



**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, October 6, 2020 at 7:30 p.m.

<b>Present</b>	<b>Staff</b>	<b>With Regrets</b>	<b>Absent</b>
V. Adamo (Chair)	S. Lee-Fernandes		
K. Burke	D. Mullane		
T. Chapman	J. Abrams		
J. McCafferty	T. Ezquerro		
C. Nosseir	C. Congrady		
L. McLellan	A. Roffey		
I. Massis	S. McAvoy		
S. Casola			

**SEAC Representatives**

P. Sorhaitz, Principal/Vice Principal Representative  
B. Larson, APSSP Representative

**A. Call to Order**

**a.1 Acknowledgement of Traditional Territory**

**a.2 Memorials and Prayer**

Chair Adamo called the meeting to order at 7:32 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-2020-10-06-01  
Approval of Agenda

Moved by J. McCafferty, seconded by C. Nosseir

“THAT the Special Education Advisory Committee approve the agenda of the Tuesday, October 6, 2020 meeting, as printed.”

**CARRIED**

## **C. Announcements**

Superintendent Lee-Fernandes announced Cauê de Azevedo Garcia as the winner of the 19-20 Power to Achieve Scholarship presented by the Learning Disabilities Association of Durham Region in partnership with Durham Catholic District School Board. This scholarship recognizes a high school student with a diagnosed learning disability who plans to continue post secondary studies. Superintendent Lee-Fernandes also shared a video that Cauê had prepared detailing his journey with education and his learning disability.

## **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 September 15, 2020**

Motion No. SS-2020-10-06-02  
Approval of Minutes

Moved by K. Burke, seconded by T. Chapman

“THAT the Special Education Advisory Committee approve the Minutes of the September 15, 2020 meeting, as submitted.”

**CARRIED**

### **f.2 Business Arising from the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting of September 15, 2020**

None

## **G. Presentations**

### **g.1 Mentally Healthy Return to Schools – D. Mullane**

Diane Mullane, Manager of Mental Health Initiatives and Mental Health Leader, presented a detailed overview of the Board's commitment to a mentally healthy return to schools for both staff and students with a focus on five key messages; mental health and well-being is the Board's priority, the need to lead with compassion and empathy, schools are an excellent place to promote and protect student mental health, there are strong mental health foundations to build on and the need to work together. She provided insight on some of the signs to look for in children who may be experiencing trauma. She also emphasized the importance of self-care and shared some ideas and strategies to assist with coping with stress and useful resources that can be accessed on the School Mental Health Ontario website. Diane responded to questions as they arose.

### **g.2 Hearing and Masking/Communications – S. McAvoy**

Sarah McAvoy, Resource Teacher for Hearing Services, provided a detailed overview of face coverings and their challenges for those students with hearing impairments. She shared which masks may be more challenging and which masks are being recommended for use in the schools. She shared information and tips on which masks work best, ways to better communicate with those who may be deaf/hard of hearing while wearing a mask and how to adapt in a virtual setting for those who require accommodations due to hearing loss. Sarah responded to questions as they arose.

## **H. Discussion Items**

None

## **I. Delegations**

None

## **J. Notices of Motion**

None

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

None

## **L. Staff Reports**

### **I.1 Coordinator's Report – T. Ezquerra**

#### **Autism**

The Ministry of Education sent an ASD training package, prepared by the Geneva Centre, to every school board to support Professional Development. DCDSB had 56 participants join "Understanding Students with Autism" on September 30. This program will run again on Oct. 19.

PEERS and Friendship Lab are both being run online again this fall. There are a total of 27 participants in these programs.

Ministry funded online ABA Geneva Centre courses will be offered again this year. DCDSB has had their budget renewed again for the 2020/2021 school year.

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

Last week, Student Services held the first Mental Health and Addictions Steering Committee of the year and welcomed new members from various stakeholder groups, including a new representative from Durham Catholic Parent Involvement Committee (DCPIC). At the meeting, the Committee approved their one-year Action Plan, with priorities aligned with School Mental Health Ontario's School Mental Health Strategy. The current 3-year Mental Health Strategy (2017-2020) is set to expire this year, so this one-year Action Plan will carry through to 2021, at which time the Committee will hopefully be able to forecast, in order to develop a longer-term plan.

