

COALITION FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Minutes of August 27, 1998

Present: Patty Gillis; Orville Endicott; Janet Budgell; Lori Olivier; Linda Till; Rick Tutt; Susan Howson; Susan Blekkenhorst; Claudio Battaglin; Nancy Rother; Shelley Paul; Deam McKennit; Genia Stevens; Marilyn Dolmage; David Jory; Pat Worth.

1. Approval of Agenda
2. Approval of the minutes of May 30 & 31
3. Business arising from the minutes.

YIO STRATEGY

Claudio reported that not too much could be done over the 4 summer. A "Youth quake" is planned for the end of the summer having workshops geared at leadership training, networking and partying. YIO will be offering free memberships in order to enlarge the network. The annual conference will be on October 30/31 (see appendix 1 for announcement & newsletter) - a Coalition presence would be appreciated. YIO has talked with OACL about having a planning & strategy meeting with interested parties to review their vision and examine resources - this will include people from the Coalition and locals. YIO now has 2 members on the board of OACL. An Smith has been asked to put together an education "champion" or work group (see Appendix 2 for OACL resolution on Education). YIO will also be presenting at a workshop in Montreal in November and at the CACL conference. Family Alliance has made a formal statement of commitment to YIO and will give them access to their Newsletter for networking and sharing information and will get involved in facilitation of local groups.

COALITION WEBSITE

Patty reported that a site is being developed through "WEBGRRLS". We can send them info about the group through disk or E-mail (call Patty for the e-mail address). They are looking for sites to hook up with - Susan B. has sent along a list - OACL is a good site to link with. The site will be working sometime in the fall.

If anyone has ideas about a logo or graphic, let Patty know.

COALITION MEMBERSHIP

Rick presented a draft report on various ways to access & mobilize memberships (see Appendix 3). We agreed to read it and send him feedback. We need to inform the member groups/individuals that the Coalition will not send out info directly (except through the Website) but rather will provide info to member group to be included in their own newsletters or communiques.

Rick, Patty & Susan B. agreed to be a working group on communication who will determine the best way to get info out to people and will receive ideas from coalition members as to content.

Trillium offers funding for Internet access which will be explored. We discussed trying to align with others interested in quality education - info -ability, through the Ministry of Citizenship may have a listing of local groups we could connect with - OACL should let its members know which locals have joined the coalition. We affirmed that the process for joining outlined in our statement of beliefs and principles continues to be relevant except that we should specify that individuals may also join.

SECURING FUNDS FOR THE COALITION

In the interest of time, Rick distributed a report prepared by himself and Anita Bates which will be discussed at the next coalition meeting (see Appendix 4).

COORDINATION OF THE COALITION

Susan H. presented a draft job description should the coalition ever be in a financial position to hire a coordinator. This will be discussed at the next meeting (see Appendix 5).

POLITICAL ACTION

We discussed that there are many issues to deal with and that it has been hard to keep track of it all and find a "focus". We must do this especially as an election nears. Although we should be providing suggestions to member groups about what they might be doing via a letter from the Coalition chairman, as a Coalition we must also be active and not just be a committee without any direct responsibility. We reviewed our commitments from the minutes of May:

Building Allies

Marilyn will speak to Kemp about lobbying the Minister of the Child without Portfolio and connection with the Principal's association;

Susan H. has contacted the Resource Teacher Assoc. but nothing could really be discussed over the summer - she will contact them again in September - Susan will also contact Fraser Mustard;

Claudio will contact student councils in September;

Nancy will speak with Ann Smith about SEAC training on the funding model - PAAC reporting should become a regular item on our agenda;

Rick will speak to OACL regarding having a family day on inclusive ed. at their next conference;

Susan H. will speak with Sharon Watt from MTACL regarding reaching parents with children in child care, at the end of September;

YIO is looking at applying for funding for a video - video and written material will also result from the BIS gathering which was held over the past 2 days;

Rick has put together a draft checklist on inclusion (see Appendix 6). Members were asked to contact him with feedback (particularly David and Nancy). It was also suggested that Rick check out SAFE (Schools are for everyone) on the internet for content;

Patty will follow-up with Jim Hansen about the "what to say when" paper for parents;

Marilyn will investigate how parent councils might become members of the coalition;

Nancy & Marilyn will develop guidelines for parents regarding the new funding model by the end of September (see Appendix 11);

Rick, Patty & Susan will look at a way to track, through the newsletters or website, how parents & kids are being affected by the new funding model and regulation;

Rick denies agreeing to develop a coalition chain letter!

CHARTER CHALLENGE

David reviewed his idea of getting up to 1000 parents to contribute \$100/yr. in order to launch a charter challenge directed at the whole education system or special education. The fact that an election is nearing could give this tactic more significance. Both CACL and OACL have expressed support in exploring the idea (see Appendix 7) and the coalition has been given \$5000 to be used towards this kind of activity.

Janet explained that although laws and government actions can be challenged, the court doesn't like to deal with issues before they have had an impact on people and the new regulation has not yet been tested in this way. The new perspective derived from the Eldridge case indicates that the failure to accommodate could be a charter violation. A school board could be subject to a challenge as an agent of the government. There are many issues to consider - one cannot attack a piece of legislation if it can be implemented in a non-discriminatory way. So, do we go after legislation or a school board - could the funding model, policy or practice be attacked?

