



**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 virtually via Microsoft O365 Teams Live Event on Tuesday, December 8, 2020 at 7:30 p.m.

Present

V. Adamo (Chair)
K. Burke
J. McCafferty
C. Nosseir
I. Massis

Staff

S. Lee-Fernandes
H. Killoran
J. Abrams
C. Congrady
A. Roffey
S. Phoenix

With Regrets

T. Chapman
S. Casola
D. Mullane

Absent

L. McLellan

SEAC Representatives

P. Sorhaitz, Principal/Vice Principal Representative
B. Larson, APSSP Representative
M. Cope, CUPE Representative
K. Boyer-Miller, OECTA Representative

A. Call to Order

a.1 Acknowledgement of Traditional Territory

a.2 Memorials and Prayer

Chair Adamo called the meeting to order at 7:31 p.m. and offered the opening prayer. She welcomed everyone to the meeting.

B. Approval of Agenda

b.1 Changes to the Printed Agenda

None

b.2 Approval of Agenda

Motion No. SS-2020-12-08-01
Approval of Agenda

Moved by K. Burke, seconded by J. McCafferty

“THAT the Special Education Advisory Committee approve the agenda of the Tuesday, December 8, 2020 meeting, as printed.”

CARRIED

C. Announcements

None

D. Considerations of Motion

None

E. Declarations of Interest

e.1 Declaration of Conflict of Interest

None

F. Actions to be Taken

f.1 Approval of Minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting of November 3, 2020

Motion No. SS-2020-12-08-02
Approval of Minutes

Moved by I. Massis, seconded by C. Nosseir

“THAT the Special Education Advisory Committee approve the Minutes of the November 3, 2020 meeting, as submitted.”

CARRIED

f.2 Business Arising from the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting of November 3, 2020

None

G. Presentations

g.1 Mind Up Student Experience– S. Phoenix

Shelley Phoenix, Manager of Social Work and Child Youth Counsellors/Chief Attendance Officer, provided a detailed overview of Mind Up Student Experience initiated by Shar Mercier, Child and Youth Counsellor with the Durham Catholic District School Board. She shared data drawn from a survey completed by secondary students containing questions related to their Mind Up experience. The data showed overall positive feedback. Shelley responded to questions as they arose.

H. Discussion Items

h.1 Review of Special Education Data Including IEPs – S. Lee-Fernandes

Superintendent Lee-Fernandes highlighted the Student Services delivery model and shared data pertaining to the number of students with IEPs and IPRC decisions. Christine Congrady, Student Services Coordinator, presented additional data pertaining to the percentages of students with EA support, a breakdown of diagnosis and the number of AT devices. Questions and comments were responded to by Superintendent Lee-Fernandes and Christine Congrady as they arose.

I. Delegations

None

J. Notices of Motion

None

K. Unfinished Business from Previous Meetings

None

L. Staff Reports

I.1 Coordinator's Report – H. Killoran

The monthly virtual Program Support Teacher meetings and mentoring have continued. The meetings include an Alternative Curriculum Segment to support professional development in alternative programming and a committee of PSTs will be developing a bank of alternative IEP comments. Monthly mentoring sessions for new Program Support Teachers are to continue. The November presentation to mentees addressed Psychoeducational Assessments and Speech and Language Assessments, while mentors engaged with the Coordinators in professional development centered upon how to lead a guided conversation with mentees.

Important Dates

- Quadmester 2 began November 13, 2020
- Quadmester 2 Secondary IEPs went home December 3, 2020

Autism

A selected number of Student Services staff took part in the Geneva Centre for Autism Online Symposium in November. The After-School Social Skills Program expanded to offer Secret Agent Society Classes to students in Grades 4 to 8 and the Friendship Lab continue to run online.

The Geneva Centre is once again offering the online Sonderly Courses for ABA. Registration will open in January for all staff.

