



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

Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Durham Catholic District School Board

May 4, 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)

Staff Present:

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

SEAC Representatives:

L. Wardle (Principal/Vice Principal Representative), Brooke 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 7:31 p.m. and welcomed everyone to the meeting. Trustee McCafferty 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-2021-05-04-01

Approval of Agenda

Motion moved by J. McCafferty and motion seconded by A. Massis.

"That the Special Education Advisory Committee approve the agenda of the Tuesday, May 4, 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 the Minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting of March 2, 2021

Motion:

SS-2021-05-04-02

Approval of Minutes

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

"That the special Education Advisory Committee approve the Minutes of the March 2, 2021 meeting as submitted"

CARRIED

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

None

- 6.3. Approval of the Minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting of April 6, 2021

Motion:

SS-2021-05 -04-03

Approval of Minutes

Motion moved by J. McCafferty and motion seconded by S. Casola.

“That the special Education Advisory Committee approve the Minutes of the April 6, 2021 meeting as submitted”

- 6.4. Business arising from the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting of April 6, 2021

None

7. Presentations

- 7.1. Review of Special Education Plan – T. Ezquerra

Student Services Consultant, Teresa Ezquerra provided a brief overview of the process that Student Services Executive Committee engaged in to review the Special Education Plan for the 2021-2022 school year. She communicated that the plan will be an interactive document to be housed at the DCDSB website. It will include direct links to referenced documents, websites and reference materials that meet the Ministry guidelines.

Teresa provided a broad summary of the Special Education Plan and informed the Committee that a draft pdf version of the plan would be sent out to the SEAC Members. Teresa invited all members to review the plan and provide feedback at the June 8th SEAC meeting. She further added the Special Education Plan would be revised to include any feedback and the finalized plan will be submitted to the Ministry of Education by the end of the July deadline for final approval.

- 7.2. Lexia -Pre/Post Data – T. Ezquerra

Teresa provided in-depth details about the Lexia® Core5® and Power Up® reading intervention programs that were piloted in some schools last year with great success and expanded to more schools this year. She also presented videos that demonstrated the personalized learning model as well as the blended learning program.

Teresa displayed a breakdown of the number of Lexia licenses that the DCDSB purchased for the current school year and provided data displaying the progress since September.

Teresa also reported that the response to the Lexia program from educators, students, and parents had been overwhelmingly positive despite the challenges with pivoting from in-person to remote learning.

Teresa responded to questions as they arose.

8. Discussions Items

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

Superintendent Susie Lee-Fernandes shared a brief overview of the Special Education Budget and how it is allocated.

Superintendent Lee-Fernandes invited the SEAC Committee to provide input and suggestions around funding and spending. She stated that this feedback would be reviewed and reported at the next SEAC Meeting. Superintendent Ryan Putnam would also be invited to the June 8th SEAC meeting to provide a final report.

9. Delegations

None

10. Notices of Motions

None

11. Unfinished Business from Previous Meeting

None

12. Staff Reports

12.1. Coordinator's Report – T. Ezquerra

Is it Ever too Early to Start Planning

April 20, 2021 Student Services hosted a virtual event for 319 students and their families on transitions and pathway planning. Students and families were shown how to navigate the DCDSB's Transition and Pathways webpage and encouraged to explore the various resources available to help determine their pathway.

Assistive Technology (AT) Update

SWATTT (Students With Assistive Technology Transition Trip)

Grade 6 and 8 students at Msgr. John Pereyma CS who have SEA assigned AT, were invited to attend a virtual SWATTT within the last 2 weeks of April.

Each SWATTT trip included the following:

- Program Support Introduction/Welcome
- Virtual/Video Tour of Secondary School
- Map of Secondary School
- Student Voice (senior student with AT)
- Self-Advocacy Scenarios led by IGTs
- Assistive Technology at Secondary School
- Kahoot- gamification to reinforce learning
- How do you feel about entering grade 9? (Emoji)

AT Year in Review

By end of the school year, over 260 AT packages will be completed (submitted, processed, delivered, trained). Individual, small group or whole class training is provided to the recipients. The Read & Write program will be available for all students next year and 314 Chromebooks are assigned for PST use with more to come.

The recipient of the LDADR Power to Achieve Scholarship was awarded to McCaley Campbell, Grade 12 student at All Saints CSS. Congratulations to McCaley!

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

Two successful parent events were held in April:

On April 21, DCDSB partnered with Durham District School Board, Kawartha Pineridge District School Board and the Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction for a Virtual Expert Panel on Drug Use. This event was well attended by parents and staff from three school boards.

On April 28, Durham Catholic Parent Involvement Committee (DCPIC) hosted a virtual parent conference featuring keynote speaker Aubrey Noronha, on the topic of "Battling Loneliness and Isolation Before and After COVID". This event was well-attended by over 80 parents.

Mental Health Poster Contest update: the final count was 295 submissions from students in grades 1 through 11. Two overall winning posters were selected, as well as first and second place winners in each division. Board-wide posters have been created from the two winning posters. The posters advertise our new Social Work Access button, which will allow students or parents/guardians to reach the access line by completing an online form, as an alternative to the existing phone line.

