

REPORT OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Thursday May 20, 2021 6:30 P.M.

An on-line meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee was held on this date.

ROLL CALL:

SensRNab Burrell, Autism Ontario – Durham Chapter
Craig Cameron, Member At Large
Tara Culley, Durham Down Syndrome Association
Elizabeth Daniel, Ontario Association for Families of Children with Communication Disorders
Rowin Jarvis, Learning Disabilities Association of Durham Region
Kathy Kedey, VOICE for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children
Eva Kyriakides, Association for Bright Children (ABC) (SEAC Chair)
Carolyn McLennon, Member At Large
Hanah Nguyen, Easter Seals Ontario

Trustees: Donna Edwards Darlene Forbes

Staff: Superintendent Andrea McAuley
Special Education Officer Kyla McKee
Chief Speech Language Pathologist Lisa Drake
Mental Health Lead Steffanie Pelleboer

Recording Secretary: Lisa Wry

1. **Call to Order:**

SEAC Chair Eva Kyriakides called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

2. **Land Acknowledgement:**

SEAC Chair Eva Kyriakides advised that the Durham District School Board acknowledges that many Indigenous Nations have longstanding relationships, both historic and modern, with the territories upon which our school board and schools are located. Today, this area is home to many Indigenous peoples from across Turtle Island. We acknowledge that the Durham Region forms a part of the traditional and treaty territory of the Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation, the Mississauga Peoples and the treaty territory of the Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation. It is on these ancestral and treaty lands that we teach, learn and live.

3. **DDSB Human Rights & Equity Statement:**

The Durham District School Board is committed to learning environments that are safe, welcoming, respectful, equitable, accessible, inclusive and free from discrimination while placing Human Rights and Equity at the center.

4. **Welcome Guests:**

SEAC Chair Eva Kyriakides welcomed special guests: Russ Davidson, Secondary Administrator Representative, and Melissa Sparkman & Shannon Robertson, Elementary Administrator Representatives.

5. **Approval of Agenda:**

That the agenda for May 20, 2021 be approved.

MOVED BY: Tara Culley

SECONDED BY: Darlene Forbes

CARRIED

6. **Approval of the Minutes from April 8, 2021:**

That the minutes from April 8, 2021 be approved.

MOVED BY: Elizabeth Daniels

SECONDED BY: Tara Culley

CARRIED

7. **Staff Reports:**

Administration:

Well-being, mental health and learning are intertwined. Our teams feel privileged to be able to support students in all these areas. Our students continue to amaze us and challenge us to our most creative thinking in individualizing their school experiences.

Information being shared through the Administrator report this month is linked within the Department report attached to tonight's agenda.

At this time, through to June 2nd, our schools remain on a directive for remote learning aligned with the provincial Stay at Home order. Of the approximately 73 000 students in the Durham DSB, as of today, 98 (slight increase to information shared last week) are accessing in-person through the criteria of programming which cannot be facilitated remotely; access ranging from focused part-time to full-time. Approximately two-thirds of the in-person learners are accessing with support of transportation through Durham Student Transportation Services. We also have 30 adolescents accessing in-person through Grove School/ECPP.

Updates regarding 2021-2022 planning were also provided to SEAC within the Department report information. District planning includes an increase in special education classes; particularly Practical Learning Program. As shared in an email with SEAC earlier this week, planning has continued to evolve.

Information from the recently completed family/caregiver surveys regarding in-person/virtual preference for the 2021/2022 school year, for students with placement in special education classes, a limited number of program classes will be running through DDSB@Home – Elementary.

- 4 classes – Gifted
- 2 classes – Practical Learning Program (PLP)
- 2 classes – School Support Program (SSP)
- Staffing for the four elementary gifted program classes has resulted from adjustment from the 2021/2022 allocation embedded within earlier planning for the six host schools.
- The four PLP and SSP classes are additional to system to support the 2021/2022 school year.

The Ministry of Education has released funding information for the 2021-2022 school year. Released documents related to the Grants for Student Needs (GSNs) and special education related funding are linked within the distributed department update. Initial framing for the 2021-2022 school year was provided within the funding documents and includes directive that Districts continue to provide a virtual option for students and signalling that further information will be provided to school boards in August specific to secondary schools. A few other changes (e.g., ADDDP funding moved into the GSN from project envelope) are noted. We will continue to update SEAC as the budget process unfolds.