Student Services staff have provided Sharing of Excellence Workshops on the following topics:

- Alternative IEP Goals for Students with ASD
- Boom Cards
- LessonPix Online Visual Supports
- General Language and Learning Strategies for Students with Language Challenges
- Structured Work – Small group discussion
- Principles of ABA: Data Collection – a two-part series

Lexia

Lexia is a research-proven, foundational reading skills program that provides explicit, systematic and personalized learning and reading instruction. The program targets skill gaps as they emerge and provides teachers with the data and student-specific resources they need for individual or small group instruction, including virtual learning applications. The LexiaCore5 Reading supports educators in providing differentiated literacy instruction for students in grades K-5 and Lexia Power-Up Literacy supports non-proficient adolescent readers in grades 6 and up.

Lexia's adaptive blended learning model includes: independent, student driven learning, assessment without testing and resources for instruction and practice. The DCDSB offered 6 Lexia training sessions for Program Support Teachers throughout October and November. Student Services purchased and assigned 500 licenses to designated students to access the learning tool under the direction of the PSTs. Currently, 6 secondary and 38 elementary, including both campuses of virtual schools offer Lexia.

Assistive Technology

Each school will be provided with a bank of Chromebooks assigned to the Program Support Department. The laptops will support students with special education needs and may be used for Lexia, students being considered for an Assistive Technology referral or as a loaner if a student's device is being repaired. 305 Chromebooks have been ordered and will be assigned to schools based on school needs and overall student population. The devices are expected to be received, imaged and delivered to the schools following the Christmas holidays.

The DCDSB hopes to continue to add to this bank of PST devices each year as the Student Services budget permits.

I.2 Mental Health Report – D. Mullane (as presented by C. Congrady)

Over the last few weeks, our Child and Youth Counsellors have been actively promoting a new resource in their schools called **Faith and Wellness: A Daily Mental Health Resource**. The resource was co-created by the Ontario English Catholic Teachers Association (OECTA) and School Mental Health Ontario (SMHO). This resource is a repository of high-quality everyday mental health practices that can be easily incorporated into classroom routines. The practices are organized around the six common elements of effective evidence-based social-emotional learning (SEL) programs.

On Friday, November 27, 2020, Student Services was able to provide an ASIST Tune-UP for some of the staff at our alternative education site, Fr. Don MacLellan. This was for staff members who had been previously trained in ASIST. Those who had not been previously trained, took part in the online module, LivingWorks Start to increase suicide alertness.

Our updated suicide protocols and new self-injury guide have now been shared with all Administrators and others in a gatekeeper role. Additionally, principals were provided with an awareness-level presentation, which they were asked share with ALL staff at staff meetings in November or December.

Following a request from the Student Senate, our Social Workers are currently in the process of creating introduction videos, which will be shared with all Secondary students and posted on school websites. This is to increase student awareness of the role of the SW and access to their services.

On December 2nd, 50 DCDSB classrooms (gr 7-12) participated in an expert panel discussion: Your Drug Questions Answered. The focus was on discussing youth substance use and how current events including the Opioid Crisis, and COVID 19 are impacting youth and the choices they are making regarding drugs.

Diane Mullane, MHL, has recently joined a provincial cross-sectorial initiative to work on co-creating a better framework for working together across our multiple sectors. Part of the work is to define "who does what" - and through this process we are trying to emphasize the role of schools in mental health promotion, prevention, and early intervention. The commitment is to co-develop a framework document and related tools.

On January 29, 2020, the Youth Suicide Prevention Action Group is hosting an event called, **It Takes a Village: Creating a Suicide Safer Community in Durham Region**. This event is intentionally scheduled on the day after Bell Let's Talk Day and will feature a keynote speaker, as well as a launch of some new resources. The target audience for this event is agency front-line staff.

I.3 Superintendent's Report – S. Lee-Fernandes

Discretionary Suspensions up to Gr. 3

Through Bill 197, COVID-19 Economic Recovery Act, 2020, the government eliminated discretionary suspensions listed in subsection 306(1) of the Education Act for students from Kindergarten to Gr. 3. Research shows that when young children, many of whom are still learning classroom coping skills, are suspended from school at an early age and with great frequency, the impact can be academic failure and even leaving school early. Any activity listed in subsection 306(1) that is motivated by bias, prejudice or hate based on any Human Rights Code grounds will still be subject to mandatory suspensions, pending investigation results. Some of the activities in subsection 306(1) include:

- Uttering a threat to inflict serious bodily harm on another person
- Swearing at a teacher or at another person in a position of authority
- Committing an act of vandalism that causes extensive damage to school property at the pupil's school or to property located on the premises of the pupil's school
- Bullying
- Any other activity that is an activity for which a principal may suspend a pupil under a policy of the board.

