



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

## **Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes**

Durham Catholic District School Board

May 3, 2022 at 7:30 PM

### **Virtual Meeting**

#### **Members Present:**

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

#### **Trustees Present:**

J. Oldman, J. McCafferty

#### **Staff Present:**

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

#### **SEAC Representatives:**

P. Sorhaitz (CPCO Representative), T. Robertson (APSSP Representative), L. Jemmott (OECTA Representative) M. Cope (CUPE Representative)

#### **Regrets:**

W. Heeney (Durham Down Syndrome Association), A. Dressekie (Community 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 7:32 p.m., offered the opening prayer, and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

- 1.5. Approval of the Agenda

#### **Motion:**

SS-2022-05-03-01

Approval of Agenda

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

Motion moved by J. McCafferty and motion seconded by J. Oldman.

CARRIED

1.6. Approval of the minutes of the previous meeting

**Motion:**

SS-2022-05-03-02

Approval of the Minutes

"That the Special Education Advisory Committee approve the minutes of the Tuesday, April 5, 2022 meeting, as printed."

Motion moved by S. Casola and motion seconded by A. Massis.

CARRIED

1.7. Declarations of Interest

None

2. Items for Information/Decision

2.1. Announcements

None

2.2. Presentations

2.2.1. Multi-Year Strategic Plan - Tracy Barill, Director of Education

Director Barill shared the Multi-Year Strategic (MYSP) planning process the Durham Catholic School Board is currently engaged in.

According to the Education Act, every School Board is required to have a MYSP aimed at:

- promoting student achievement and well-being;
- a positive school climate that is inclusive and accepting of all pupils,
- the prevention of bullying and
- the delivery of effective and appropriate education to its pupils.

The MYSP is developed by the Director and the Senior Admin team, overseen by the MYSP Committee and approved by the Board of Trustees.

As part of the strategic planning process, the DCDSB is conducting a series of community consultation sessions to seek input and feedback from students, staff, families, parishes, and community stakeholders. Director Barill invited the committee to participate through the online platform, ThoughtExchange, to share their thoughts and rate thoughts shared by others. The committee was encouraged to subscribe to DCDSB webpage [dcdsb.ca/strategicplanning](https://dcdsb.ca/strategicplanning) for more information on upcoming engagement sessions.

2.2.2. Special Education Plan Review - Teresa Ezquerra, Student Services Consultant

Teresa Ezquerra, provided an overview of the 2021-2022 Special Education Plan required by the Ministry of Education. She highlighted that minimal changes were made from the previous version. The changes included:

- **Standard 1** – Board’s Consultation Process: a list of the presentations made at SEAC this year, based on consultation and requests by SEAC members;
- **Standard 2.4** - The current number of IPRCs;
- **Standard 2.6** - LHIN (Local Health Integration Networks) is now called Home and Community Care Support Services (HCCSS);
- **Standard 2.11**- updates on full-time equivalent (FTE) Special Education staffing;
- **Standard 3**- SEAC committee: updates to the names and contact information for each member

Teresa encouraged the committee to review the [Special Education Plan](#) on the DCDSB website and provide input and feedback at the next June SEAC meeting. She added that the Special Education Plan would be revised to include any changes they wish to see and that the final version would be submitted to the Ministry of Education at the end of July.

2.3. Discussion Items

2.4. Business arising from previous meeting

## 2.5. Staff Reports

### 2.5.1. Coordinator's Report - Teresa Ezquerra

The deadline to submit new packages for assistive technology to ensure delivery before end of June was April 22.

The Assistive Technology (AT) Team is diligently working through the 50+ packages that were received. To date, the AT Team has processed more than 260 AT packages this school year (including new, replacement & augmentative communication devices).

The AT Team continues to support students with the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT) & Education Quality Accountability Office (EQAO) assessments.