May, each school year, brings a focus on transitions. That remains true this year with the added shifts of students from remote or virtual to in-person. We thank families/caregivers, staff across all roles and most importantly students for the privilege of being part of their supports.

This is our Administrator report for May 2021.

Discussion took place among the committee members, with the following reflections:

- Students transitioning from elementary to small class placement in secondary-majority are moving from small class to small class, with a small number moving from mainstream to small class placements.
- New housing developments and the ability to have these homes built with accessibility features, has resulted in an influx of new students which has increased the need for more small class placements.
- Currently not able to commit to in-person or virtual for Introduction to Highschool summer program, in consultation with the Durham Regional Health Department (DRHD), with the hope that we will be able to be in school with tours allowed.
- PLP classes reduce the number of EAs need to go from class to class, consequently there will be more flexibility, focused and intentional supports for transitions and various student needs.
- Concerns about current accessible busing for in-person learners-key barrier with the Ministry tight timeline shifts-busing timing is affected because of the low number of students accessing transportation.
- Destreamed math and integrated student needs – possible topic for June meeting.

Board:

Trustee Donna Edwards informed SEAC members that the Board of Trustees received presentations and information on: Presentation on the Supervised Alternative Learning (SAL) program, motion to create a renaming committee for consideration of renaming 2 schools in our system based on concerns centred on human rights and equity. The two new Ajax and Whitby schools have committees to name them. Community use of school policy as well as the Trustee expense policy were approved. Former Ritson P.S. location is being put up for circulation. In preparing the budget for 2021-2022, there are acknowledged cost pressures and concerns with budget constraints, an increase in funding, but a large percentage will be used for labour. There is also an increase in software licences per student. Transportation is a huge concern with social distancing we may not have enough bus drivers; provincial concern. Boards have been given permission to spend 2% of their reserves.

8. **Inclusive Student Services Report – May 2021:**

Inclusive Student Services Department Update to SEAC May 2021

Updates include:

- School Update
- Speech Language & Hearing Month
- Children's Mental Health Week Update
- 2021-2022 Special Education Class Planning
- Transition to the 2021-2022 School Year
- Summer Programs
- Teacher Professional Learning: New DDSB AQ Course Accreditation

School Update – Ministry Directive to School Boards

Aligned with the province-wide Stay At Home order, the Ministry of Education provided direction to Districts to switch students to remote learning.

"As part of our Government's efforts to protect the most vulnerable, boards are expected to make provisions for in-person support for students with special education needs who cannot be accommodated through remote learning based on student needs.

Most students with special education needs will be learning remotely during this period. In-person learning should be reserved for students who cannot be accommodated through remote learning. School boards are best positioned to determine which students with special education needs may require this accommodation. School boards have flexibility in determining how to deliver in-person instruction in such circumstances, based on local conditions. However, consideration should be given to limiting overall movement and limiting the number of sites that will be open."

School Update – May 2021

- Majority of DDSB students, per Ministry directive are currently learning remotely/virtually.
- Based on consideration for students who cannot learn remotely, and consultation based within each student's IEPs, a few students are being supported through in-person learning

Currently:

- DDSB Enrolment: over 73 000
- All services remain active in support of students, families and educators.
- 94 students across 23 sites (Many part-time, some full-time)
- Approx. 2/3 accessing transportation/bussing
- Grove (ECPP) following Ministry directive. 30 Adolescents accessing programming in-person from the 48 program classrooms.

May: Speech Language & Hearing Month

- Did you know that SLPs (Speech Language Pathologists) are essential members of education teams? Assisting educators with programming in the areas of reading, writing, speaking, listening, social skills and more, SLPs play a critical role in supporting academic success, as well as the social and emotional well-being of students.
- #communicateawareness

May: Speech Language & Hearing Highlight

- Our Hearing Resource Team is comprised of specialist teachers, working with a consulting Audiologist supporting students who are Deaf, or who are deaf/Hard of Hearing.
- Their services range from consultation with families and educators to direct 1:1 teaching; for example, supporting students learning Braille.
- #communicateawareness
- Social media campaigns for speech, language and hearing are planned throughout to promote awareness, information and resources for educators and families

