



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

Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Durham Catholic District School Board

April 6, 2021 at 7:30 PM EST

Virtual Meeting

Present:

V. Adamo (Chair, VOICE for the Hearing Impaired), K. Burke (Vice Chair, Learning Disabilities Ontario, joined at 7:45 p.m.), J. McCafferty (Trustee), J. Oldman (Trustee), W. Heeney (Durham Down Syndrome Association, joined at 7:40 p.m.), C. Nossier (Grandview Children's Centre)

Staff Present:

S. Lee-Fernandes (Superintendent of Education), D. Mullane (Mental Health Leader), J. Abrams (Chief Psychologist), S. Phoenix (Manager, Social Work and Attendance) H. Killoran (Consultant for Autism Services), A. Roffey (Communications)

SEAC Representatives:

L. Wardle (Principal/Vice Principal Representative), T. Robertson (APSSP Representative), M. Cope (CUPE Representative)

1. Call to Order

- 1.1. Land Acknowledgement
- 1.2. Memorials and Prayer

Chair Adamo called the meeting to order at 7:37 p.m. and offered the opening prayer. She welcomed everyone to the meeting. Chair Adamo noted that quorum was not reached so the meeting would be proceeding without motions.

- 1.3. Roll Call and Apologies

2. Approval of Agenda

- 2.1. Changes to the printed Agenda
None

3. Announcements

None

4. Considerations of Motion

None

5. Declarations of Interest

5.1. Declaration of Conflict of Interest

None

6. Actions to be Taken

6.1. Business arising from the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting of March 2, 2021

None

7. Presentations

7.1. Budget Overview - R. Putnam

Superintendent Putnam reported that the Durham Catholic School Board continues to keep a Balanced Budget Framework and has addressed the pandemic investments and various impacts through a combination of Federal and Provincial government funding and the use of reserves.

Superintendent Putnam presented a detailed summary of the Special Education budget and advised that the Board is very supportive of special education.

Superintendent Putnam answered questions as they arose and offered to return in May if a follow up is required.

7.2. Ventilation/Air Quality in Schools – S. Grieve

Supervisory Officer Grieve provided a detailed breakdown of the measures that have been put in place in regards to personal protective equipment for staff and students, hand sanitizers, and increased disinfecting and cleaning.

Supervisory Officer Grieve also informed that Provincial funding was provided to improve heating, ventilation and air conditioning in the schools. Additional funding included the upgrading to higher efficiency filters and HEPA filter air purifiers.

Federal government funding will be forthcoming to eligible projects encompassing occupational health and safety, facility improvements; including air quality and

water filling stations, enhancing physical distancing and facilitating distance learning (network and broadband infrastructure).

Supervisory Officer Grieve responded to questions as they arose.

7.3. Autism Updates – H. Killoran

Helen Killoran, Consultant for Autism Services, informed that both Elementary and Secondary schools recognized World Autism Awareness Day today, Tuesday, April 6th. The DCDSB schools tweeted pictures of their front foyer displays and virtual classroom participation. A few of the displays were shared with the Committee. A prize will be awarded to the most creative display submitted.

Helen shared that the Durham Catholic Autism Resource Team (DCART) continues to support the student referral from both Elementary and Secondary panels in the various areas. Additional supports for students who do not qualify for DCART services have been provided by the Consultant and Resource Teacher for Autism Services. The objective is to further develop capacity building in the school, while supporting the Program Support Teachers in their roles as Special Education Leaders, offer professional development to educators and support the implementation of PPM140. Helen provided a detailed summary of the various professional development opportunities offered for educators; including the Geneva Centre Ministry Course, Promoting Emergence of Advanced Knowledge (PEAK) and Autism Behaviour Assessment courses.

Helen also shared a number of programs that DCDSB currently offers for virtual learning and reported that they have been well attended all year.

Helen communicated that a new committee of 16 PSTs has formed to create a document to support teachers on the development of Alternative Curriculum.

8. Discussions Items

None

9. Delegations

None

10. Notices of Motions

None

11. Unfinished Business from Previous Meeting

None

12. Staff Reports

12.1. Coordinator's Report – H. Killoran

Quadmester 3 ends April 9, 2021 and the electronic Report Card distribution will happen on April 23rd.

New PST mentoring series continued with a presentation on Understanding Applied Behaviour Analysis.

The Student Services staff provided Sharing of Excellence workshops on the following topics:

- Principles of ABA: Generalization – Part 1 and 2
- A5 is Against the Law

12.2. Mental Health Leader's Report - D. Mullane

During the month of March, Student Services advertised a **Student Services Spring Workshop Series for Program Support Teachers and Administrators**. Eleven optional workshops have been offered between March and June by Psychological Services staff, Speech-Language Pathologists and members of the Durham Catholic Behaviour Resource Team (DCBRT). This is in addition to the regular Sharing of Excellence workshops that are ongoing.

During the month of March, Student Services ran a Mental Health Poster Contest. 267 posters were received from students in grades 1 to 11. The students were asked to focus on positive mental health themes, (e.g., what it means to 'be well'; help-seeking; how to help a friend; stomping out stigma; positive ways of coping; or the connection between physical and mental health). Winning submissions will be used to create a board-wide poster and will be featured throughout Children's Mental Health Week in May. Winners will receive a gift card and all participants will receive a certificate.