At the end of April, each secondary and 7-12 school hosted a Students with Assistive Technology Transition Trip (SWATTT). This event was supported by the AT Team, Program Support Teachers & Intermediate Guidance Teachers. Students had the opportunity to engage in the following activities:

- Welcome and Introductions
- Video Tour of school
- Student Voice
- Kahoot game
- Self-advocacy scenarios
- AT @ receiving school
- Virtually meet other students who have AT
- Follow-up with Intermediate Guidance Teacher after SWATTT

DCDSB has recently partnered with the Abilities Centre to offer a Therapeutic Recreation Program in Schools (TRIS). The goal of TRIS is to support students with disabilities to build, learn and maintain life and social skills, increase independence, and improve quality of life and overall wellness. Abilities Centre staff work with educators in schools to support students with disabilities in developing soft skills that directly impact resiliency and the ability to deal with positive and challenging change, including preparing for successful graduation and readiness for skills development and employment programs. The program is currently being piloted at All Saints CSS, but the DCDSB is looking to expand the TRIS program to other schools in the 2022-2023 school year.

Teresa answered questions from the committee.

#### 2.5.2. Mental Health Leader's Report - Jessica Abrams

During the week of May 2-6, DCDSB celebrates Catholic Education Week and **Child and Youth Mental Health Week**.

This year, Student Services has once again worked closely with the Faith department to develop an integrated package of resources for schools. These are some of the highlights:

- A joint Catholic Education and Child and Youth Mental Health Week web page has been created through the Communications Department to share information and resources with students and families. Mental health activities and strategies are included, and the story read-alouds has been set up for parents/guardians to access. Webpage link: <https://www.dcdsb.ca/en/students/catholic-education-week-and-child-and-youth-mental-health-week.aspx>
- On May 3, staff and students were invited to wear something green to acknowledge the importance of child and youth mental health and as a symbol of mental health awareness for all.
- A slide deck was provided to Secondary school hall monitors. This is a looping slide show that includes quotes, infographics and slides focused on help-seeking strategies and resources, including culturally-relevant resources and messaging.
- Three Interactive Resource Kits (Primary/Junior, Intermediate/ Secondary and Staff) were created. These kits include a compilation of activities including Guided Christian Meditations, mindful breathing and other calming activities, some familiar resources from School Mental Health Ontario (SMH-ON), story read-alouds (for Primary-Junior), mental health strategies (for Intermediate-Secondary), inspirational videos and music, and more. Educators are encouraged to explore the resources with their students and use the tools to engage and connect with students to support their faith, mental health and well-being.

**Professional Development Opportunities for Staff:**

- On May 5, safeTALK session will be offered for staff. SafeTALK teaches suicide alertness and it is open to all staff members by registration.
- We're **hoping** to run a Mental Health First Aid-Youth (Virtual) session on May 18 and 19 for a "gatekeeper audience" (many daytime sessions have had to be cancelled due to staff shortages)
- Upcoming Sharing of Excellence workshop on May 25: Engaging Youth in Mental Health and Anti-Stigma Initiatives (Tips for Starting a Student Wellness Group)

The **Staff Wellness initiatives** focus on body, mind and spirit. Currently, we're planning:

- "Wellness Walk" with Karli Robertson, Senior Manager of Indigenous Education on May 10;
- "Moment of Mindfulness" with Diane Mullane, Senior Manager of Mental Health Initiatives and Joyce Thompson, Social Worker on May 12;
- Culture Wellness session, hosted by Angelique Benois from the Women's Multicultural Resource and Counselling Centre on June 2;
- Distribution of "Three Pillars of Mental Health" posters from the Mood Disorders Society of Canada to all schools; and
- Finally, as part of the Child and Youth Mental Health Week package mentioned above, a unique "Staff Lounge" has also been created with activities to support staff well-being as a reminder that education staff need to take care of themselves too! We will be promoting this throughout the month of May.

2.5.3. Superintendent's Report - Susie Lee-Fernandes

Superintendent Lee-Fernandes informed that both Board level and Provincial committees have been established to analyze further the Right to Read Inquiry report. The Ontario Catholic School Trustees Association (OCSTA) and the Ministry of Education (MOE) are in the process of gathering input on the recommendations that are being brought forward by the report.