This week is Children's Mental Health Week. As mentioned, Student Services worked closely with the Faith department to create an integrated package of resources for administrators and educators focused on the theme of Nurturing Hope; Cultivating Gratitude. A webpage has also been developed for families with some at-home activities and a postcard activity that called "With Gratitude." Parents/guardians and staff members are invited to download the postcard and either print it or send it digitally to praise or thank a friend, colleague or community member for something they've done or something they appreciate about them. Some schools have also taken on the challenge of sending postcards to frontline essential workers, such as long-term care home staff, Region of Durham transit operators, hospital staff and more. We hope to spread joy, love and happiness by sharing these uplifting messages of hope and gratitude with one another.

There are many great things happening in the schools; for example, on May 3, St. Mary Catholic Secondary School hosted a Mental Wellness Café with keynote speaker Jennifer Kolari, and a panel discussion including school and board level support staff. This was well-attended by about 79 parents and students.

In terms of staff professional development, myself and my colleagues in the Psychological Services department are once again offering the Supporting Minds 3-part Mental Health Literacy series during the month of May, focusing on anxiety, mood and attention problems – noticing the signs and providing support. Additionally, Durham Catholic Behaviour Resource Team (DCBRT) will be offering a four-part series, as part of the larger spring workshop series for Program Support Teachers and Administrators, with a focus on understanding behaviour through the self-regulation lens, best practices and resources, and two Q and A panel discussions.

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

Superintendent Susie Lee-Fernandes announced that Delfina Pinto, Acting Executive Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent was honoured with this year's Distinguished Catholic Educator award for the Student Services department.

Superintendent Lee-Fernandes recognized the Speech and Language Pathologists and the Hearing Services team on the exceptional work that is done in supporting students.

Superintendent Lee-Fernandes provide an update in respect to pivoting to remote learning. At this time there is no confirmed date of return to in-person learning. Accommodations for students with high level of need are being provided across the Board. There are currently 17 students in EIC classrooms at the 3 locations, 50 elementary students and 47 secondary students. These students are also being supported by the Student Services staff.

Funding for summer learning is available and preparation and planning are currently in process. It is available for the areas of Autism, Mental Health, Summer Learning/Transitions and reading supports. More details will be shared at next month's SEAC meeting.

Superintendent Lee-Fernandes also provided the following Equity updates:

- An Anti-Black racism course; Deconstructing Anti-Black Racism, will be piloted next year in 3 secondary schools as a grade 11 academic stream.
- Continued engagement in on-going professional development and training for staff. Four invitational learning sessions will be offered this month, which include speakers; Dr. Andrew Campbell, Katherine Mustachi (Senior Manager of Faith and Formation), Dr. Kofi Belfon and Carrington Christmas.

Motion No.

SS-2021-05-04

Approval of May 4, 2021 Verbal Coordinator, Mental Health Leader and Superintendent Reports

Motion was not addressed and will be returned to the June 8, 2021 Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting

13. Association Reports

Learning Disabilities Association – Durham Chapter – K. Burke

Congratulations to the scholarship winner!

Read & Write report will be delayed till the Fall as per announcement this past week from Human Rights Ontario.

Grandview Kids – C. Nossier

New Programs or Services:

Grandview Kids **Ability Awareness Program** is still being offered virtually.

- It is a free service available to schools, daycares and community groups in Durham Region to enhance awareness about differences, while advocating acceptance and inclusion.
- Our Ability Awareness presenter, Marshall Hohmann, provides group presentations tailored to various age groups to raise awareness of a variety of disabilities.
- He is available to work with parents/guardians to develop a customized, positive presentation that focuses on valuing differences.

- To set up a presentation, please email communications@grandviewkids.ca or visit <https://grandviewkids.ca/resources/ability-awareness-program/>.
- Through the **Family Engagement Program**, parents/caregivers have the opportunity to connect with other parents/caregivers who share similar experiences of parenting a child who has special needs.
- Our passionate Family Engagement Team – comprised of Grandview Kids parents and grads – is here to support you from day one!
- Services include paperwork support, Online Parent Support (OPS) Facebook page (required to have child currently/formerly receiving Grandview Kids services); OAP info page on Facebook (open to anyone with OAP number)
- Family Leader Program (ambassadors, advisors, advocates); networking and events for parents and caregivers; 1:1 support and mentoring; coffee chats.
- The team also helps families create “all about me” document to share with peers, teachers, teams etc. (good for school transitions) to help understand a child’s needs and preferences.

Other Information:

- School-Based Rehab (SBR): We continue to be flexible to provide service in a place that makes sense and within the COVID – 19 parameters for schools and working closely with the SERT and principals (as appropriate).
- We continue to follow up quickly with referrals determined to be priorities by the school.

We appreciate getting the heads up when students will not be attending school before the clinician heads out to the school

- In response to growing number of cases in our community (especially variants of concern), Grandview Kids will be converting the majority of in-person services to virtual until the week of May 25.
- Clinicians will follow up with clients directly if rescheduling is required; this applies to SBR appointments.
- Some clients will continue to receive in-person case if they have urgent or high-priority needs.

Website: www.grandviewkids.ca

14. Correspondence

None

15. Inquiries and Miscellaneous

None

16. Pending Items

None

17. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:12 p.m.

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