



**DURHAM CATHOLIC  
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD**  
*Learning and Living in Faith*

**Minutes** of the **Special Education Advisory Committee** of the Durham Catholic District School Board which was held was held virtually via Microsoft O365 Teams Live Event.

**Present**

V. Adamo  
K. Burke  
T. Chapman  
J. McCafferty  
A. Massis

**Staff**

J. Bowyer  
S. Phoenix  
D. Mullane  
J. Abrams  
T. Ezquerra

**With Regrets**

S. Casola  
C. Nosseir

**Absent**

**SEAC Representatives**

P. Sorhaitz, Principal/Vice Principal Representative  
T. Robertson, APSSP Representative  
B. Larson, APSSP Representative  
M. Cope, CUPE Representative

**A. Call to Order**

**a.1 Acknowledgement of Traditional Territory**

**a.2 Memorials and Prayer**

Chair Adamo called the meeting to order at 7:34 p.m., offered the opening prayer and welcomed everyone to the meeting. Chair Adamo noted that quorum was not reached so the meeting would be proceeding without motions.

**B. Approval of Agenda**

**b.1 Changes to the Printed Agenda**

None

**C. Announcements**

**D. Considerations of Motion**

None

## **E. Declarations of Interest**

### **e.1 Declaration of Conflict of Interest**

None

## **F. Actions to be Taken**

### **f.2 Business Arising from the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting of April 21, 2020**

None

## **G. Presentations**

### **g.1 Review of Special Education Plan – T. Ezquerra**

Teresa Ezquerra, Student Services Consultant, provided a detailed overview of the 2020 -2021 Special Education Plan with specific mention of the sections that had changed from last year's plan (e.g., staffing, presentations SEAC members). There were no changes to the the Board's special education model or consultation process. Minor adjustments were requested by the committee prior to the Ministry's July 31 submission deadline.

### **g.2 Assistive Technology – T. Ezquerra**

Teresa Ezquerra, Student Services Consultant, provided a breakdown to the SEAC Committee of some of the data associated with the Board's use of Assistive Technology, including the number of approvals, deliveries and internal and external transfers of Assistive Technology as of March 12, 2020. She also explained the Assistive Technology Hardware and Software that are provided to special education students in the Board. Teresa walked the Committee through the Assistive Technology Distance Learning website and the list of resources available to parents and students during the school closures.

## **H. Discussion Items**

None

## **I. Delegations**

None

## **J. Notices of Motion**

None

## **K. Unfinished Business from Previous Meetings**

None

## **L. Staff Reports**

### **I.1 Coordinator's Report – T. Ezquerra**

Weekly virtual Program Support Teacher meetings continue and best practices are shared. Program Support Teachers are supporting classroom/subject teachers with Distance Learning for students with IEPs. With parental input, Program Support Teachers are creating Distance Learning plans for students with Alternative IEP goals. A Teams site has been created as a repository for shared resources. As per Ministry direction, review IPRCs will continue (virtually)

Student Services staff are providing Professional Learning Opportunities to all DCDSB employees. These include book studies, webinars, pre-recorded videos, etc on a variety of special education topics including Assistive Technology, Learning Disabilities, Mental Health, Autism and more.

Saganaska held virtual interviews this month; 3 students from DCDSB are being considered for September enrollment

### **I.2 Mental Health Report – D. Mullane**

This week is Children's Mental Health Week, celebrated across Ontario from May 4 to 10, 2020. DCDSB is acknowledging the week via social media (twitter) posts and also sharing resources with students related to daily themes, along with a daily mental health strategy, using videos created by Student Services staff. The resources are all available at this link: <https://www.dcdsb.ca/en/students/children-s-mental-health-week.aspx>

Last Monday, the Social Work team began accepting new referrals. This service is being offered in specific situations, including: students and/or parents/guardians showing signs of significant distress; students who have underlying mental health concerns and whose symptoms have been exacerbated by pandemic related issues; or students who are showing signs of mental health concerns that are significantly impacting their daily functioning and who are not connected to a community resource.

Student Services continues to explore virtual counselling and support using a platform that is compliant with privacy regulations for Regulated Health Professionals, but this has still not been determined. Student Services is also very aware of the fact that many students and families would prefer to not connect in this way and that the phone may still be a preferred option for many.

Student Services staff have developed an extensive list of PD offerings, many of them related to mental health.

A very popular option is LivingWorks START, which is a 90 minute online program that lets trainees learn suicide prevention skills. It is not considered to be a substitute for suicide intervention training, but it is a powerful tool that enables people to recognize when friends, family members, co-workers or neighbors are struggling and take meaningful actions to connect them with life-assisting caregivers. LivingWorks has temporarily reduced the price for this course, which allowed DCDSB to provide this opportunity for many staff to continue to build a suicide-safer community at DCDSB.