Both Public and Catholic boards represent the Provincial committee; however, the Catholic boards will consolidate feedback and submit a unified report to the Ministry of Education (MOE).

Superintendent Lee-Fernandes provided an overview of the Equity Plan draft for 2022-2023. The plan includes:

- Special Education Review
- Universal Design for Learning (UDL)
- Support for de-streaming – learning with Program Support Teachers (PSTs) to bring back to school staff/teams
- Right to Read Inquiry Report – Teaching pedagogy and interventions aligned with the science of reading

Committee members shared suggestions that will be brought forward for consideration.

Superintendent Lee-Fernandes acknowledged and thanked Dr. Jessica Abrams and the Speech-Language Pathologists for the excellent presentation on the Science of Reading at the last Program Support Teacher Meeting.

**Motion:**

SS-2022-05-03-03

Approval of the May 3, 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 May 3, 2022 meeting.”

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

2.6. Association Reports

**Grandview Kids - C. Nosseir**

**Smart Start Hubs**

Grandview Kids has been selected by Empowered Kids Ontario as an early adopter of Smart Start Hubs. These Hubs will connect parents and caregivers with child development services in their communities as early as possible. The Hub will be a clear point of entry to services for children and families and bring together local professionals in early intervention and

child development services to provide seamless connection to assessments and services. Community partners, including DCDSB, will be invited to information and collaboration sessions as the project gets underway in the coming months.

**Other Information:**

- Grandview Kids is pleased to share that it has officially broken ground on the new headquarters located at 1641 Harwood Avenue North in Ajax. The project has been funded by the Federal, Provincial, Municipal and local Government. Building will commence in the fall of 2022 with an opening planned for September 2024. While the new four-story facility will provide improved access to children and families, satellite locations in Whitby, Scugog, Oshawa, and Clarington will remain. More information, including a recording of the live-streamed ground-breaking is available on GrandviewKids.ca.
- Representatives from Grandview Kids will participate in the DCDSB strategic planning session on May 4, 2022.

**Autism Ontario - S. Casola**

Autism Ontario has a number of excellent webinars available “on-demand” on our website:

<https://www.autismontario.com/programsservices/webinars/recent-and-upcoming-webinars>

**New Programs or Services:**

Autism Ontario has a number of distance program offerings – primarily virtual workshops being and programming for children and youth offered in the Durham Region – all can be found at:

[https://www.autismontario.com/events?custom\\_325=Durham&event\\_type\\_id=All](https://www.autismontario.com/events?custom_325=Durham&event_type_id=All)

**Updates and Information:**

With the recent celebration of World Autism Day on April 2, 2022, we continue to see great strides towards a more inclusive Ontario for Autism. Many schools are activating Autism Ontario’s *Celebrate the Spectrum* theme throughout the month of April. Activations can be found at [Celebrating the Spectrum](#).



Autism Ontario would also like to share with you the release of a report conducted in partnership with Autism Ontario and Laurier Autism Research Consortium of Wilfred-Laurier University titled “Families in Flux: Findings from the 2021 Ontario Autism Caregiver Survey on education, service access, and well-being in the context of COVID-19” on World Autism Day found [here](#).

Website: [www.autismontario.com](http://www.autismontario.com)

### **LDADR - J. Sorhaitz**

May 2022

- ONBIDA – Teacher Training “Introduction to Structured Literacy Instruction” \*\*Registration starts in May (see ONBIDA’s website for more details). This training will include self-study with the online course “The Reading Teacher’s Top 10 Tools” by Dr. Deb Glaser which is aligned with the IDA Knowledge and Practice Standards.

Thursday, May 5th

- Integra – Executive Functioning and Emotion Regulation webinar. This workshop provides participants with an understanding of the nature of executive functioning (higher-order thinking skills including planning, organization, and flexibility) for children with LDs in this area. Practical strategies to support the development of executive functioning skills and self-regulation will be shared.

