



**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, September 15, 2020 at 7:30 p.m.

Present

V. Adamo (Chair)
K. Burke
T. Chapman
J. McCafferty
C. Nosseir
L. McLellan

Staff

S. Lee-Fernandes
S. Phoenix
D. Mullane
J. Abrams
C. Congrady
F. Mosier

With Regrets

S. Casola
M. Cope

Absent

A. Massis

SEAC Representatives

L. Wardle, Principal/Vice Principal Representative
T. Robertson, 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 7:37 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-2020-09-15-01
Approval of Agenda

Moved by K. Burke, seconded by C. Nosseir

“THAT the Special Education Advisory Committee approve the agenda of the Tuesday, September 15, 2020 meeting, as printed.”

CARRIED

C. Announcements

Superintendent Lee-Fernandes shared congratulations to Emma Fischer, a grade 11 student at All Saints for her winning Year of Love poster design.

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 June 2, 2020

Motion No. SS-2020-09-15-02
Approval of Minutes

Moved by C. Nosseir, seconded by T. Chapman

“THAT the Special Education Advisory Committee approve the Minutes of the June 2, 2020 meeting, as submitted.”

CARRIED

f.2 Business Arising from the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting of June 2, 2020

None

G. Presentations

g.1 Re-Opening of Schools and Special Education – S. Lee-Fernandes

Superintendent Lee-Fernandes shared that the Durham Catholic District School Board continues their commitment to Excellence, Equity and Engagement and their respective priorities such as research based best practices, encouraging and celebrating collaboration, cultivating a positive sense of self and belonging for each individual, enhancing relationships with our students, which are among many others. She emphasized the importance of parent/guardian consultation as goals are being developed. Opportunities have been and will continue to be provided for parent input by way of virtual meetings with call-in options.

COVID-19

Superintendent Lee-Fernandes provided an overview of the protection measures that the Durham Catholic District School Board has put in place to ensure the health and safety of staff and students with respect to COVID-19 including mental health awareness and supports. She shared that each school has a COVID-19 safety plan that has been developed in alignment with the Ministry of Education Guidelines and Public Health requirements and reviewed by the Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee (JOHSC) and Senior Administration. Signage regarding physical distancing and other safety measures were also provided to all schools. Operational guidelines have been put into place, which were reviewed and approved by JOHSC.

Programming

Superintendent Lee-Fernandes shared that as of September 12 all accommodation requests with respect to switching between online and in-class learning have been granted. Going forward transitions will likely take place at natural breaks in the school year (e.g. Christmas, March Break).

Superintendent Lee-Fernandes shared a detailed overview of what re-entry might look like for those students with special education needs and discussed supports that were offered to those students during the distance learning period, such as home visits to assist with technology.

She also shared a detailed overview of what the remote learning requirements look like and information on the services offered by the Student Services Department and how they have been adapted for the 20-21 school year.

Additional Funding

Superintendent Lee-Fernandes shared details of additional funding that was provided by the Ministry of Education for Increased Supports and Summer Learning Opportunities.

H. Discussion Items

h.1 Goal Setting

Superintendent Lee-Fernandes discussed the reopening of schools, which has been developed under the following principles:

- Providing a safe and healthy school environment for students, teachers and staff, and safeguarding the broader communities in which they live
- Providing a consistently high-quality education for every student in Ontario
- Addressing potential gaps in student learning, mental health and well-being arising from the school closures in 2019-20
- Maintaining close communication with and respecting the opinions and authority of parents and reducing barriers to returning to work

h.2 Calendar Review

Superintendent Lee-Fernandes shared an outline of annual activities and presentations prepared by the Student Services department and asked the committee if there was anything further they would like to see added or if there was any feedback. The Committee shared their feedback on the outline and provided suggestions for items that they would like to see at future SEAC meetings. The calendar will be updated accordingly.

h.3 Ontario Parent Survey Results

Superintendent Lee-Fernandes shared the results of a province-wide online parent survey that was conducted between May 5 and June 19 by McMaster University and Offord Centre for Child Studies. The purpose of the survey was to help understand what families with children are experiencing in the context of COVID-19, and what services families and caregivers may need. She advised that the survey is part of a larger intervention study funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada created to promote positive parenting practices and improve child outcomes. The survey was completed by 7434 caregivers/parents, representing over 14000 children.