This week, the Durham Youth Drug Awareness Committee (DYDAC) launched a Video PSA contest for students in grades 7 through 12, in place of the secondary student conference that has been held for the past six years. Students have been encouraged to focus on healthy choices, personal or community safety, stigma and substance use. Schools from DDSB and DCDSB will be allowed to submit up to three videos from each grade level to the DYDAC committee. The closing date for the contest is December 14, 2020.

The Durham TAMI Coalition has been meeting to discuss alternate programming. At this point, the focus is on completing the classroom program in the Intermediate schools that were cancelled between March and June. The interactive pieces of the program (i.e., Introductory session and speaker session) will be done virtually. The TAMI Summits are on-hold for now.

## **I.2 Mental Health Report – D. Mullane (cont'd)**

Last week, Student Services advertised a unique novel study for grade 7 and 8 students based on one of the Harry Potter books: **Harry Potter and The Prisoner of Azkaban: A Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) Novel Study**. This Novel Study began as a partnership with a psychiatrist, Dr. Sinyor, at Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre and the Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario (CDSBEO). Dr. Sinyor proposed the project as a strategy for increasing mental health literacy and coping skills in youth. Diane Mullane mentioned this last year, but Student Services was never able to get it past the initial pilot stage. This year, there's been a great response from educators, and it will be launching in October with a select group of teachers.

Last month Student Services shared information about a telephone access line that was established over the summer and available for any student or family to call to request support. It has been decided to keep this line in place, as a barrier-free way for students and families to access support. This will be communicated widely in upcoming weeks.

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

Superintendent Lee-Fernandes thanked the entire Student Services Team for working diligently to support a positive return to learning and advised that a number of professional development opportunities have already been offered. A menu of offerings exclusively for the Virtual staff has been provided to address brand new staff joining the system, and adapting to the virtual world and providing student supports in a new realm.

### **Staffing Updates**

Superintendent Lee-Fernandes announced the following Student Services staffing changes:

#### **Resignations:**

- Michael Richardson, LTO Hearing Itinerant Teacher
- Kerrie McFadden, Psychological Associate

#### **New Staff:**

- Laurel Cowles, Hearing Itinerant Teacher returning (Oct. 1)
- Sheri Smith, Psychometrist
- Ashley Toohey, Psychometrist

### I.3 Superintendent’s Report – S. Lee-Fernandes (cont’d)

#### Individual Education Plans

Superintendent Lee-Fernandes provided the following update on Individual Education Plans:

##### Elementary IEP Dates

First Term	Second Term
⇒ Sent home October 20	⇒ Sent home February 1 (with first term Report Card)

##### Secondary IEP Dates

Quadmaster 1 (Sept. 8 – Nov. 11)	Quadmaster 2 (Nov. 16 – Jan. 29)	Quadmaster 3 (Feb. 1 – Apr. 20)	Quadmaster 4 (Apr. 22 – June 25)
⇒ Sent home October 6	⇒ Sent home December 3	⇒ Sent home February 23	⇒ Sent home May 11

#### Update on Return to Learning

Superintendent Lee-Fernandes provided the following update on return to learning:

##### In-Class Learning (Effective September 28, 2020)

- Elementary – 11 531 students
- Secondary – 5403 students

##### Virtual Learning (Effective September 28, 2020)

- Elementary – 3520 students
- Secondary – 1125 students

### I.3 Superintendent’s Report – S. Lee-Fernandes (cont’d)

As of September 21, 2020, all change requests were accommodated with the exception of French Immersion classes – there may have been some limits due to the availability of qualified teaching staff for French language instruction

Parents/guardians wishing to change between models at this time will be put on waitlist. The next general time for movement between models will be after Christmas.