Motion No. SS-2020-12-08-03

Approval of the December 8, 2020 Verbal Coordinator, Mental Health Leader and Superintendent Reports

Moved by I. Massis, seconded by C. Nosseir

“THAT the Special Education Advisory Committee accept the verbal Coordinator, Mental Health Leader and Superintendent Reports at the December 8, 2020 meeting.”

CARRIED

Special Incident Portion (SIP)

As per the memo from November 2, 2020, the Ministry of Education has temporarily adjusted the Special Incidence Portion (SIP) allocation process for the 2020-2021 school year. Boards may be relieved of administrative work related to claims submission process while still ensuring that they are properly resourced to support students with special education needs through a board-by-board allocation. Further information and direction from the Ministry is forthcoming.

Covid-19 Update

Durham Region is currently in the Red Zone – control phase. Consequently, the Board has moved to a Work from Home option based on the ability to continue to offer full services to students. The Student Services Department has an updated COVID-19 Health and Safety Plan with adjusted guidelines regarding number of schools visited in a week. There is some impact to service delivery but overall, students are being served to the fullest extent while following health and safety expectations.

School Team Meetings and Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) continue to be held virtually in most cases. Some challenges with engagement, attendance and levels of achievement are being addressed.

The DCDSB continues to support with early intervention strategies, focus on school climate and student well-being.

Right to Read

On October 3, 2019, the OHRC announced a public inquiry into potential human rights issues that affect students with reading disabilities in Ontario's public education system. The Right to Read inquiry has reached out to hear from parents, students and educators about their experiences, challenges and concerns. The evidence-gathering phase is mostly complete, and the inquiry team is now analyzing the large amount of data, information and documents received and drafting a final report. The five benchmarks that are a part of effective systemic approach to teaching all students to read, include:

- Science-based curriculum and teaching methods
- Mandatory early screening
- Effective reading interventions
- Effective accommodation
- Psych-educational assessments

[Right to Read link](#)

M. Association Reports

Learning Disabilities Association – Durham Chapter – K. Burke

Events

December 2020

- Wednesday, December 9

LDAO - Math Made Digital: Unlocking the Power of EquatIO (online) [LDAO Webinars](#)
EquatIO is more than just a replacement for pen and paper, EquatIO is a revolutionary math tool that the world has never seen, but always wanted. EquatIO makes math and STEM subjects engaging and rewarding for every student.

January 2021

- Thursday, January 14th

Integra - Walk A Mile in My Shoes (online) [WORKSHOP SERIES WINTER 2021](#)

This experiential and interactive workshop is designed to give participants an understanding of what it might feel like to have a LD. Participants will gain knowledge about current thinking in the field LDs, and a practical understanding of how they may affect mental health and everyday life at home and at school.

- Wednesday, January 20th

ONBIDA - The Role of Speech Language Pathologists in Supporting Struggling Readers by Corina Murphy (online) [ONBIDA Webinar](#)

Durham Catholic District School Board Trustees – J. McCafferty

The Durham Catholic District School Board held the inaugural board meeting on December 7, 2020 wherein Morgan Ste. Marie was acclaimed Chair and Janice Oldman was acclaimed Vice-Chair for the period December 1, 2020 to November 30, 2021.

N. Correspondence

None

O. Inquiries and Miscellaneous

None

P. Pending Items

None

Q. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:42 p.m.

Motion No. SS-2020-12-08-04
Adjournment

Moved by K. Burke, seconded by J. McCafferty

“THAT the Special Education Advisory Committee meeting of December 8, 2020 adjourn.”

CARRIED

R. Closing Prayer

The closing prayer was offered by K. Burke

X

Valerie Adamo
Chair, Special Education Advisory Committee

X

Susie Lee-Fernandes
Superintendent of Education

Recording Secretary: Delfina Pinto