



**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, January 5, 2021.

**SEAC Members Present**

V. Adamo (Chair)  
K. Burke  
J. Oldman  
J. McCafferty  
C. Nosseir  
S. Casola  
A. Massis

**Staff Present**

S. Lee-Fernandes  
D. Mullane  
J. Abrams  
S. Phoenix  
C. Congrady  
A. Roffey

**SEAC Representatives**

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

**A. Call to Order**

- a.1 Acknowledgement of Traditional Territory
- a.2 Memorials and Prayer

Superintendent Lee-Fernandes called the meeting to order at 7:32 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-2021-01-05-01

Approval of Agenda

Moved by J. McCafferty, seconded by V. Adamo

“THAT the Special Education Advisory Committee approve the agenda of the Tuesday, January 5, 2021 meeting, as printed.”

**CARRIED**

## **C. Announcements**

c.1 Following the inaugural Board meeting on December 7, Trustee Committees were confirmed. Superintendent Lee-Fernandes welcomed Trustee Janice Oldman and Trustee Jim McCafferty who will serve on SEAC the 2021 year.

c.2 On December 15, 2020, Superintendent Lee-Fernandes received correspondence from Durham Down Syndrome Association appointing Walter Heeney as their new SEAC representative. The Committee accepted the appointment of Walter Heeney and the resignation of Lori McLellan at the January 5, 2021 meeting.

## **D. Considerations of Motion**

None

## **E. Election For Chair Of The Special Education Advisory Committee**

e.1 Superintendent Lee-Fernandes opened the floor for nominations for the position of Chair of SEAC for the period of January 5, 2021 to December 31, 2021.

<b>Nominee</b>	<b>Moved</b>	<b>Seconded by</b>	<b>Willing to Stand?</b>
V. Adamo	J. McCafferty	J. Oldman	Yes

Superintendent Lee-Fernandes called for further nominations. Nominations were declared closed.

Motion No. SS-2021-01-05-02

Close Nominations

Moved by J. McCafferty, seconded by J. Oldman

“THAT the Special Education Advisory Committee close nominations for the position of Chair of SEAC for the period from January 5, 2021 to December 31, 2021.”

**CARRIED**

Superintendent Lee-Fernandes welcomed Valerie Adamo, Representative for VOICE for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children as Chair of SEAC for the period from January 5, 2021 to December 31, 2021. Valerie accepted the position of Chair.

## **F. Elections for the Position of Vice Chair of the Special Education Advisory Committee**

f.1 Superintendent Lee-Fernandes opened the floor for nominations for the position of Vice Chair of SEAC for the period from January 5, 2021 to December 31, 2021.

<b>Nominee</b>	<b>Moved</b>	<b>Seconded by</b>	<b>Willing to Stand?</b>
K. Burke	J. McCafferty	V. Adamo	Yes

Superintendent Lee-Fernandes called for further nominations. Nominations were declared closed.

Motion No. SS-2021-01-05-03

Close Nominations

Moved by J. McCafferty, seconded by V. Adamo

“THAT the Special Education Advisory Committee close nominations for the position of Vice Chair of SEAC for the period from January 5, 2021 to December 31, 2021.”

**CARRIED**

Superintendent Lee-Fernandes welcomed Kari, representative for Learning Disabilities Association of Durham Region, as Vice Chair of SEAC for the period from January 5, 2021 to December 31, 2021.

## **G. Declarations of Interest**

g.1 Declaration of Conflict of Interest

None

## **H. Actions to be Taken**

h.1 Approval of Minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting of December 8, 2020

Motion No. SS-2021-01-05-04

Approval of Minutes

Moved by J. McCafferty, seconded by K. Burke

“THAT the Special Education Advisory Committee approve the Minutes of the December 8, 2020 meeting, as submitted.”

### **CARRIED**

h.2 Business Arising from the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting of December 8, 2020

None

## **I. Presentations**

None

## **J. Discussion Items**

### **j.1 Right to Read**

Superintendent Lee-Fernandes recalled that on October 3, 2019, the Ontario Human Rights Commission announced a public inquiry into potential human rights issues that affect students with reading disabilities in Ontario’s public education system. Through this initiative, 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.

Superintendent Lee-Fernandes provided a breakdown of the benchmarks that are a part of effective systemic approach to teaching all students to read, which the OHRC is focusing on. She also shared that pre-assessments for the Lexia Reading Intervention Program are in progress to determine starting points. The assessments will include PM Benchmarks; a Board-approved diagnostic testing tool. Summary data and information will be provided at the end of the current school year on the use and impact of Lexia Reading Intervention Program. The Committee commented on the Right to Read video and expressed their interest in hearing more in the future.

