



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

Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Durham Catholic District School Board

June 7, 2022 at 7:30 PM

Virtual Meeting

Members Present:

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

Trustees Present:

J. Oldman

Staff Present:

S. Lee-Fernandes (Superintendent of Education), D. Mullane (Senior Manager, Senior Manager of Mental Health Initiatives/Mental Health Leader), C. Congrady (Student Services Coordinator), A. Roffey (Communications)

SEAC Representatives:

D. Assenza (CPCO Representative), B. Larson (APSSP Representative), L. Jemmott (OECTA Representative)

Regrets:

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

1. Opening
 - 1.1. Land Acknowledgements
 - 1.2. Memorials and Prayer
 - 1.3. Roll Call and Apologies
 - 1.4. Call to Order

Chair Adamo called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m., offered the opening prayer, and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

- 1.5. Approval of the Agenda

Motion:

SS-2022-06-07-01

Approval of Agenda

"That the Special Education Advisory Committee approve the agenda of the Tuesday, June 7, 2022 meeting, as printed."

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

1.6. Approval of the minutes of the previous meeting

Motion:

SS-2022-06-07-02

Approval of the Minutes

"That the Special Education Advisory Committee approve the minutes of the Tuesday, May 3, 2022 meeting, as printed."

Motion moved by W. Heeney and motion seconded by A. Massis.
CARRIED

1.7. Declarations of Interest

None

2. Items for Information/Decision

2.1. Announcements

Superintendent Lee-Fernandes informed that the Student Services Department has a few significant staffing changes this year.

Superintendent Lee-Fernandes announced the resignation of Dr. Jessica Abrams, Senior Manager of Psychological and Speech-Language Services and Chief Psychologist. Dr. Abrams has accepted the position of Director of the Psychology Clinic at York University, providing clinical training to grad students. Dr. Abrams will be sincerely missed at DCDSB!

Superintendent Lee-Fernandes announced the following retirements:

- Nicola Dunning, Speech-Language Pathologist, after 22 years with DCDSB;
- Sandra Kearns, Resource Teacher for Behaviour, after 33 years with DCDSB;
- Leah Van Roessel, Itinerant Teacher for Hearing Services, after 34 years with DCDSB;
- Diane Mullane, Senior Manager of Mental Health Initiatives/Mental Health Leader, after 32 years with DCDSB. "Diane was a trailblazer

with her role and will leave a huge hole to fill. She will be greatly missed and we wish her nothing but the best in her retirement".

Superintendent Lee-Fernandes wished them well and thanked all of them for their many dedicated years of service to the Board.

2.2. Presentations

2.3. Discussion Items

2.3.1. Review of Priorities 2022-2023 - Susie Lee-Fernandes

Superintendent Lee-Fernandes shared the following 5 key areas of the Special Education Plan that will be reviewed next year:

- Standard 2.1:** The Board's General Model for Special Education
- Standard 2.8:** Special Education Placements Provided by the Board
- Standard 2.3:** Early Identification Procedures and Intervention Strategies
- Standard 2.5:** Educational and Other Assessments
- Standard 2.9:** Individual Education Plans (IEPs)

As previously shared with the committee, the DCDSB has started the groundwork for Project Search with the goal of beginning the program for students with developmental and intellectual disabilities in September of 2023. The program will provide a postsecondary experience for students who continue with the Board up until the age of 21. The last year of secondary school will focus on their pathway and building up their skills in preparation for the workplace and community living.

The pilot, Therapeutic Recreation in Schools, ran at All Saints CSS this year in partnership with the Abilities Centre in Whitby. This was a great success and expansion to other secondary schools will continue.

The Durham Catholic School Board recently submitted two proposals to the Ministry for additional funding to support the transitions for students with disabilities:

- Project Search for approximately \$300,000 which will go towards staffing
- STEP Co-op and Job Coaches for approximately \$450,000 which will go towards enhancing and improving the program and fund for Job Coaches in all secondary schools.

Superintendent Lee-Fernandes also shared that the DCDSB is continuing to build educator and staff capacity around Anti-Racism, Anti-Discrimination, Culturally Responsive Pedagogy, Universal Design for Learning and the Right to Read Inquiry.

