

# DURHAM LANGUAGE COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE MEETING

## Minutes of Meeting

DATE & TIME:	December 8, 2014 @ 1:15 P.M.
LOCATION:	Ajax Welcome Centre – 458 Fairall Street, Ajax ON L1S 1R6
ATTENDEES:	Cathy Condarcu-Sain, Dika Gajic, Cara Wallace, <b>Geraldine Ortiz (Recorder)</b> , <b>Hermia Corbette (Chair)</b> , Karen McNeil, Kathy Pittman-Feltham, Linda Smith, Paul Brown, Sharon Munro  Scott Davis, John Battista, Maria Tonon, Mitch Litvack, Shila Houshman (via teleconference)
REGRETS:	Donna Thomas, Paul Jackson, Janet MacDonald, Audrey Andrews, Grace Scire

### WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

Meeting called to order and roundtable introductions completed by attendees.

### FUNDER UPDATES

**SHILA HOUSHMAND**

Summary Of Discussion	
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- CIC officers holding language services program files and CIC supervisors now meet monthly to address language program issues and receive/provide direction. Service providers are encouraged to bring issues to their project officers for further review/input. This includes issues regarding the PBLA.
- Mourad was attending the CESBA conference where there is pre-conference ESL day and broad range of workshops and professional development opportunities (school boards).
- Scott indicated that Durham is low in the number of ESL students actually in classes. It is very important to communicate to students that it is important to come to class to improve their quality of life.

### CMAS NEWS

Summary Of Discussion	
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- No updates available at this time.

## Summary Of Discussion

An updated Language Assessment Services Report was sent by email to attendees prior to the meeting. The statistics were presented and the following was discussed:

- Numbers have decreased during November and December as per the usual seasonal fluctuations. A plan to conduct outreach to Employment Ontario centres in Durham is in the works. To date at least 7 centres have been contacted and 5 presentations have been arranged.

## OTHER UPDATES, NEWS OR BUSINESS

## Summary Of Discussion

### **Assessing and referring clients with learning disabilities and mental health issues.**

The following are some points on a discussion brought forth by Dika Gajic and Cathy Condarcu-Sain regarding identification, referral, and meeting the learning needs of persons with mental health issues and special learning needs.

- There was a discussion regarding how to best serve the needs of clients who display apparent signs of mental illness. The issue was brought forward as a result of a recent incident with a client who had a language assessment (in March 2014) and moved between schools boards until it was apparent that she could no longer attend classes due to growing concerns for the health and safety of the client and the other students.
- Assessors are not qualified to make any specific diagnoses and it can be difficult to determine during the 2-3 hour assessment, how a client's behaviour and needs may impact their learning in class or any behaviour impacting others. Disruptive behaviours also may not be exhibited all the time. A student can be under medication/treatment and not display any notable symptoms during assessment.
- In some cases a client or accompanying family members may identify a specific diagnosis or need.
- In a case where the client exhibits behaviours during a language assessment that may make learning in a typical classroom environment difficult, the assessor can provide suggestions for other/additional community services and can suggest learning options to the client that may be more conducive to their learning style/needs (where available).
- Clients who are eligible and want a language assessment and referral should not be denied this service. Assessment Centres also have a duty to accommodate wherever possible.
- With the client's consent, language assessors can and should attempt to notify the school of any specific needs identified, especially since accommodations may be needed. A note can be made in the "Comments" section in HARTs to help advise LTPs of special needs/consideration. (HARTS has confirmed that once a referral to a course has been made the LTP can see comments by assessors in the "Additional Information" field. The assessor will select a suitable comment based on the options provided in the drop down menu of the "Comments" section).
- Instructors with LTPs are also not equipped to diagnose a mental health issue. They can encourage a client to see their medical practitioner when there seems to be a need.
- Language training classes and instructors are not equipped to manage consistent disruptive behaviour in a classroom setting (no one-on-one teaching assistants or in-depth mental health training for instructors).

- A dilemma occurs when a client cannot speak English well enough to be understood by mental health practitioners or other community services but has significant mental health issues such that they can't learn effectively in the classroom to address their language barrier. Ideally there would be mental health services in multiple languages.

**Action item:**

- Hermia Corbette will invite CMHA Durham staff: Yanina Chiacho to the next meeting to address issues and concerns and to become aware of what services are covered and what resources are available in the area.
- Dika to share resources acquired through her research.
- It was asked if the funders have come across this kind of issue before and it was stated that the question would be taken back to be explored.

**HARTS Update**

Summary Of Discussion	
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An update was read to all by Karen McNeil, on behalf of Grace Scire.

- Additional training on iCARE is being provided, LTPs are encouraged to register for the webinars and ask their questions at that time.
- Two additional webinars have been added specifically for project officers.

**Durham District School Board**

Summary Of Discussion	
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- Dika indicated that school boards have contracts to negotiate so information from funders on continued funding/contracting would be appreciated as early as possible for planning.
- DCDSB Continuing Ed has a new logo which is now being used. New course guide coming out.
- MCIIT provided funding for learner awareness. Looking to do outreach/advertising
- Ajax is growing and people want to learn in their community.
- At the end of March 2015 DCDSB will be losing one classroom in the Banff Rm at the Ajax WC. This will displace 32 students which will have nowhere to go considering all other classes are currently full and the same is anticipated for April 1, 2015. Would like to work with CDCD/Ajax WC to find additional space to continue classes.
- They are facing challenges with finding appropriate and cost effective field trips for classes to attend with the CNC children.
- Partners are coming to classes to promote programs. The Whitby library will be visiting the classes this week to set students up with library cards and give an overview of services.
- Citizenship Preparation classes have been doing very well this year and many students have been successful at passing the test. Many students have come back to talk to other students about the test.
- DDSB mentioned the wonderful PD that they have had this school year, however DCDSB has no PD in budget under LINC and have not had an opportunity for PD this school year (couldn't get paid time). PD is urgently needed by staff to be kept up to date. Suggestion was to swap a few teaching days for paid PD days.

## iCARE

Summary Of Discussion	
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The following are points shared by attendees regarding their experience with iCARE.

- iCARE upload process has been found to be time consuming. Additional funding to support this function was requested. CIC advised to send requests in writing for consideration.
- Email addresses need to be double checked and "not applicable, N/A" is no longer a valid entry.
- Webinar was short and not detailed enough. It didn't address the problem of non-validating students.
- There were questions about the value of iCARE reports to LTPs and a suggestion that training on interpreting the reports is needed. Karen clarified that the purpose of iCARE was to help CIC collect and analyze data and evaluate effectiveness of programs and it wasn't designed to assist LTPs/SPOs in their planning.
- The province of Ontario is unique, as it is the only province that has a system like HARTS to support iCARE uploads and do additional tasks to assist with local and LTP reporting and planning. Any differentiations between HARTS and iCARE are because they are not parallel systems however all necessary iCARE data is collected in HARTS.

Future Meetings	
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The next meeting will be held at the **Pickering Welcome Centre:**

Thursday, April 16th, 2015 at 1:00 P.M.

Chair: Dika Gajic