## **K. Delegations**

None

## **L. Notices of Motion**

None

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

None

## **N. Staff Reports**

### **n.1 Coordinator's Report – C. Congrady**

Monthly virtual Program Support Teacher meetings and mentoring have continued. Learning Disabilities was the December presentation for the mentees. The presentation allowed the mentors to engage with the Coordinators in professional development centred on the critical aspects of the mentor-coaching relationship. The final activity in the mentoring session brought mentees together with their mentors to participate in an online game where learning profiles for students with learning disabilities were matched to possible strategies and programming to use within the classroom to support academic needs.

Student Services staff provided Sharing of Excellence Workshops during the month of December on “Boom Cards”, LessonPix Online Visual Supports and using “Core Language” with students with minimal verbal communication.

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

This month, Student Services will finally be starting to run Roots of Empathy programs in six classrooms. This adapted version is called the “Recovery Program.” Instead of live visits, the baby will visit the classroom by way of photos and videos. This new program was piloted in the fall in other boards with great feedback. The Student

Services staff are looking forward to being able to offer ROE in this modified format this year.

The Durham Talking About Mental Illness (TAMI) Coalition has also finished adapting the Intermediate classroom curriculum to a virtual format. TAMI recorded speaker stories and the classroom introductory session, and will be rolling it out to Intermediate classrooms later this month, starting with classrooms that were registered but not able to complete the program last year.

The Durham Youth Drug Awareness Committee (DYDAC) has received approximately 30 submissions so far for our PSA contest from students in gr 7-12 across two school boards (DCDSB and DDSB). The winner will be selected in mid-January. All participants will be acknowledged and winners will receive a prize.

Student Services will be offering a three-part, Supporting Minds Mental Health Literacy Series, as a Sharing of Excellence on Jan 12, 19 and Feb 2.

On January 16, Diane Mullane was invited to co-present a workshop with the Mental Health Leader from PVNCCDSB on the topic of Supporting Staff and Student Well-being Through a Trauma-Informed Lens, at the Ontario Catholic School Trustees Association (OCSTA) seminar.

This year, Bell Let's Talk Day falls on January 28. Schools will be encouraged to participate in this national day of awareness, and there will be a virtual event for staff, hosted by the Staff Wellness committee.

It Takes a Village – community event hosted by the Youth Suicide Prevention Action Group will take place on January 29. Sixty-seven participants have registered to date. The event poster was shared at the December SEAC meeting.

### **n.3 Superintendent's Report – S. Lee-Fernandes**

Superintendent Lee-Fernandes shared the names of the new staff members joining Student Services and announced the resignation of Diane de Vos, Psychometrist.

The Committee was updated on the Provincial Shutdown and the implications to DCDSB schools; Key considerations; Mental Health and well-being of staff and students, maintaining of the classroom communities and adjusting expectations for remote learning, Equity-that all students have access to learning; synchronous or asynchronous, promoting Catholic Faith in remote learning spaces and teaching and learning expectations in remote learning.

The Ministry of Education released the Educator's Guide for a Safe and Healthy Return to School Resource. The Mental Health and Well-being Supports section with resource links highlights the Mentally Healthy Return to School Toolkit, First 10 Days of School, Importance of Self Care, Diverse Backgrounds and Communities as well as Supporting Student Mental Health and Well-being. The second part of the Educators guide focuses on health and safety protocols.

Superintendent Lee-Fernandes shared a table out of PPM-164 that outlines the required minimum amount of synchronous learning. Every family's circumstances are different and should be taken into consideration. These expectations are flexible and adaptable to each family's situation.

Student Services staff are working from home where and when appropriate. Starting January 11<sup>th</sup>, staff will service schools based on the guidelines outlined in the Red Zone Student Services Health and Safety Plan. Virtual services for secondary panel will be pivoted unless students are accommodated to attend in-person.

## **O. Association/Trustee Reports**

Autism Ontario – S. Casola

Autism Ontario has a number of excellent webinars available “on demand” on its website:

[Autism Ontario Program and Services](#) - And include topics such as:

- How can I help my child print – 3-part series
- 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)

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

[Autism Ontario Durham Events](#)

These events include:

- Virtual support groups
- Interim One-Time Funding Q&A
- Virtual Family PA Day Sushi Workshop

### **Durham Catholic District School Board Trustees – J. McCafferty**

The Durham Catholic District School Board is seeking a new Trustee representative for the Town of Whitby due to the resignation of Trustee Chapman. Applications are being accepted until January 22, 2021.

## **P. Correspondence**

None

## **Q. Inquiries and Miscellaneous**

None

## **R. Pending Items**

None

## **S. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 8:03 p.m.

Motion No. SS-2021-01-05-05

Adjournment

Moved by C. Nosseir, seconded by S. Casola

“THAT the Special Education Advisory Committee meeting of January 5, 2021 adjourn.”

**CARRIED**



## **T. Closing Prayer**

The closing prayer was offered by V. Adamo.

**X**

---

Valerie Adamo  
Chair, Special Education Advisory Committee

**X**

---

Susie Lee-Fernandes  
Superintendent of Education

Recording Secretary: Delfina Pinto