



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

Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Durham Catholic District School Board

February 2, 2021 at 7:30 PM EST

Virtual Meeting

Present:

V. Adamo (Chair), K. Burke (Vice Chair), J. McCafferty (Trustee), J. Oldman (Trustee), S. Casola, W. Heeney, A. Massis, C. Nossier

Staff Present:

S. Lee-Fernandes, D. Mullane, J. Abrams, C. Congrady, F. Mosier, A. Roffey

SEAC Representatives:

L. Wardle (Principal/Vice Principal Representative), P. Sorhaitz (Principal/Vice Principal Representative), T. Robertson, B. Larson (APSSP Representatives), K. Boyer-Miller (OECTA Representative), M. Cope (CUPE Representative)

1. Call to Order

- 1.1. Land Acknowledgement
- 1.2. Memorials and Prayer

Valerie Adamo called the meeting to order at 7:34 p.m. and offered the opening prayer. She welcomed everyone to the meeting.

- 1.3. Roll Call and Apologies

2. Approval of Agenda

- 2.1. Changes to the printed Agenda

None

- 2.2. Approval of Agenda

Motion:

SS-2021-02-02-01

Approval of Agenda

Motion moved by C. Nossier and motion seconded by A. Massis.

"That the Special Education Advisory Committee approve the agenda of the Tuesday, February 2, 2021 meeting, as printed."

CARRIED

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. Approval of Minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting
Minutes of January 5, 2021

Motion:

SS-2021-02-02-02

Approval of Minutes

Motion moved by S. Casola and motion seconded by K. Burke.

"That the special Education Advisory Committee approve the Minutes of the January 5, 2021 meeting as submitted"

CARRIED

6.2. Business arising from the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting
of January 5, 2021

None

7. Presentations

None

8. Discussion Items

8.1. Review of 2019-2020 Director's Annual Report-S. Lee-Fernandes

Superintendent Lee-Fernandes shared that in support of the Board's Stewards of Sustainability Initiative to reduce the amount of paper-based products, the report was produced online through the newly refreshed website at www.dcdsb.ca. The report reflects the Board's liturgical theme, A Year of Hope and celebrates the work that took place within the first year of the Discovery 2023: Renewing the Vision Strategic Plan.

Superintendent Lee-Fernandes highlighted the five strategic priorities:

- Witnessing Faith
- Celebrating Inclusion and Well-Being
- Teaching and Learning
- Expanding Pathways
- Managing Resources

Superintendent Lee-Fernandes added that the plan provides an overview of the operating expenditures, and highlights the work that took place to promote the continuity of learning during a global pandemic.

9. Delegations

None

10. Notices of Motions

None

11. Unfinished Business from Previous Meeting

None

12. Staff Reports

12.1. Coordinator's Report - F. Mosier

The monthly virtual Program Support Teacher meetings have continued. The monthly mentoring sessions for new Program Support Teachers continued in January with a presentation to mentees on Assistive Technology while mentors engaged in professional development on the Mentor-Coaching Model.

The Student Services staff have provided Sharing of Excellence workshops on; Principles of ABA:Reinforcement, Understanding PPM 140, Supporting Minds Mental Health Literacy Series and Teaching Life Skills.

Autism

Free online courses in Applied Behaviour Analysis have been offered to all educators through the Geneva Centre Sonderly platform. Registration closes on February 22, 2021.

PEERS and Friendship Lab classes begin for the new term this week and will be offered virtually.

A committee was formed to create a bank of comments for Alternative Curriculum for IEPs. The committee consists of both elementary and secondary Program Support Teachers. This resource of learning expectations, teaching strategies and annual goals will support teachers to program for the of their students, who are working on alternative curriculum.

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

On January 4, 2021, in partnership with the Durham Catholic District School Board's Communications Department, **Mental Health Moment** was launched, a new feature on board and school websites.