I. Delegations

None

J. Notices of Motion

None

K. Unfinished Business from Previous Meetings

None

L. Staff Reports

I.1 Coordinator's Report – F. Mosier

Summer Learning

DCDSB participated in a Ministry funded initiative for Summer Learning for students with Individual Education Plans. Teachers and Student Services staff submitted proposals with a topic of interest for students with a specific learning profile. 39 Teachers and several Assistive Technology Specialists, with Educational Assistants supporting, ran over 50 programs for students in the months of July and August. Topics included: Cooking, Film and Photography, Computer Literacy, Reading Comprehension and Visual Arts. Over 160 students were enrolled. Parent feedback was positive.

I.1 Coordinator's Report – F. Mosier (cont'd)

Transition Programs

A total of 1,858 students participated in enhanced transition programs over the course of the 2 weeks prior to schools opening. 205 Teachers along with 184 Educational Assistants and 3 Speech & Language Pathologists planned and delivered over 77 transition programs for students with special needs. 96 more Educators and 6 Child & Youth Councilors facilitated transition programs for students with mental health needs

Autism

Peers and Friendship Lab virtual programs ran over the summer months. Both of these programs will continue this fall in an online platform.

The new Early Intervention Classroom at St. Bridget has opened. 5 new students will begin in the program this week.

St. Joseph CS (Oshawa) is piloting a Reintegration Classroom for students with social language needs. 6 students will be participating in a small group with 2 Educational Assistants and a PST classroom teacher for 1 hour each day. The skills developed in the reintegration classroom will be generalized to the students' regular classroom.

Assistive Technology

The Assistive Technology Team provided Summer Learning opportunities including device and software specific sessions (e.g., Chromebook hotkeys, Read & Write). Additionally, the AT Team supported transition programs in schools in August.

The team is currently working to complete assessments, deliveries and trainings from before school closure and referrals received since school reopening.

The AT Team is refining a process to support students attending the Virtual Schools. We continue to transition to Chromebooks as the assigned device. MACs will no longer be purchased once inventory is depleted.

PST Mentoring

DCDSB's annual mentoring program for New Program Support Teachers began Friday, September 11, 2020. The initial session focused on IOL and E-Raid Training. Each new Program Support Teacher has been paired with a mentor and monthly mentoring sessions will follow pertaining to topics vital to successfully navigate the world of Program Support.

Psych and SLP Services

Dr. Jessica Abrams, Manager, Psychological and Speech Language Services/Chief Psychologist, welcomed Kerrie McFadden, Psychological Associate. Kerrie comes to DCDSB with years of experience working with students, schools, and families.

Student Services is working to fill a maternity leave position in Psychological Services and is currently short-staffed in the Speech-Language Department. Student Services staff are currently covering additional schools. Psych and SLP staff are currently

I.1 Coordinator's Report – F. Mosier (cont'd)

providing consultation support to school teams and completing assessments that carried over from last year

Assessment referrals will commence in October with enhanced safety protocols in place. Careful consideration of factors that may impact the validity of assessments will be taken when making referrals

I.2 Mental Health Report – D. Mullane

Summer Mental Health Support:

The Ministry of Education made funds available to provide mental health supports over summer.

DCDSB Social Workers provided Brief Therapy Intervention and Wellness Check-Ins to students and families on existing caseloads and also established a telephone access line for any student or family to call to request support. All services were offered virtually (phone or OTN). Over 60 students and families received support.

DCDSB also updated suicide protocols and self-injury guidelines over the summer which will be rolled out to staff in upcoming weeks.

Student Services is looking at virtual options and trying to be creative for some programs this year, (e.g., TAMI, Roots of Empathy, DYDAC conference) due to restrictions. Similarly, many of the mental health certificate trainings (e.g., MHFA, ASIST, SafeTALK) can only be delivered in person so Student Services is looking at how to deliver these in a safe way.

All DCDSB staff have been in-serviced on a "Mentally Healthy Return to School" (included revisiting the messages from Dr. Kristen McLeod related to trauma-informed schools).

Student Services provided resources from SMHO, including **The First 10 Days (and Beyond)**, as well as additional tools to help them feel more comfortable supporting students with mental health challenges and knowing when to access additional supports.