Other offerings are on topics such as anxiety, coping with stress, depression, substance use, self-care and so on.

### **I.3 Superintendent's Report – J. Bowyer**

#### **Catholic Education Week**

Superintendent Bowyer announced that Student Services nominated Diane Mullane, Manager, Mental Health Initiatives, Mental Health Leader for the Distinguished Catholic Educator award. This award is presented annually to a deserving person in each department.

#### **Children's Mental Health Week**

Superintendent Bowyer thanked Diane Mullane and Student Services staff for supporting the development of activities and videos in support of this week

#### **Changes to Board Administration**

Superintendent Bowyer announced the promotion of two new Superintendents – Michael O'Neill (VP at St. Mary) and Gerard Win (System Principal for Special Education at PVNCCDSB). She also announced that Mariah O'Reilly has been placed as Acting Superintendent and began on May 1, 2020. All three will officially begin their duties as Superintendents of Education on August 17, 2020.

#### **OECTA Collective Agreement – Supports for Students**

Superintendent Bowyer provided details on the outcome for Student Services from the ratification of the OECTA Collective Agreement.

The new collective agreement provided for the following staffing enhancements:

Elementary – additional 8.3 PST teachers

- Elementary (8.3 PSTs)
  - Creation of a third EIC classroom to serve North Oshawa and Whitby
  - Significant support provided to schools based on an data driven model
    - Number of IEPs in general
    - Number of students requiring support of an EA
    - Number of Educational Assistants
    - Amount of System Level Support required
    - Resulted in the hiring of an addition 7.0 PST

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Secondary – additional 30 sections

- Secondary (30 Sections) – divided per school
  - One additional K course – to run Work Experience course
  - Two additional sections – to run Step program
  - One additional section – to run UP Math (Learning Strategies class)
  - All Saints and St. Mary – expected to run an additional learning strategies class

### **Distance Learning Updates**

Superintendent Bowyer advised that the Board continues to progress in terms of addressing the individual needs of students with IEPs. She also shared that Student Services staff have been taking advantage of the opportunity to provide professional development opportunities at all levels of the organization as the Board continues to plan for all possible eventualities – full return, partial/staggered return, no return. These plans will address considerations for vulnerable students (e.g., students who are immuno-compromised).

## **M. Association Reports**

### **VOICE for the Deaf and Hearing Impaired – V. Adamo**

#### **VOICE CONFERENCE – Rescheduled to Oct 2&3 2020**

The annual conference will be held October 2 & 3 (October 2 is geared to professionals) The theme is ‘EMPOWERING PARTNERSHIPS.’ VOICE would like to celebrate how the collaborative teamwork of parents, teachers, LSL Specialists, AV Therapists, audiologists, doctors, etc. support families with their journey  
Information is available on the website. <https://www.voicefordeafkids.com/Events>

**GREAT WOLF LODGE** ( this is a members only event)  
Sadly this has been cancelled at this time.

#### **VOICE CAMP August 7 to 9 at Bark Lake Leadership Centre**

The decision on whether or not camp will happen this year is expected to be made Mid June. Attending this two night weekend getaway will give parents the opportunity to interact and meet other families who have children with hearing loss and kids and teens have the chance to spend a fun-filled weekend together. Meals and accommodations are included in the registration cost, as well as:

- Workshops for parents
- Camp activities for children (led by camp instructors)
- Access to Sandy Beach (with lifeguards present)
- Saturday Movie Night (and snacks!)

Information is available on the website. <https://www.voicefordeafkids.com/Events>

**THE GIFT OF HEARING FUND – Deadline extended to June 30**

VOICE has set up a fund to give back to our members who require financial assistance in order to obtain an upgrade for their child's hearing technology. This technology includes hearing aids, cochlear implants, and other primary hearing related devices that the child wears. If your family requires assistance please check the requirements and if you are eligible, send a completed application package by June 30th 2020  
<https://www.voicefordeafkids.com/Academic-Scholarships>

The Louise Crawford Scholarship 2020

This scholarship is for VOICE Members who are entering an accredited College or University in the Fall of 2020. .

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT THE WEBSITE

<https://www.voicefordeafkids.com/Academic-Scholarships>

Looking for some helpful resources to educate your school or work place on hearing loss? Check out our [Resources](#) page for more information and communication tips!

## **N. Correspondence**

None

## **O. Inquiries and Miscellaneous**

None

## **P. Pending Items**

None

## **Q. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 9:16 p.m.

## **R. Closing Prayer**

The closing prayer was offered by V. Adamo

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Valerie Adamo  
Chair, Special Education  
Advisory Committee

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Janine Bowyer  
Resource, Special Education  
Advisory Committee

Recording Secretary: Candice Cavalier