2.4. Business arising from previous meeting

2.4.1. Feedback/Input re: Letter from Superior-Greenstone DSB (Virtual Meetings)

Motion:

SS-2022-06-07-03

In support of virtual meetings

“That the Special Education Advisory Committee draft a letter to the Minister of Education requesting to continue to allow meetings to occur virtually.

Motion moved by J. Oldman and motion seconded by A. Dressekie.

CARRIED

2.4.2. Draft Letter to the Minister of Education re: Nursing shortages

Motion:

SS-2022-06-07-04

Approval of letter as drafted

“That the Special Education Advisory Committee approve the drafted letter to the Minister of Education requesting that the issue of nursing shortages be of priority for the government.”

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

CARRIED

2.4.3. Draft Letter to the Minister of Education re: SIP funding

Motion:

SS-2022-06-07-05

Approval of letter as drafted

“That the special Education Advisory Committee approve the letter to the Minister of Education requesting that the Minister evaluate the true costs associated with SIP claims to support students and increase funding accordingly .”

Motion moved by J. Sorhaitz and motion seconded by J. Oldman.
CARRIED

2.5. Staff Reports

2.5.1. Coordinator's Report - Christine Congrady

Christine reported the following:

- The Coordinators are currently attending transition meetings for new students who will be joining our schools in September 2022;
- The PST Mentoring program concludes this month with a final session on end of year and start-up procedures;
- Sharing of Excellence Series:
 - How to Use Token Economy – participants learned about developing and using token economies with students
- Project SEARCH Update:
 - Upcoming meetings with the Abilities Centre and Durham Region
 - July 25-29th – Conference in Baltimore, Maryland

Christine answered questions from the committee.

2.5.2. Mental Health Leader's Report - Diane Mullane

Staff Professional Development:

- As part of Child and Youth Mental Health Week in the first week of May, we hosted an after-school safeTALK (suicide alertness) session for interested staff. The session was full to capacity and well-received by those who attended.
- On June 2, the parent/caregiver community (as well as the community at large) was invited to participate in a safeTALK session hosted by Youth Suicide Prevention Durham. DCDSB provided the venue and one of the trainers. We hope to provide additional opportunities for parent mental health literacy, including safeTALK sessions, in the upcoming year.

- The first session of the new Mental Health First Aid - Supporting Youth (Virtual) was provided on May 18 and 19 for a “gatekeeper” audience, which included school administrators, PSTs, Guidance Counsellors, and others. A summer session will be offered in early July, which is open to all staff members.

Staff Wellness Initiatives:

- On May 12, staff were invited to attend an after-school “Moment of Mindfulness” session hosted by our Mental Health Leader and one of our school Social Workers. This was part of our staff wellness initiatives.
- On June 2, we hosted a Cultural Wellness session with Angelique Benois from the Women’s Multicultural Resource and Counselling Centre.
- We are currently working on an onboarding wellness package for new employees.

Support for Ukrainian Families:

- Over this past month, DCDSB has been engaging in discussions with our ESL consultants and Settlement Workers to talk about how the Board can support our families arriving from Ukraine.
- The Ukrainian Canadian Congress- Durham Branch, requested specific information for their website, which is intended to be a one-stop shop for newcomer families and those who support them. Here is the website link: [Support Newcomers](#)
- Should some students with trauma histories require mental health supports, this can be provided using translation services, if needed. In the meantime, we’ve shared some information with schools about how to welcome and support the needs of newcomer students, including recognizing when a student might be struggling. This information is from School Mental Health Ontario and is available at this link: [School Mental Health Ontario-Welcoming Newcomers](#)

Diane Mullane, Senior Manager of Mental Health Initiatives/ Mental Health Leader shared this message with SEAC after her retirement was announced:

“It has been both a pleasure and a privilege to have participated in regular SEAC meetings over the past several years. I’ve loved learning about the types of activities and advocacy work that your organizations are involved in and getting to know some of you on a more personal level. I have the utmost respect for the work you do in serving our most vulnerable children, and I wish you all the best.”