There is also a question of whether it would be better to launch a class action which would require all participants to have the same concerns and so the same remedy must fit everybody, or, to join actions which are similar. Class actions tend to be more relevant when the issue is gaining money, not furthering a principle.

CACL has received funding from the court Challenges Program to study the impact of the Eaton and Eldridge cases and to develop a strategy for their use (see Appendix 8). David, as CACL's rep to the coalition, will inquire as to how much money they got and what they intend to do with it.

David will draft a letter from the coalition to CACL indicating that we want to sit down and talk about where we go with this. We want to ensure that the coalition is seriously implicated in these efforts and that the focus on any future charter challenge be within Ontario. David will also speak to the President of CACL and Connie Laurin Bowie. Susan B. and Orville will participate in any meetings or discussions which may ensue as a result of the letter.

REGULATION 181/98

Janet provided a summary completed by ARCH and an ARCH alert (see Appendix 9). There are some new gains such as a new test for the IPRC and appeal boards which previously did not exist and is a bit of protection for children. If a parent can show that inclusion will benefit their child, the board must demonstrate that it cannot. The Principal of a school must prepare an IEP within one month after the IPRC with certain specific information included. Parents can now nominate anyone to the appeal board and that person, with the nominee from the school board, must agree on the chairperson. The IPRC can now provide recommendations about program and parents can be present while the IPRC is deliberating. Parents cannot appeal the recommendation of program.

Linda presented her concerns. In particular, Section 9 which allows boards to pre-place children prior to an IPRC. This placement does not have to be inclusive and cannot be appealed. The child may therefore be segregated for a time and the relative "success" of the placement could be used as an argument to keep the child segregated. This section eliminates the previous protections built into bill 82 whereby children were not moved or placed while an IPRC was pending.

It was agreed that we needed to analyze this and the other sections of the Reg very carefully in order to provide directions to parents and determine what, as a coalition, we should do in response to the sections of particular concern. The possibility of sending a joint letter from the coalition and ARCH asking for a meeting with the Minister was discussed, but we are not yet at a point of knowing what we would be asking for. The coalition and its member groups have not been on the job and have wasted a lot of time the Reg and funding model announcements were made. We must pull up our socks in order to better support families.

Linda, Marilyn, Susan B. and Pat will work on an analysis. Linda will continue to talk with ARCE.

MINISTRY'S ADVISORY COUNCIL ON SPECIAL EDUCATION

Linda and Pat presented the difficulties which they have experienced with this council. Linda, as Pat's advisor, has not been receiving copies of documents and minutes from the meeting. Pat has also been advised that Linda would not be able to attend any in camera meetings of the council. Pat has been calling Lynne Z. and Bill Wyman since min-June, but has not had his phone calls returned. And, apparently Lynn has discussed the presence of Linda at the council meetings in a less than flattering manner at a PAAC meeting.

There are 3 issues to be addressed: Firstly, Pat requires support in order to fulfill his role on the council and the council is obstructing this process and discriminating against him; Secondly, we question why there should be any in camera meetings when all information and discussions are supposed to be confidential in the first place; and thirdly, we question the entire issue of confidentiality relating to this council since if representatives are not able to consult with the people they represent, then in practice, they only represent themselves!

We will deal with the most important issue first. Pat and Patty will work together to write a letter to the Minister of Education & Training protesting the obstacles being presented to supporting Pat, mentioning the inappropriate statements made by Lynne Z at PAAC.

BUILDING INCLUSIVE SCHOOLS - FINANCIAL UPDATES AND COORDINATION

Marilyn presented a report of the proposal accepted by HRDC to fund the gathering which took place over the last 2 days and the writing of the book, along with the present financial updates (see Appendix 10). We have roughly \$22,000 for the writing and production of the book and \$15,000 for project activity with schools. The issue is one of co-ordination. Marilyn realizes that the book will require more co-ordination than originally projected and that we have committed to a draft by the end of October. Therefore, Marilyn's time should be focused on the book and phone calls from parents should be referred to representatives from the member groups.

Nancy and Marilyn had to quickly put the HRDC grant application together and along with Bruce Kappel, were the principal facilitators of the gathering. They are uncomfortable with making decisions about money for services being paid to themselves!

It was agreed that the sub-committee which previously existed to examine finances should exist once again and will be comprised of Marilyn, Nancy, Susan H. and Patty.

This group will also look at project activity which can occur for schools which are interested and how and to whom money will be allocated.

VARIA

Lakehead ACL will be invited to join the coalition. Patty will send them a letter.

NEXT MEETING

Will take place from 10:00 - 4:00 on October 30th, Friday at the YIO conference site. A meeting/hotel room will be booked at the Regal Constellation Hotel - 900 Dixon Road - 416 - 675-1500.

Members of the coalition who wish to stay on may offer to volunteer that evening. Marilyn will discuss how we can help, with the YIO conference committee. Please RSVP to Patty by October 16.

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