



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

Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Durham Catholic District School Board

June 8, 2021 at 7:30 PM EST

Virtual Meeting

Present:

V. Adamo (Chair, VOICE for the Hearing Impaired), K. Burke (Vice Chair, Learning Disabilities Ontario), J. McCafferty (Trustee), J. Oldman (Trustee), W. Heeney (Durham Down Syndrome Association), S. Casola (Autism Ontario), Alex Massis (Community Representative), Claudia Nossier (Grandview Children's Centre)

Staff Present:

S. Lee-Fernandes (Superintendent of Education), D. Mullane (Mental Health Leader), J. Abrams (Chief Psychologist), F. Mosier (Student Services Coordinator), A. Roffey (Communications)

SEAC Representatives:

P. Sorhaitz (Principal/Vice Principal Representative), B. Larson (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 7:30 p.m. and welcomed everyone to the meeting. Chair Adamo offered the opening prayer.

- 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-2021-06-08-01

Approval of Agenda

Motion moved by K. Burke and motion seconded by W. Heeney.

"That the Special Education Advisory Committee approve the agenda of the Tuesday, June 8, 2021 meeting, as printed."

CARRIED

3. Announcements

Superintendent Lee-Fernandes announced the retirement of the following staff:

- Anna Aita, Behaviour Support Specialist
- Cheryl Dixon, Resource Teacher for Vision Services
- Shannon Hamilton, Program Support Teacher
- Francine Hurst, Behaviour Support Teacher
- Beverley Mazzarolo, Program Support Teacher
- Lana Van Netten, Child and Youth Counsellor
- Joann Wynia, Program Support Teacher

Superintendent Lee-Fernandes thanked them all for their many years of dedicated service and wished them all the best in their retirement.

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 the Minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting of May 4, 2021

Motion:

SS-2021-06-08-02

Approval of Minutes

Motion moved by J. McCafferty and motion seconded by W. Heeney.

“That the special Education Advisory Committee approve the Minutes of the May 4, 2021 meeting as submitted”

CARRIED

- 6.2. Business arising from the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting of May 4, 2021

Motion:

SS-2021-06-08-03

Approval of the Staff Reports of the May 4, 2021 meeting

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

“That the special Education Advisory Committee approve the Staff Reports of the May 4, 2021 meeting as submitted”

CARRIED

7. Presentations

- 7.1. Special Education Budget Update – R. Putnam

Superintendent Ryan Putnam provided an overview of the Board’s perspective on budget decisions for the 2021-2022 school year and specifically, the funds allocated for Special Education. After the presentation, Superintendent Putnam answered questions as they arose.

- 7.2. Summer Learning – F. Mosier

Student Services Coordinator, Francesca Mosier shared that the Ministry of Education funding will be used to support Special Education programs this summer. The Programs will be offered by teachers and Student Services staff and supported by DCECs and EAs as needed. The programming is designed for students who have Special Education needs or are struggling readers. The program covers a wide range of topics including academic and interest based. Francesca provided a list of the programs as well as the structure of the program offerings.

Francesca also shared that the DCDSB Assistive Technology department will be offering Lexia training sessions to select students in July. The training will include the basic navigation of the assigned technical devices and will focus on the features of “Read & Write” and “One Drive”.

Francesca informed that the Ministry funding will also support successful re-entry to school in September and she also provided a breakdown of the summer transition programs and explained the goals of the programs.

Francesca answered questions as they arose.

8. Discussions Items

8.1. Review of Special Education Plan – S. Lee-Fernandes

A few of the SEAC Committee members stated they did not receive the draft copy of the Special Education Plan. Superintendent Lee-Fernandes apologized and advised that the Plan would be resent to all. As the Special Education Plan will only be submitted to the Ministry in August, she informed everyone that they are invited to provide feedback.

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 quadmester 4 IEPs went home on May 11, 2021.

The Student Services staff provided Sharing of Excellence Workshops on Teaching Social Skills to Students with ASD and Supporting Minds Mental Health Literacy Series.

The new PST Mentoring Program continued with a presentation on Building Personal Resiliency for mentees and Asking Impactful Questions for mentors.

Autism:

After school social skills programs are being offered during the summer, to students with an ASD diagnosis. Programs include PEERS, Friendship Lab and Secret Agent Society. All programs will run virtually, Registration forms are available through the school PST.

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

The Ministry has provided a substantial bundle of summer mental health money. Student Services has been working on creating opportunities for students, staff and parents including programs and resources focused on mental health promotion and prevention, as well as support for students who may need additional help due to the COVID-19 pandemic. These resources are intended to support the learning recovery and transitions of students who may find the return to school challenging due to their mental health needs.