2.5.3. Superintendent's Report - Susie Lee-Fernandes

Superintendent Lee-Fernandes shared the two learning opportunities that will be held during the summer;

Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario (LDAO) Educators’ Institute will be held on August 16th and 17th. This conference is open to the Special Education Team and Program Support Teachers. There are currently 18 attendees.

The Summer Institute for Educators will be held on August 25th and will provide a full day of learning on topics that include equity, mental health, classroom management, etc. A keynote will be on an equity-related topic and there will be an opportunity to purchase culturally relevant resources.

Superintendent Lee-Fernandes expressed her gratitude for the Committee's representation at SEAC this year. She also thanked and acknowledged the Student Services staff, Program Support Teachers, Educational Assistants, Principals and Vice Principals for all their hard work, dedication, and commitment to our students.

Motion:

SS-2022-06-07-06

Approval of the June 7, 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 June 7, 2022 meeting.”

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

2.6. Association Reports

Grandview Kids - C. Nosseir

Smart Start Hubs

Grandview Kids has been selected as an early adopter of SmartStart Hubs in the Durham Region – this model of coordinated service planning helps connect families to early intervention services in a more efficient way. The project implementation has moved to awareness building with formal and informal partners. The DCDSB will be invited to an information workshop prior to September 2022, in hopes of sharing information, roles and responsibilities as what the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services refers to as an “informal partner.”

Other Information:

- Grandview Kids is hosting its Annual General Meeting on June 23, 2022. Please watch our social media channels and website for information on how to access the live stream.
- Grandview Kids has a number of summer programs available to clients and caregivers. Please visit Grandview Kids, I Want To...” Register through MyCommunityHub” to review service offerings. These include Junior Firefighter Camp, Let’s Get Active, and Little Critter Camp.
- Grandview Kids is excited to compete for a Trexo Robotic Gait Training System. Trexo is a technology that helps children with disabilities stand and walk through the use of robotics. We encourage all members of the Durham Region community to vote for Grandview Kids by visiting <https://trexorobotics.com/trexo-plus-giveaway-canada/> and voting before June 30, 2022.

Learning Disability Association Durham Region - J. Sorhaitz

The recipient of the LDADR Power to Achieve Scholarship was awarded to Matthew Bayon, a Grade 12 student at All Saints CSS.

Congratulations to Matthew!

2.7. Correspondence

- 2.7.1. Letter from Kenora CDSB dated February 19, 2022 re: SIP claim funding

The letter addressed to the Honourable Stephen Lecce, Minister of Education from, Teresa Gallik, Chair of the Board of Trustees and Norine Schram, Chair of SEAC, Kenora CDSB requests that SIP funding does not continue to decrease and that Boards are provided with adequate resources to meet the support needs of students with special education needs so that they can reach their full potential.

The Committee agreed that no further action was needed as the letter in support of this matter had been drafted.

2.7.2. Letter from Kawartha Pine Ridge DSB dated May 4, 2022 re: Nursing Shortages

The letter, addressed to the Honourable Christine Elliott, Minister of Health, and to Honourable Stephen Lecce, Minister of Education from Alison Rodriguez, Chair of SEAC, Kawartha Pine Ridge DSB requesting that the issue of nursing shortages be a top priority for this government to develop a solution that allows all children access to the learning they require and deserve.

The Committee agreed that no further action was needed as the letter in support of this matter had been drafted.

3. Other Business

3.1. Board Communications

3.2. Motion to Adjourn

Motion:

SS-2022-06-07-07

Motion to Adjourn

“THAT the Special Education Advisory Committee meeting of June 7, 2022 adjourn.”

Moved by J. Oldman and motion seconded by C. Nosseir.

CARRIED

3.2.1. The next meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee will be held on Tuesday, September 13, 2022 @ 7:30 pm

3.3. Closing Prayer

Closing prayer was offered by Vice-Chair Heeney.

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The meeting adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

Valerie Adamo

Chair, Special Education Advisory Committee

Susie Lee-Fernandes

Superintendent of Education

Recording Secretary: Delfina Pinto