SLP Story Time

- A recorded reading of a story launched every Friday, highlighting a topic or strategy
- Story Time link bit.ly/slpstorytime
- SLPs partner with Social Workers, Psychologists, and Teacher Librarians to bring different perspectives to the reading.
- Support engagement and use of the Addressing Impacts of Anti-Black Racism Well-Being Toolkit specific to the books recommended within that resource

Making Mental Health and Well-Being Our Priority

The DDSB realizes that:

- This is a challenging school year.
- Educators care and want to do their best as they support students and families.
- Relationships matter and are essential to resilience.
- Supports and resources are available to students and families
- Educator well-being matters as well!

Highlights: Children's Mental Health Week

- Five days of focus which included:
- Mindful Monday
- Talk About It Tuesday
- Wellness Wednesday
- Thankful Thursday
 - Shine Green
- Fitness Friday

Highlights: Children's Mental Health Week

Overview for Shaun Boothe's Sessions: "Hope in Challenging Times"

- 3 sessions offered virtually; 2 Secondary, 1 Intermediate
- 300 classrooms participated
- 3600 students, educators and support staff attended

Educator Feedback:

- My grade 9s REALLY enjoyed listening to Shaun Boothe. His message was engaging and kept their attention the entire time! Wow! I say this deserves an encore! Very inspirational!

Student Feedback:

- What I love about these webinars, is that I can relate to what you all say. Amazing job!
- Thanks so much for this! So much of what was said today resonated with us!
- This was an amazing thing to watch thank you!

Making Mental Health and Well-Being Our Priority

- Schools in Pickering & Ajax joined together for a Wellness Series for families and caregivers Thursday May 13 to Saturday May 15.
- Session include those with well-being focus, engaging in anti-racism conversations, arts and yoga sessions.
- Psychological Services and Social Work team members are supporting alongside community and school partners.
- Information through link: www.salignus.com/paws.html

Supporting Student and Family/Caregiver Engagement

- Three part-time Engagement Workers (professionals highly experienced in student engagement and school systems through roles as Social Workers) are adding support as a resource to re-engage students and families where attendance/engagement is a concern
- Supporting primarily DDSB@home
- Funded through COVID related Mental Health support dollars

Indigenous Understandings – Training with Dr. C. Baskin

- Social Work and Psychological Services teams, along with partners in Equity and Indigenous Education participated in half day training; over 60 staff
- Facilitated by Dr. Cyndy Baskin, Ryerson University
- Dr. Baskin delivered foundational training with respect to Indigenous world view and ways of knowing
- Setting the stage for next step in examining intersection of Anti-Indigenous racism and mental health
- Learning included resonating importance of entering into conversations with focus on relationship building:
"It is unethical to ask intrusive questions and expect families to tell everything without revealing anything about ourselves." C. Baskin

Summer Learning Opportunities

- Summer School (Secondary)-SERT, EA & ESL support added for students with IEPs
- TeachTown Basics, TeachTown Social Skills and SOLS (STAR Online Learning System) supporting students with Autism
- Getting Ready for High School Program Smile-e Program
- Language and numeracy support for Indigenous and Self-Identified students & ESL (step 2 students)
- Transition and Well-Being Support (new to Grade 1 students), with embedded focus on literacy skill support
- Primary Literacy Skills (Grade 1 and 2 Students)
- Intermediate Mathematics (Grade 7 and 8 Students)

Grove (ECPP) Summer Learning

Summer programming funded by the Ministry of Education involves fifteen programs run centrally out of the DASS facility.

Mental Health Supports - Summer 2021

- Collaborative planning is currently underway between DDSB Mental Health Leaders, DCDSB Mental Health Leaders with community partner interest sought.

- Services continuity will include the ability for families to use the "Connect with a Member of Our Mental Health Team" button on the DDSB website; monitoring weekdays Monday-Thursday.
- This button is clearly identified that it is not a crisis button, however it contains a lot of direction for families and students if they are in need of crisis services.

2021-2022 Special Education Program Planning

A report on Special Education program planning for the 2021-2022 was shared with Trustees at Standing Committee on May 3. The report can be found in the agenda package commencing on page 9.