Thursday, May 19th

- Integra – The Social Impact of Learning Disabilities webinar. In this workshop, we will discuss why children with LDs are at risk for experiencing social challenges with their peers. Participants will explore what skills are needed to be socially competent in everyday life. Strategies on how to understand and support social competence will be shared.

Tuesday, May 24th

- ONBIDA - Our Favourite FSL and Francophone Structured Literacy Tools: A Bilingual Webinar. This webinar will address scope and sequence examples and Structured Literacy lesson plan activities for Primary and Junior grades, adaptation française de "Teaching Is Rocket Science," and facile à lire.

Thursday, June 2nd

- Integra – Understanding Memory and Learning Disabilities webinar. This experiential workshop is designed to give participants a better understanding of the different types of memory challenges (verbal, visual, and working memory). We will look at the impact memory challenges have on everyday life for children and youth with LDs (socially, emotionally and behaviorally).

Open Date

- LDAO Online Workshops and Courses. A variety of self-paced workshops on a variety of topics relating to Learning Disability.
- ONBIDA Project Read Online Webinar Courses “Framing Your Thoughts”. The Framing Your Thoughts® program is centered on a sequential and systematic method of instruction designed to help students write and arrange accurate and creative sentences and paragraphs. This sequential and multisensory program is part of the Project Read® curriculum, a research-based language arts program. ONBIDA is pleased to offer these programs at a special discount for Canadian educators.
- ONBIDA: Basics of Decoding and Spelling Instruction. This is a 5 unit course that provides instruction in how to teach decoding and spelling so that all students can learn to read and spell! It will transform your teaching so that you can reach all students! It includes how to teach basic and complex phonics, spelling, strategies for reading and spelling multi-syllable words, and basic morphology
- CADDAC past webinars CADDAC Webinars. Free access to a variety of past webinars on a wide range of topics relating to ADHD

Resources:

LDAO LD@Home <https://www.ldathome.ca>

LDAO LD@School <https://www.ldatschool.ca>

## 2.7. Correspondence

### 2.7.1. Letter from York Catholic DSB dated April 5, 2022

The letter, addressed to the Minister of Health and to the Minister of Education from Jennifer Wigston, Chair of SEAC, York Catholic

District School Board writing in support of the District School Board of Niagara's recent letter denoting the impact of nursing shortages in school boards across the province. The YCDSB requests that this issue be of top priority for the government and that an immediate and accessible solution be developed.

The Committee supported the issue and agreed that a letter be drafted and brought back for consideration at the next SEAC meeting.

2.7.2. Letter from York Catholic DSB dated April 5, 2022

The letter, addressed to the Minister of Education from Jennifer Wigston, Chair of SEAC, York Catholic District School Board (YCDSB) writing in support of the Durham District School Board's recent letter regarding the Student Incident Portion Claim Funding (SIP).

In the spring of 2018, the previous government announced an increase in the SIP funding. However, in August 2018, the Ministry announced that the increase would be clawed back. The YCDSB SEAC expressed concerns that the SIP funding provided is inadequate and requested that the Minister evaluate the true costs associated with SIP claims to support students and increase funding accordingly.

The committee agreed that a letter be drafted in support of the SIP funding increase and brought back to the June 7th SEAC meeting for consideration.

3. Other Business

3.1. Board Communications

None

3.2. Motion to Adjourn

**Motion:**

SS-2022-05-03-04

Motion to Adjourn

“THAT the Special Education Advisory Committee meeting of May 3, 2022 adjourn.”

Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting

May 3, 2022

Page 12 of 12

Moved by J. Oldman and motion seconded by S. Casola.

CARRIED

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

3.3. Closing Prayer

Closing prayer was offered by Chair Adamo.

The meeting adjourned at 9:27 p.m.

---

Valerie Adamo

Chair, Special Education Advisory Committee

---

Susie Lee-Fernandes

Superintendent of Education

Recording Secretary: Delfina Pinto