



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

Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Durham Catholic District School Board

January 10, 2023 at 7:30 PM

CEC – North & South Board Rooms

Members Present:

W. Heeney (Durham Down Syndrome Association), A. Massis (Community Representative), C. Julien (Community Representative)

Trustees Present:

J. McCafferty

Staff Present:

S. Lee-Fernandes (Superintendent of Education), Y. Fisher-Brown (Mental Health Leader), H. Killoran (Student Services Consultant), F. Pileggi (Communications)

SEAC Representatives:

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

Regrets:

V. Adamo (VOICE for the Hearing Impaired), C. Nosseir (Grandview Kids), S. Casola (Autism Ontario), J. Sorhaitz (Learning Disabilities Ontario), Robert De Souza (Trustee), M. Cope (CUPE Representative)

1. Opening

1.1. Memorials and Prayer

In the absence of quorum, W. Heeney called the meeting to order at 7:34 p.m., offered the opening prayer and welcomed everyone to the meeting. W. Heeney noted that quorum was not reached so the meeting would proceed without motions. Elections were also deferred to the next meeting.

1.2. Land Acknowledgement

1.3. Approval of the Agenda

1.4. Roll Call and Apologies

1.5. Call to Order

1.6. Approval of the minutes of the December 6, 2022 SEAC Meeting

1.7. Declarations of Interest

None

2. Items for Information/Decision

None

2.1. Announcements

Following the Regular Board meeting on December 19th, Trustee Committees were confirmed. Jim McCafferty and Robert De Souza will serve on SEAC for the 2023 year.

2.2. Election for Chair of Special Education Advisory Committee

Deferred

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

2.2.2. Comments from Candidates

2.2.3. Motion to Close Nominations

2.2.4. Motion to Destroy Ballots

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

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

Deferred

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

2.3.2. Comments from Candidate

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

2.3.4. Motion to Destroy Ballots

2.3.5. Motion to Close Nominations

2.4. Business arising from previous meeting

2.4.1. Feedback from Committee re: Letter Peel-Dufferin CDSB dated October 14, 2022 - Requesting the option to extend the time students with differing abilities have to remain or continue in Secondary School beyond year 7 and beyond age 21

Deferred

2.5. Presentations

None

2.6. Discussion Items

None

2.7. Staff Reports

- 2.7.1. Student Service Report - Teresa Ezquerra, Yulan Fisher-Brown, Susie Lee-Fernandes

Coordinator's Report

Helen Killoran, Student Services Consultant, reported on behalf of Teresa Ezquerra.

Project SEARCH update

Program Support Teachers (PST) from each secondary school have submitted student names as potential candidates for the first group of interns for September 2023. Meetings with each school team (PST, Guidance and Co-op Teachers) were held during the week of January 9th to discuss potential candidates and provide information to share with parents/guardians and students. A webpage has been created and can be accessed at [Project SEARCH](#). The Information Night will be held on Thursday, March 2, 2023 at 6:00 pm at the Pope Francis Centre and simultaneously through Zoom.

The new Program Support Mentoring Program continued in December with learning on how to administer and score the Weschler.

Sharing of Excellence Series for December

How to Develop Self-Management Systems – participants will learn how to use self-monitoring (an evidence-based practice) to improve engagement with learning and/or to decrease challenging behaviours through teaching individuals to differentiate between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour, monitoring their own behaviour using a recording system, and reinforcing their own behaviours so as to meet goal(s).

Assistive Technology

100 additional Chromebooks are being prepared and will be delivered to PSTs; this adds to the 240 Chromebooks that have been assigned since 2021

All Lexia licenses are in use; some secondary schools will use Lexia in Semester 2 beginning in February. There are 2 training sessions with Greenfield Learning this month that will review the Lexia program with PSTs and focus on interpreting data for student success.

Helen answered questions as they arose.

Mental Health Report

Yulan Fisher-Brown, Sr. Mgr. Mental Health Initiatives/ Mental Health Leader provided the Mental Health Report.

School Mental Health Ontario (SMH-ON) and Wisdom2Action (W2A) launched #HearNowON: Student Voices on Mental Health will connect with secondary school students in Ontario on their priorities regarding mental health. 1,028 students and young people across Ontario participated through an online survey and approximately 159 young people participated through regional forums or the data analysis process.