#### Covid Management in Schools

DCDSB does have detailed Public Health protocols that we are following in schools. Public Health nurses are involved in the schools at this time and are making regular visits (once/week). The Board continues to adapt its protocols and responses based on new information from Public Health and being responsive to the feedback from parents. Outbreaks are declared by Public Health – they will also direct classroom or school closures

### **I.3 Superintendent's Report – S. Lee-Fernandes (cont'd)**

#### **Preparedness to Pivot**

All teachers have set up their Edsby classrooms – Edsby is the Learning Management System that the Board uses for communication with parents/guardians. Making sure this connection between home and school is in place will support a move to cohort or online learning if required. The Ministry of Education would direct any changes to the learning models being offered.

#### **October is Learning Disabilities Month**

Superintendent Lee-Fernandes thanked the Learning Disabilities Association of Durham Region for sharing the calendar that highlights “31 Days of LD”. Based on Canadian statistics, up to 2200 students in the DCDSB system may have a Learning Disability. The calendar is a great resource for schools – includes a mix of facts, resource links, and activities that would benefit the whole school community in a variety of ways. This calendar has been shared with the system.

Motion No. SS-2020-10-06-03

Approval of the October 6, 2020 Verbal Coordinator, Mental Health Leader and Superintendent Reports

Moved by L. McLellan, seconded by I. Massis

“THAT the Special Education Advisory Committee accept the verbal Coordinator, Mental Health Leader and Superintendent Reports at the October 6, 2020 meeting.”

**CARRIED**

### **M. Association Reports**

#### **Learning Disabilities Association – Durham Chapter – K. Burke**

Throughout October, Learning Disabilities Awareness month, the Learning Disabilities Associations of Ontario will be raising awareness to reduce stigma to allow people to get the supports they need to reach their potential.

“In the middle of this Pandemic it is clear that those who already faced barriers to success now have additional challenges to overcome” states Lawrence Barns, President & Chief Executive Officer of LDAO. “This Pandemic has heightened challenges at school, university, the workplace and of course homes in lockdown. Our desire is to remind people that stigma has very real negative consequences and that support has the reverse impact. Statistics in Canada weren't great and likely worse during this time, its time for all of us to do better at supporting those with Learning Disabilities”

### **The Stats**

- **1 In 10 people in Ontario are impacted.**
- **35% of students with LDs drop out of school**
- **62% of students with LDs will be unemployed a year after graduation**
- **36% of youth in correctional facilities have specific learning disabilities.**
- **Almost 50% of adolescent suicides have a diagnosis of an LD. (Source LDAC survey)**

### **Together we can change this!**

If society helps individuals with Learning Disabilities to succeed, all of the above statistics can be radically altered, leading to successful lives that can impact our communities for the better and people with learning disabilities can become among the most creative, and productive members of our communities.

### **About the Campaign:**

The greatest hurdle a person with an LD often has to overcome is the stigma and public perception, labelled lazy, stupid or incompetent they begin to hide their disability and instead struggle in silence. Yet with their strengths, and above average intelligence, some simple support can see them excel in their chosen field. Our hope is to see Ontario as the leader in destroying the barriers stigma creates.

### **About Us:**

The Learning Disabilities Associations of Ontario are registered charities dedicated to improving the lives of children, youth and adults with learning disabilities. Through the local chapter The LDA OF (insert as required) services to the public are provided through a network of Chapters across Ontario. LDAs receive no government funding for their work and rely on the generous support of donors and funders.

### **Our Mission:**

LDAO's mission is to provide leadership in learning disabilities advocacy, research, education and services and to advance the full participation of children, youth and adults with learning disabilities in today's society. We value promoting positive change through:

- Innovation
- Strategic partnerships
- Credible advocacy
- Informed public policy and
- Quality products and services

### **More about Learning Disabilities:**

- By definition someone with LDs has average to above average intelligence
- LDs impact certain skills, most of which can be improved with the right supports.
- Because LDs usually exhibit in the school system, those with LDs can be identified early in life, and early intervention improves confidence.
- When they don't receive appropriate support, individuals with LDs have higher than the average rates of school dropout, unemployment and poverty.
- LDs can be inherited and many parents are now finding they are have been impacted in their lives as their children are diagnosed.