After a successful first run of a new virtual group called **TRAILS to Wellness: Coping with COVID**, two Social Workers are ready to take on a bigger project by offering it as a virtual series to grade 7 and 8 students throughout the board. All parents have been invited to attend an information session on April 20, 2021. The series will provide psychoeducation to students to help them learn and practice healthy strategies for managing feelings of stress, low-mood, or increased worry, especially related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Currently, the DCDSB is engaged in two projects with the Canadian Centre on Substance Use & Addictions (CCSA)

1. The DCDSB has entered into a partnership with CCSA along with two other school boards to develop four training modules that address issues of concern for educators. Our boards will be piloting the modules and informing the content as they're being developed. These modules will help to build capacity of our educators, with the intention of further scaling up to meet the needs of educators with other school boards across jurisdictions in Canada.
2. DCDSB, DDSB and KPRDSB have also partnered with the CCSA, Ontario Addiction Treatment Centres, and Lakeridge Health (Pinewood Centre) to host a **Virtual Expert Panel event** on April 21, 2021 at 7:00 pm. The panel will be discussing youth substance use and how current events, including the pandemic and Opioid Crisis, are impacting youth and the choices they are making regarding drugs. Interested participant must register to attend (via link on attached poster).

On April 28, 2021, the **Durham Catholic Parent Involvement Committee (DCPIC)** is hosting a virtual parent conference featuring keynote speaker Aubrey Noronha, who will focus on coping with stress, loneliness and isolation related to COVID. Aubrey is a popular speaker and a DCDSB graduate. The event will be announced within the next week.

Planning for **Children's Mental Health Week**, which takes place during the first week of May, is well underway. Student Services has been co-planning with our Faith Department to merge the Catholic Education Week theme of Nurturing Hope, with the Board-selected theme of gratitude. Principals will receive an integrated package of "ready-to-go" resources and materials, so that they're not trying to juggle these two important weeks.

12.3. Superintendent's Report - S. Lee-Fernandes

Superintendent Lee-Fernandes shared Health and Safety updates and drew attention to the increased expectations of the staff regarding personal protective equipment as well as the increased strain on the staff coverage for absences related to Covid-19 as a result of the new Durham Region Public Health requirements for testing and isolation.

Superintendent Lee-Fernandes also shared the planning for the 2020-2021 school year and highlighted that the DCDSB will be offering a virtual learning option through the Durham Catholic Virtual Elementary School (DCVES). This will be a one-year trial to determine the possible benefits of

running a virtual school moving forward. Students selecting this option will be required to remain in the virtual setting for the full year.

Superintendent Lee-Fernandes communicated that the Student Services Department has been working diligently to review and update the information provided on the “Student Services and Special Education” webpages. The information and images are being reviewed through an equity lens to ensure sensitivity and diversity in the images and the language used as well as being AODA compliant.

Superintendent Lee-Fernandes noted that the Student Services Department is currently reviewing the Special Education Plan for 2022-2022 and that the plan will also be moving to a web-based format which will provide succinct and clear information for everyone to access and understand.

In regard to continuing to support students with special needs, Superintendent Lee-Fernandes alluded to key mindsets as preparations are underway for the new school year.

13. Association Reports

Learning Disabilities Association – Durham Chapter – K. Burke

Meetings or Conferences:

March 3 Children and Adults with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (CHADD) webinar Your Next Steps: College and Career Prep for Young Adults with ADHD – An exploration of strategies to support key areas of independent living including social skills, goal setting, time management and effective communication.

March 5 & 6 LDAO Halton Hills Chapter 10th Solutions for Learning Conference online

March 11 Integra Understanding Memory and Learning Disabilities online

New Programs or Services:

LDADR is pleased to announce that this year we are able to offer paid attendance to 10 educators in the Durham Region to attend the LDAO Summer Institute online, August 16 and 17. Stay tuned for further details!

Autism Ontario - S. Casola

Upcoming Meetings or Conferences:

We have a number of excellent webinars available “on demand” on our website:

<https://www.autismontario.com/programs-services/webinars/recent-and-upcoming-webinars>

New Programs or Services:

We have a number of distance program offerings – primarily virtual workshops being offered in Durham Region – all can be found here:

https://www.autismontario.com/events?custom_325=Durham&event_type_id=All

March Break funding will not be offered in March due to the moving of March Break to April. Still pending update from MCCSS about if funds will be available during “April Break” – please check out www.autismontario.com for details soon.

Grandview Kids – C. Nossier

New Programs or Services:

- Grandview Kids received funding to open a Complex Care Clinic for clients with complex medical needs.
- The clinic is set to open as early as April 2021, in partnership with Lakeridge Health, Sick Kids Hospital and the Central East LHIN.

Other Information:

- School-Based Rehab: We are continuing to connect with schools for students who were identified as having high needs, usually related to safety and/or equipment needs.
- Service is provided in person, in-centre, in-school or virtually.
- We continue to work with the SERTs and principals to coordinate for access to space in schools if it is safe to do so.
- COVID-19: Families/caregivers can request in-person services if they wish to receive care face-to-face. Therapists/clinicians will honour these requests.
- We have implemented extensive, evidence-based COVID-19 protocols to enable the delivery of safe, in-Centre care.
- New Build: Three RFP finalists were announced for our New Build, who are invited to submit their bid to design, build and finance the project. More information in our [Winter 2021 New Build update](#).

- The New Grandview Kids will support the seamless and coordinated provision of family-centred care for children and youth with physical, communication and developmental needs.

- It will be an open, welcoming and inclusive community-based paediatric facility, supporting an integrated mix of rehabilitation, medical and clinical services, as well as education and research activities.

- Our member association, Empowered Kids Ontario (EKO), recently launched its 2021 scholarship program. All the background information in terms of eligibility and application process are in the attached flyer.

14. Correspondence

- Hastings and Prince Edward District School Board dated February 19, 2021

15. Inquiries and Miscellaneous

None

16. Pending Items

None

17. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:09 p.m.

18. Closing Prayer

The closing prayer was offered by V. Adamo

Valerie Adamo
Chair, Special Education Advisory Committee

Susie Lee-Fernandes
Superintendent of Education

Recording Secretary: Delfina Pinto