- It's one of the 'call to action' buttons on the main page, so that it is very visible and easy to access.
- Twice a month an article, information, resource, strategy or activity will be shared with students, families and staff
- There will always be two separate folders – sometimes it'll be the same article for both audiences, and at other times, it'll be an activity or resource for the specific audience
- It also links directly to the mental health resources
- Principals have been asked to promote this platform within their school community as well, as it is the main communication tool to share evidence-based information and resources with parents

The Supporting Minds Health Literacy 3-part Series, offered as Sharing of Excellence workshops on January 12th, 19th and February 2nd , had great participation. This series will be repeated in the spring.

On Bell Let's Talk Day, 171 staff registered to participate in two anti-stigma Conversation Cafés, hosted by the Staff Wellness committee. There was also a draw for a chance to win prizes to support staff participation in a "Healthy Habits" challenge, taking place in January and February. Schools were encouraged to acknowledge and participate in Bell Let's Talk Day with their students, and based on the action on social media, many educators participated.

The Youth Suicide Prevention Action Group's community event: **It Takes a Village Creating a Suicide-Safer Community in Durham Region**, hosted as a Teams live event by DCDSB, had 163 community members registered.

The **Durham Youth Drug Awareness Committee's** Public Service Announcement (PSA) contest closed this month. Among the winners in the "Group" category at the Intermediate level was a submission from St. Joseph Catholic School, Oshawa. All participants will be acknowledged and winners will receive a prize.

In 2020, a new Bill, (Bill # 178) proclaimed the first Monday in March in each year as Black Mental Health Day in Ontario. This falls on March 1st, 2021. This is currently in the planning phase. Student Services plans to host a guest speaker for an evening event; to highlight black excellence in mental health by spotlighting staff members; and to highlight specific resources related to this topic.

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

Extended Remote learning period

Superintendent Lee-Fernandes reported that the Government announced the extension of remote learning until February 10, 2021. In the coming days, there should be some indication as to a decision, on a further extension of remote learning or return to in-person learning.

Superintendent Lee-Fernandes shared that students with the highest special education needs are being accommodated for in-person learning. She also provided a breakdown of the total number of students, both in the elementary and the secondary panel that are being accommodated.

She communicated that the Anti-Black Racism Strategy 2020-2021 was presented to the Board of Trustees at the Board meeting on January 25, 2021 and that Equity is a core commitment in the DCDSB Strategic Plan,

Discovery 2023: Renewing the Vision. The Board is committed to cultivating a positive sense of self and belonging for each individual by respecting and responding to diverse identities and strengths.

Superintendent Lee-Fernandes highlighted that the Board is addressing all forms of discrimination with a particular focus on Anti-Black racism. She explained that this strategy does not discount or ignore other forms of racism or discrimination in the school system. The Board is addressing this for all racialized groups and all groups that are marginalized, but research within Ontario confirms that black populations continue to experience critical forms of systemic racism and inequitable outcomes. She further added that Black youth are disproportionately represented in all of the negative outcome areas including unemployment violence and the lack of opportunities.

Superintendent Lee-Fernandes stated that one of the core commitments of the DCDSB is also to excellence. The Board has been heavily relying on the research and what the experts say which is in similar alignment in the Board's view regarding the anti-Black racism strategy. Calls for change are supported by decades of research, reports and recommendations that highlight the need to combat systemic racism, particularly anti-Black racism which is prevalent within public services and institutions, but more so in the education system.

Superintendent Lee-Fernandes presented a list of Action items and provided an overview of each one.

1. Anti-Racism Policy
2. Advisory Committee
3. Ongoing training
4. Human Resources
5. Student Data Collection
6. Symposium for Staff

Superintendent Lee-Fernandes concluded the report and answered questions as they arose.

Motion:

No. SS-2021-02-02-03

Approval of February 2, 2021 Verbal Coordinator, Mental Health Leader and Superintendent Reports

Motion moved by J. Oldman and motion seconded by J. McCafferty

“That the Special Education Advisory Committee accept the verbal Coordinator, Mental Health Leader and Superintendent Reports at the February 2, 2021 meeting.”

