



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

Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Durham Catholic District School Board

January 4, 2022 at 7:30 PM

Virtual Meeting

Members Present:

V. Adamo (Chair, VOICE for the Hearing Impaired), W. Heeney (Durham Down Syndrome Association), S. Casola (Autism Ontario), C. Nosseir (Grandview Children's Centre), J. Sorhaitz (Learning Disabilities Ontario), A. Massis (Community Representative), A. Dressekie (Community Representative)

Trustees Present:

J. Oldman

Regrets:

Jim McCafferty (Trustee), M. Cope (CUPE Representative)

Staff Present:

S. Lee-Fernandes (Superintendent of Education), J. Abrams (Senior Manager, Psychological and Speech-Language Services/Chief Psychologist), T. Ezquerra (Student Services Consultant), A. Roffey (Communications), N. Dunning (Speech-Language Pathologist)

SEAC Representatives:

P. Sorhaitz (Principal/Vice-Principal Representative), T. Robertson (APSSP Representative), L. Jemmott (OECTA Representative)

1. Opening
 - 1.1. Land Acknowledgements
 - 1.2. Memorials and Prayer

Chair Adamo called the meeting to order at 7:36 p.m., offered the opening prayer, and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

- 1.3. Roll Call and Apologies
- 1.4. Call to Order

1.5. Approval of the Agenda

Motion:

SS-2022-01-04-01

Approval of Agenda

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

"That the Special Education Advisory Committee approve the agenda of the Tuesday, January 4, 2022 meeting, as printed."

CARRIED

1.6. Approval of the minutes of the previous meeting

Motion:

SS-2022-01-04-02

Approval of the Minutes

Motion moved by W. Heeney and motion seconded by C. Nosseir.

"That the Special Education Advisory Committee approve the Minutes of the December 7, 2021 meeting as submitted."

CARRIED

1.7. Declarations of Interest

None

2. Items for Information/Decision

2.1. Announcements

2.1.1. LDADR Change in Representation

On December 15, 2021, Superintendent Lee-Fernandes received correspondence from Vice Chair Burke, stating that for personal reasons, she would be stepping down and Learning Disabilities Association of Durham Region would be appointing Julie Sorhaitz as their new SEAC representative. The Committee accepted the appointment of Julie Sorhaitz and the resignation of Kari Burke at the January 4, 2022 meeting.

2.2. Election for Chair of Special Education Advisory Committee

2.2.1. Election for the Position of Chair of the Special Education Advisory Committee - Susie Lee-Fernandes

Superintendent Lee-Fernandes opened the floor for nominations for the position of Chair of SEAC for the period of January 4, 2022 to December 31, 2022.

2.2.2. Comments from Candidates

<u>Nominee</u>	<u>Moved</u>	<u>Seconded by</u>	<u>Willing to Stand?</u>
V. Adamo	W. Heeney	C. Nosseir	Yes

2.2.3. Motion to Close Nominations

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

Motion:

SS-2022-01-04-03

Close Nominations

“THAT the Special Education Advisory Committee close nominations for the position of Chair of SEAC for the period from January 4, 2022 to December 31, 2022.”

Motion moved by J. Oldman and seconded by S. Casola.

CARRIED

2.2.4. Acceptance Speech by the Chair of the Special Education Advisory Committee

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 4, 2022 to December 31, 2022. Valerie accepted the position of Chair.

2.3. Election for Vice Chair of the Special Education Advisory Committee

2.3.1. Election for the Position of Vice Chair of the Special Education Advisory Committee

Chair Adamo opened the floor for nominations for the position of Vice Chair of SEAC for the period of January 4, 2022 to December 31, 2022.

2.3.2. Comments from Candidates

<u>Nominee</u>	<u>Moved</u>	<u>Seconded by</u>	<u>Willing to Stand?</u>
W. Heeney	J. Oldman	S. Casola	Yes

2.3.3. Motion to Close Nominations

Motion:

SS-2022-01-04-04

Close Nominations

“THAT the Special Education Advisory Committee close nominations for the position of Vice Chair of SEAC for the period from January 4, 2022 to December 31, 2022.”

Motion moved by J. Oldman and seconded by C. Nosseir.

CARRIED

2.3.4. Acceptance Speech by the Vice Chair of the Special Education Advisory Committee

Chair Adamo welcomed W. Heeney, Representative for Durham Down Syndrome Association as Vice Chair of SEAC for the period from January 4, 2022 to December 31, 2022. Walter accepted the position of Vice Chair.

2.4. Presentations

2.4.1. Lexia - Greenfield Learning - Karen Rowland

Karen Rowland, the representative from Greenfield Learning sent her regrets as she was not able to attend this meeting. Teresa Ezquerra, Student Services Consultant presented on behalf of Lexia and Greenfield Learning.

Teresa provided an in-depth overview of the Lexia software. Teresa highlighted that Lexia is a comprehensive reading intervention program that enables students of all abilities to advance their reading skills in various areas, it accelerates reading skill development, predicts students' year-end performance, and provides teachers with data-driven action plans to help differentiate instruction. The DCDSB currently has 500 Lexia licenses assigned to students in the Elementary and Secondary panels.