**Dyslexia:** Difficulties with oral and/or written language, i.e., listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

**Dysgraphia:** Difficulties with writing legibly with age-appropriate speed, and with written expression

**Dyscalculia:** Difficulties with basic math skills, calculating, and math problem-solving

**Executive Function:** A set of mental processes that helps connect past experience with present action. People use it to perform activities such as planning, organizing, strategizing, paying attention to and remembering details, and managing time and space.

**For Further Information Contact your local LDA chapter:** [www.LDAO.ca/contact-us/ldao-chapters/](http://www.LDAO.ca/contact-us/ldao-chapters/)

### **Durham Down Syndrome Association – L. McLellan**

Each remaining Saturday in October, DDSA invites you to get out in the fresh air and join in an Autumn Hike with Mike! Mike is a DDSA member, as well as the DDSA's Board Secretary, and an avid hiker with his kids. This Saturday October 10th, Mike will be at Heber Down Conservation Area at 10 am to lead an autumn hike, respecting social distancing, and maintaining COVID safety guidelines (masks outdoors on the trail are not mandatory, but should be brought along for precaution). This hike, rain or shine, will be two parts, each approximately 25 minutes long: first part is mild, second part moderate; some may opt for just part one.

If you would like to join DDSA, meet in Heber Down Conservation Area parking lot off of Country Lane at 10 am: <https://goo.gl/maps/Jir33KJBDFHa2qC26>

Hike will start at 10:05 am. Parking is \$3.

Please RSVP with a Facebook message or email DDSA at [mastermail@ddsa.ca](mailto:mastermail@ddsa.ca) if you are interested, so Mike has an idea of how many people to look for on the day of, so no one gets left behind!

### **Autism Ontario – S. Casola**

Community Family Services of Ontario and Autism Ontario presents “Language development milestones for Children” in Mandarin – October 27, 1:00-2:00pm

Registration and information here:

[https://www.autismontario.com/civCRM/event/info?id=4349&utm\\_source=Email&utm\\_medium=Newsletter&utm\\_campaign=October\\_Newsletter](https://www.autismontario.com/civCRM/event/info?id=4349&utm_source=Email&utm_medium=Newsletter&utm_campaign=October_Newsletter)

The Latest Genetic Breakthrough in Autism Research - Thursday, October 29 from 12:00pm – 1:00pm. Registration and information here:

<https://onlinexperiences.com/scripts/Server.nxp?LASCmd=AI:4;F:QS!10100&ShowUID=74836D4A-D905-4FFD-87E5-0E1B334459A1>

## **Grandview Children’s Centre – C. Nosseir**

### **Foundational Family Services**

The Ministry has recently added a new service that provides support and increases parent and caregiver’s capacity for families registered for the Ontario Autism Program. This service will provide parent training and help parents/caregivers to build their own skills in helping their child on an ongoing basis. These services will be provided at no charge to OAP families.

We at Grandview, feel that as a parent or caregiver, you are your child’s first and most essential teacher; so we have added a series of parent/caregiver workshops on various topics that can be accessed by registering on My Community Hub. These services will continue to transform to meet our family’s needs to ensure support as the Ministry’s new OAP is created. Stay tuned for new and exciting changes!

To access My Community Hub, visit <https://grandviewkids.ca/> and click register in the top right corner.

## **N. Correspondence**

None

## **O. Inquiries and Miscellaneous**

None

## **P. Pending Items**

None

## **Q. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 8:44 p.m.

Motion No. SS-2020-10-06-04  
Adjournment

Moved by L. McLellan, seconded by K. Burke

“THAT the Special Education Advisory Committee meeting of October 6, 2020 adjourn.”

**CARRIED**

## **R. Closing Prayer**

The closing prayer was offered by J. McCafferty.

**X**

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Valerie Adamo  
Chair, Special Education Advisory Committee

**X**

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Susie Lee-Fernandes  
Superintendent of Education

Recording Secretary: Candice Cavalier