Through the data collected, SMH-ON recommended the following:

1. Students want to learn more about Mental Health, as part of their regular school day
2. Students want their teachers to learn more about mental health so they can be a strong resource in this area
3. Students want better and clearer access to supports and services through school
4. Students want us to honour diversity and prioritize inclusion and belonging
5. Students want to be better informed about, and engaged in, mental health promotion and stigma reduction initiatives

Student Services is working with the New Teacher Induction Program to develop modules focused on various topics, including MH, Equity, Autism, Learning Disabilities, Universal Design of Learning.

SMHO has launched new MH curriculum for the Careers course that will be piloted in the second semester at 4 of our secondary schools.

Talking about Mental Illness programming ran at St. Patrick, St. Monica and St. Anne.

Upcoming:

- Bell Let's Talk Day January 25th
- Mental Health First Aid - Jan 25-26
- Sharing of Excellence- Kindergarten and Educator Well-Being

Special Education Review Update

Superintendent Lee-Fernandes informed that the Leading Equitable and Accessible Delivery (LEAD) Process has been completed and is being used to inform the Special Education Review.

As part of the process, several anonymous surveys were put out to provide feedback and input from various groups. A feedback summary report with aggregate results will be shared with SEAC.

Superintendent Lee-Fernandes also shared that in collaboration with Academic Services, the following virtual Parent/Guardian Kindergarten series will be offered:

- February 15, 2023: Welcome to Kindergarten and Information on Before and After Child Care
- March 8, 2023: Early Literacy Skills
- March 29, 2023: Supporting Transitions for Students with Special Needs
- April 19, 2023: Tips and Strategies to Support Communication Skills and Well-Being

The sessions will provide new parents with information for the foundational transitions for support at home and school.

Superintendent Lee-Fernandes briefly updated the committee on "What does racism have to do with me."

- "Understanding Anti-Black Racism to Support the Mental Health and Well-Being of Black and Racialized Students" session was held on September 14th with the Principals and on the September 23rd PA Day with the staff.
- "Supporting Mentally Healthy Conversation About Anti-Black Racism with Students" was postponed to November 9th and November 15th.
- Both "Your Role as an Adult Ally" and "Tips for Adult Allies" are coming up on January 11th, 17th and February 17th.
- "How to Foster and Maintain Supportive Spaces for Black Youth" will be held on March 1st and 21st.
- "Listen, Believe & Act: Support for students who have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19" will be offered on May 10th and April 18th.

Superintendent Lee-Fernandes also shared that in regard to the Virtual Learning Series, two virtual sessions have been planned with Youth Speak – Inclusivity for Caring Adults:

- January 24, 2023
- February 16, 2023

The sessions will address the effects of intersecting forms of discrimination and oppression through speakers' lived experience and acquired knowledge. The participants will gain a deeper understanding of core concepts around race, ability, etc., and how to practice intersectional inclusion and allyship.

A student conference will be offered to students from grades 7 to 9. The theme will be "**Created in the Image of God: I Am because We Are**" (**Ubuntu**). Details will be sent out in a Numbered Memo in mid-January.

Teachers will be able to sign up with their classes to attend three virtual classes. Teachers will also be provided with a training session and resource support.

Tanika Riley, who runs Por Amor, will be facilitating the workshops. The sessions will focus on Identity and embracing who you are, and Mental health.

After the session, teachers will be provided with pre-workshop reflection questions and toolkit for activities and continued conversation in the classroom.

2.8. Association Reports

Valerie Adamo, VOICE for the Hearing Impaired

Upcoming Meetings or Conferences:

Monthly Family & Caregiver Social Meetups have been carried forward into 2023.

These are virtual zoom events and can be accessed by registering on the website.

They are currently scheduled for the end of April this year.

<https://www.voicefordeafkids.com/Events>

2.9. Correspondence

- 2.9.1. Letter from Durham District School Board dated November 22, 2022
Re: Special Incidence Portion Claim Funding

Deferred

3. Other Business

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- 3.1. Board Communication
- 3.2. Motion to Adjourn
 - 3.2.1. The next meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee will be held on Tuesday, February 14, 2023 @ 7:30 pm
- 3.3. Closing Prayer
 - W. Heeney offered the closing prayer.
 - Meeting adjourned at 8:05 pm.

Walter Heeney
Special Education Advisory Committee

Susie Lee-Fernandes
Superintendent of Education

Recording Secretary: Delfina Pinto