The Student Services department will continue to operate the Social Work Access Line (and new Online Form option) from Monday to Thursday throughout the summer. The department has worked collaboratively with community partners to develop and offer virtual group programs and workshops for children, youth, and parents/caregivers, as well as a professional speaker series for parents/caregivers, focused on supporting their child's mental health through the pandemic and their return to school.

Professional Speaker Series:

- June 17 and July 15: Jennifer Kolari - Thriving, Not Just Surviving, Another Pandemic Summer
- Aug 19 and Sept 23: Charmaine Lane - Supporting your Child's Mental Health Through the Impact of Racism and Oppression
- Aug 26 and Sept 28: Nicole Tuzi - From Zoom to Classroom- How to Support Your Child's Social-Emotional Development When Returning to School

In addition, new resources have been created, as well as some staff professional development opportunities, including a partnership with Sick Kids hospital that involves PD for all Kindergarten educators on the topic of early years mental health.

A booklet is in the process of being created and a dedicated webpage for parents to be able to access all of the information and register for sessions. This information will be available before the end of the week.

Over the last few weeks, the Mental Health First Aid training team has participated in "upskilling" to be able to deliver the brand new **Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) - Supporting Youth (Virtual)**, which is an updated version of "MHFA - Adults Who Interact with Youth" (the course that has been offered at DCDSB for many years). We are hoping to offer our first sessions over the summer.

The Head Start program (transition program for new grade 9 students) will continue to involve lessons in mental health and well-being, which have now been updated with new content, as well as our Social Worker videos for each individual school.

As the 2021-2022 Action Plan is being developed, it is recognized that the pandemic has had differential impacts, that everyone has a unique COVID-19 story, and that some students (and staff) will be carrying heavier backpacks when

they return to school in the fall (e.g., impacts of poverty, grief, racism, mental illness). Focus will be placed on the idea of resilience and the need to reduce risk factors and inequities and draw on protective factors within the context of COVID recovery.

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

Superintendent Susie Lee-Fernandes communicated that schools will remain in remote learning for the remainder of the school year. Communication will be forthcoming in regard to the return and pick up of school materials and personal items. Students will keep their assistive technology over the summer.

Superintendent Lee-Fernandes informed that through the regular budgeting process for 2021-2022 school, the Board will be investing in supports under Mental Health and Special Education for Social Work and Child and Youth Counsellor supports.

Superintendent Lee-Fernandes shared that, in planning for 2021-2022, a virtual learning option will be available in the elementary panel and a hybrid model for the secondary, where the teachers will be teaching both in class and online at the same time.

Superintendent Lee-Fernandes also shared that over the next 3 years, the Student Services department will be reviewing the Special Education practices and protocols within the Department. This will include a number of resources to re-evaluate and reflect on the practices;

- Special Education in Ontario (2017)
- Ontario Human Rights Commission Policy-Accessible education for students with disabilities (2018)
- Ontario Human Rights Commission Recommendations-Improving outcomes for students with disabilities
- Right to Read Inquiry-report expected in Fall 2021

Superintendent Lee-Fernandes expressed extreme gratitude and recognition to the many staff at the school level as well as the staff at the System level for their hard work and dedication to the students.

She also recognized the Student Services Executive team for tremendous work, guidance and expertise.

Superintendent Lee-Fernandes thanked all the members of SEAC for always having the students' best interests at heart and engaging in collaborative conversations that benefit the students.

Motion No.

SS-2021-06-08-04

Approval of June 8, 2021 Verbal Coordinator, Mental Health Leader and Superintendent Reports

Moved by J. McCafferty, seconded by J. Oldman

“THAT the Special Education Advisory Committee accept the verbal Coordinator, Mental Health Leader and Superintendent Reports at the June 8, 2021 meeting.”

CARRIED

13. Association Reports

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 and programing for children and youth offered in Durham Region – all can be found here:

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

Autism Ontario 1:1 Summer Camp Funding launches June 9, 2021 (and is open until June 28, 2021) you can find the application and details here:

<https://www.autismontario.com/camp>

Website: www.autismontario.com

14. Correspondence

None

15. Inquiries and Miscellaneous

None

16. Pending Items

None

17. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:39 p.m.

18. Closing Prayer

The closing prayer was offered by J. Oldman

Valerie Adamo
Chair, Special Education Advisory Committee

Susie Lee-Fernandes
Superintendent of Education

Recording Secretary: Delfina Pinto