CARRIED

13. Association Reports

Learning Disabilities Association – Durham Chapter – K. Burke

Meetings or Conferences

- Integra offerings Winter Workshop Series (Executive Functioning and Emotional Regulation, The Social Impact of Learning Disabilities) Register via Integra website
- Disability Tax Credit Workshop offered by LDAO and LDWAC register at [LDAO Events](#) Wednesday, December 9
- CADDAC- Interactive ADHD Parenting Course (online) register via website caddac.ca
- CADDAC Livestream Recordings geared to parents of children with ADHD as well as adults with ADHD, [CADDAC Workshops](#)

New Programs or Services:

Partnering with Schools for Student Success- Effective Parent Advocacy

A collaboration between LDAO and Integra an online workshop for parents and those who help parents navigate the school system. For further information and registration go to LDAO website

Other information:

Learning Disabilities Association Ontario (LDAO), Durham Chapter will soon be launching the second annual scholarship to students with a diagnosed LD who will be graduating from the DCDSB and pursuing post secondary education. LDAO appreciates the support of DCDSB staff in helping reach this group. This year student applications may be in a number of formats; essay, song, video, poem, spoken word, dance or art submission. The application must demonstrate how the learning disability affected the student in school, what or who helped, and what advice they would give to their Gr. 9 self. Submissions will be judged by two panels, one from the LDAO and the other from DCDSB. The winner will be

awarded \$500 towards their post secondary education. Presentation will be prior to June 2021.

Autism Ontario - S. Casola

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

[Autism Ontario webinars](#)- And include topics such as:

- Equity-Based Health Promotion for Black Mothers of Children with
- Developmental Disabilities: Consideration for Practice and Policy during COVID-19 pandemic and beyond
- Introduction to Autism and Autism Ontario for Professionals
- Introduction to Autism and Autism Ontario for Caregivers
- As the Doctor: Autism & Mental Health: A Focus on Caregivers (Live)

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:

[Autism Ontario events](#)

Grandview Kids - C. Nossier

- Grandview Kids remains open for in-person and virtual services, amid extended school closures and State-of-Emergency.
- 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.
- Appointments must be cancelled within 24 hours of the appointment time. This enables staff to fill those spots, so we are able to serve the maximum number of clients. When someone cancels last-minute, it impacts everyone.

Priority project updates

Grandview Kids completed integral steps in the early phases of our **New Build project**:

- We selected Collier as the Project Manager to plan and execute the project
- We have engaged stakeholders, including clients and families, about what they would like to see in our new Centre of Excellence.
- We are wrapping up the user consultation process, moving into the exciting Request for Proposal (RFP) phase this spring.

- Once submissions are reviewed, Infrastructure Ontario (IO) and Grandview Kids will evaluate the proposals.
- The successful team is expected to be announced in early 2022.
- The target completion date for construction is 2024.

The Grandview Kids **Transformation Initiative** recently surveyed all parents/caregivers, seeking feedback on how to improve our intake processes and clinical pathways. Survey feedback will be incorporated into the design of a future state model, to be launched in spring 2021.

Durham Catholic District School Board Trustees – J. Oldman

Trustee Oldman noted that the new DCDSB trustee for the Town of Whitby will be selected at a Special Board Meeting on February 10.

14. Correspondence

None

15. Inquiries and Miscellaneous

None

16. Pending Items

None

17. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Motion:

No. SS-2020-02-02-04

Adjournment

Motion moved by K. Burke and motion seconded by J. McCafferty.

“THAT the Special Education Advisory Committee meeting of February 2, 2021 adjourn.”

CARRIED

- 17.1. The next meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee will be held on Tuesday, March 2, 2021 @ 7:30pm

18. Closing Prayer

The closing prayer was offered by J. McCafferty

Valerie Adamo
Chair, Special Education Advisory Committee

Susie Lee-Fernandes
Superintendent of Education

Recording Secretary: Delfina Pinto