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

Superintendent Lee-Fernandes welcomed all returning SEAC members, staff resources, and the public watching to a new school year. She shared that it was a very successful July and August with Summer Learning Programs and Transition Programs that provided opportunities for students with special education needs to connect and continue learning over the summer, and prepare for a successful re-entry to school. Superintendent Lee-Fernandes extended a huge thank you to the tremendous dedication of all the various staff members who were involved in summer programs.

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

Superintendent Lee-Fernandes shared that Student Services welcomes some new members to Student Services:

- Christine Congrady - Student Services Coordinator for Whitby, North Oshawa and Alternative Education
- Kyla Edgecombe – Child and Youth Counsellor
- Kerrie McFadden - Psychological Associate

She advised that Student Services focus continues to be in meeting the needs of students with special education needs. As the school environment adapts to the health and safety requirements, Student Services will continue to support students so they can achieve their full potential both academically and socially

Motion No. SS-2020-09-15-03

Approval of the September 15, 2020 Verbal Coordinator, Mental Health Leader and Superintendent Reports

Moved by K. Burke, seconded by T. Chapman

“THAT the Special Education Advisory Committee accept the verbal Coordinator, Mental Health Leader and Superintendent Reports at the September 15, 2020 meeting.”

CARRIED

M. Association Reports

Learning Disabilities Association – Durham Chapter – K. Burke

Sept. 24/20 Integra-Walk A Mile in My Shoes (online) Workshop Series Fall

Oct.8/20 Integra-Anxiety and Learning Disorders (online) Workshop Series Fall

Oct. 17 & 18- CADDAC 12th Annual ADHD Conference (virtual) <http://www.cadac.ca>

Oct. 22/20 Integra Executive Functioning and Emotional Regulation (online) Workshop Series Fall

All Integra Workshop registration at their website

<http://www.childdevelop.ca/programs/integra-program/workshops-and-training/workshop-registration-form>

Sagonaska Demonstration School Youtube Channel-contains numerous resources and strategies on Learning Disabilities and ADHD

VOICE for the Hearing Impaired – V. Adamo

The annual VOICE conference is being revisited in light of the current situation with COVID.

Voice has been extremely active over the past couple of months in pursuing masking studies and alternatives.

Through our SEAC reps and many of our Auditory Verbal Therapist and Itinerant teacher members we have been working behind the scenes with many of the school boards, the Ministry of Education and the various auditory device manufacturers and audiologists.

The focus of the work has been in understanding the impact to sound quality and the availability of visual cues of the various masking options. Although this work is of direct importance to kids with hearing loss, we firmly believe that the work has a much broader audience of interest. If you are interested in additional information please don't hesitate to let me know.

Durham Down Syndrome Association – L. McLellan

The DDSA has educator packages available for any educator or parent who would like one. Contact mastermail@ddsa.ca to get a copy or go to ddsa.ca for a digital copy.

Durham Catholic District School Board of Trustees – J. McCafferty

Kathy LeFort, Trustee for the Townships of Uxbridge, Scugog and Brock has moved out of area and therefore resigned from the Durham Catholic District School Board of Trustees after over 30 years. The vacancy for the position closes on Monday and a replacement will be selected in October.

N. Correspondence

n.1 Correspondence from Halton Catholic District School Board dated June 8, 2020

n.2 Correspondence from Integration Action for Inclusion re: Return to School dated July 25, 2020

n.3 Correspondence from Integration Action for Inclusion re: Bill 197 dated July 25, 2020

Motion No. SS-2020-09-15-04
Correspondence from SEAC Committees

Moved by C. Nosseir, seconded by J. McCafferty

“THAT the Special Education Advisory Committee receive and file the correspondence from the Halton Catholic District School Board SEAC Committee and Integration Action for Inclusion shared at the September 15, 2020 Meeting.”

CARRIED

O. Inquiries and Miscellaneous

None

P. Pending Items

None

Q. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:24 p.m.

Motion No. SS-2020-09-15-05
Adjournment

Moved by J. McCafferty, seconded by L. McLellan

“THAT the Special Education Advisory Committee meeting of September 15, 2020 adjourn.”

CARRIED

R. 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: Candice Cavalier