may be differences between how a teacher versus ECE rates the child. In 2016 a pilot will take place to further examine these differences.</p> <p>Although there were plans to conduct a local KPS this year, the Ministry of Education will not permit linking the KPS to the EDI so it was decided not to proceed with the KPS this year but to include it as part of the 2016 pilot instead.</p>	
4	Best Start 10 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations	This item will be discussed at the April meeting.	
5	Children’s Charter of Rights	<p>Marni and Cheryl presented information on the Children’s Charter of Rights which is part of the work of the Parent and Family Engagement Committee. Part of the process is getting the voices of children and a sub-committee has been formed to guide this process. Karyn Callaghan is providing support to the process but they are also looking for additional support from others.</p> <p>A professional learning occurred on February 3<sup>rd</sup> with Karyn and several others. There will be 3 or 4 call-outs to elicit participation. They have divided the art by age. The deadline is May 30<sup>th</sup> but it has been extended to August 15<sup>th</sup> for summer camps. They are hoping to launch the Children’s Charter during the Week of the Child &amp; Youth.</p>	
6	Other Business	<p>Grace indicated that there was an editorial piece submitted to the Hamilton Spectator outlining the important need for local child care spaces by Judith Bishop. She made a plea for more local investment and requested the opportunity to make a presentation to the City Emergency Committee.</p> <p>The Special Needs Resourcing Review Report will be presented to the City’s Committee and Council on Monday for approval and will proceed with an implementation strategy. The Report will be posted on the Hamilton Best Start website.</p>	
7	Adjourned	<p><b>There is no meeting scheduled for March.</b></p> <p><b>Please note:</b> Next Meeting is scheduled for:  <b>Friday, April 17, 2015</b>  <b>The Waterfront Centre (555 Bay St., Hamilton, ON)</b>  <b>1:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.</b></p>	