Teresa also provided a breakdown of preliminary data that shows overall great progress since the start of the current school year.

Teresa answered questions as they arose.

2.4.2. Special Education Review - Susie Lee-Fernandes

Superintendent Lee-Fernandes reviewed the following SEAC goals that the committee had previously agreed upon:

- Building greater capacity around the connection between students with special education needs and mental health
- Support return to learning
- Evidence-based strategies specific to reading instruction
- Include Special Education Review as a discussion item going forward

Superintendent Lee-Fernandes shared a breakdown of the monthly updates of discussion on key areas of focus and recommendations.

2.5. Discussion Items

None

2.6. Business arising from previous meeting

2.6.1. Draft Letter to Ministry in Support of Online Learning Supports and Universal Design for Learning

Chair Adamo shared that the draft letter to the Minister of Education in support of Online Learning Support and Universal Design for Learning was sent to everyone earlier today. The committee was asked to review the letter in order to finalize it at the next SEAC meeting.

2.7. Staff Reports

2.7.1. Coordinator's Report - Teresa Ezquerra

- The new PST Mentoring series continues in a modified manner to accommodate supporting students during virtual learning.
- Student Services Coordinators continue to visit schools to assess student needs and ensure that adequate supports are being provided.
- Sharing of Excellence Workshop; Principles of ABA: Individualized Programming will be offered virtually by Student Services staff.

- The follow-up Lexia training scheduled for the end of January has been postponed until further notice.

2.7.2. Mental Health Leader's Report - Dr. Jessica Abrams

Student Services will be offering the following workshops virtually:

- Introduction to Mindfulness, as a Sharing of Excellence on Jan 12th. This workshop will focus on strategies that can be used both personally and in the classroom to enhance staff and student well being
- Bounce Back (skill-building sessions) on Jan. 17th, presented by the Canadian Mental Health Association
- Mind Beacon (iCBT) on Jan. 26th

Bell Let's Talk Day falls on Jan. 26th. Information and resources will be shared with schools to use in classrooms and to encourage raising awareness of mental health and stigma on that day.

Mental Health First Aid Training - Youth (Virtual training). This is an updated version of the Mental Health First Aid in-person youth course targeted for Secondary Educational Assistants. It consists of three modules, the first one is self-directed starting on Jan. 31st.

2.7.3. Superintendent's Report - Susie Lee-Fernandes

Superintendent Lee-Fernandes shared the plans for remote learning as students return to learning after the break given the Ministry's most recent announcement indicating a tentative return date of January 17th.

- Technology is being distributed to students as needed
- Elementary classes to begin on Thursday, Jan 6th
- Secondary classes to begin Wednesday, Jan. 5th with shorter check-in meetings and full classes starting on Thursday, Jan. 6th
- Students with complex special needs will begin in-person starting on Thursday or Friday with transportation in place by Friday.

Student Services staff will be ready to support students in-person in specific circumstances, however, students must meet the following criteria to be accommodated with in-person learning:

- Student is not accessing the Ontario curriculum and has a completely alternative program supported by the PST
- Requires pervasive or extensive EA support to access learning in general
- Needs of the student cannot be met through remote/online learning

Motion:

SS-2022-01-04-05

Approval of the January 4, 2022 verbal Coordinator, Mental Health Leader and Superintendent Reports

“THAT the Special Education Advisory Committee accept the verbal Coordinator, Mental Health Leader and Superintendent Reports of the January 4, 2022 meeting.”

Motion moved by S. Casola and seconded by J. Oldman.

CARRIED

2.8. Association Reports

None

2.9. Correspondence

2.9.1. Email from the Association of Chief Speech Language Pathologists of Ontario School Boards (ACSLP) dated Dec. 6, 2021

Nicola Dunning, a Speech-Language Pathologist with the DCDSB, spoke on behalf of the Association of Chief Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario School Boards (ACSLP).

Nicola informed that the Ministries of Health, Education and Children, Community and Social, Services have recently announced a review of PPM 81; the provision of health support services in school settings.

Nicola provided a detailed explanation of ACSLP's position noting that the association supports the work of SLPs employed by school boards in delivering equitable, responsive, and comprehensive services to students.

Nicola asked if SEAC would consider sending a letter in support of a tiered model of service delivery which includes the unification of Speech and Language Services delivered by school board employed Speech-Language Pathologists and recommending that funding and oversight for unified delivery of speech and language services be consolidated under the Ministry of Education and the District School Boards.

Nicola answered questions as they arose.

The Committee agreed to review in advance and to provide feedback to the discussion of our position the next meeting.

3. Other Business

3.1. Board Communications

3.2. Motion to Adjourn

Motion:

SS-2022-01-04-06

Motion to Adjourn

“THAT the Special Education Advisory Committee meeting of January 4, 2021 adjourn.”

Motion moved by W. Heeney and seconded by S. Casola.

CARRIED

3.2.1. The next meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee will be held on Tuesday, February 1, 2021 @ 7:30pm

3.3. Closing Prayer

Closing prayer was offered by C. Nosseir.

The meeting adjourned at 9:16 p.m.

Valerie Adamo
Chair, Special Education Advisory Committee

Susie Lee-Fernandes
Superintendent of Education

Recording Secretary: Delfina Pinto