Link: <https://calendar.ddsb.ca/calendars/Detail/2021-05-03-1900-Standing-Committee-Meeting/0ff9e514-8e37-4b8d-a83e-ad1a0157f454>

The overall number of special education classes in the Durham District School Board will increase for the 2021-2022. Changes include:

- Increase in Developmental Program (1 elementary class)
- Increase in Practical Learning Programs (3 elementary, 6 secondary)
- Decrease in School Support Programs (-2 elementary classes)
- Decrease in Self-Regulation Program (-1 elementary class)

2021-2022 Special Education Program Planning

Special Education Class Type	Total 2020-21	Elementary 2020-21	Secondary 2020-21	Total 2021-22	Elementary 2021-22	Secondary 2021-22
Deaf/Hard of Hearing Program	1	1	0	1	1	0
Developmental Program	20	12	8	21	13	8
Gifted Program (Elem only)	22	22		26	26	
Practical Learning Program	71	33	38	80	36	44
School Support Program	78	49	29	76	47	29
Self Regulation Class	2	2		1	1	
Structured Learning Program	11	8	3	11	8	3
Transition to Work Program	6		6	6		6
SE Program District Totals	211	127	84	222	132	90

Note:

- Above reflects March 2021 planning.
- Elementary and Secondary Family/Caregiver surveys have now closed for selection of in-person or virtual/DDSB@Home for the 2021-2022 school year. Team is currently working through analysis and considerations for students with special education program placements
- Families will have one additional opportunity in August to indicate a change in preference.

Transition to School Support Planning

Resource Highlight: Transition Planning for Students with Special Education Strengths and Needs

- Specific to Spring 2021 to Fall 2021
- Strategy considerations for specific transitions (e.g., elementary to secondary, ECCP to/from DDSB, change in placement etc.)
- Resource document distributed to SEAC with May 2021 agenda package.

Transition to School Support Planning

- Recognition that many of our students will have been out of bricks/mortar for extended amount of time; transition needs will be higher
- Ministry funding will support implementation of transition plans
- Early Years Transition EA team being implemented for the fall based on this need
- Sade (Transition Coordinator) has attended IPRCs and ITP meetings to ensure parents are connected to community resources; significant increase in attendance of community partners (eg. Community Living) at these meetings as well

2021-2022 GSN Information Released

The Ministry of Education recently released GSN information for the 2021-2022 school year including:

- Expectation of continued remote learning option for families/caregivers
- Mental Health and Well-Being Funding
- COVID-19 Related Funding
- Elementary – Full time in-person/cohort by class
- Secondary – Limiting cohorts. Full-time in-person with readiness to switch to remote/virtual. Language around maximum contacts. More Ministry direction to come in August.
- OSSD Volunteer Hours requirement – 20 hours (return to 40 hrs in 2022/23)
- Students graduating in 2021/2022 - OSSLT exemption
- 2 Credit virtual learning requirement

Ministry link: <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/funding.html>

2021-2022 SB06: Special Education Funding

The Ministry of Education recently released GSN information for the 2021-2022 school year including:

- Previously provided through PPF, funding for ASSD programs is being transferred into the Behaviour Expertise Amount (BEA) of the GSN.
- New Supporting Student Mental Health Allocation within the Mental Health and Well-Being Grant of the GSN. Funding is based on the following calculation: \$100,858 per school board + (\$1.34 x ADE)

- Priorities and Partnerships Funds (PPFs)

Mental Health and Well-Being: To support the critical linkage between mental health and well-being and student success. Also provides students with physical health and safety supports. \$9.50M

Special Education: To improve support for children and youth with special education needs and their families and educators. \$1.86M

2021-2022 SB06: Special Education Funding

DDSB teams, including Finance and Senior Team, are in the process of working through the Ministry funding memos to amend proposed planning. Education Finance Committee will be meeting later this month.

SEAC will continue to receive updates through the 2021-2022 planning process. Next update: June SEAC or before via electronic communication.

Link to Index of 2021-2022 Ministry of Education Ontario Funding documents:

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/funding.html>

Guide to Special Education Funding 2021/2022:

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/funding/2122/special-education-guide-2021-22.pdf>

OAP Update: Entry to School Program

- 6-month skills-based group-based program prior to initial school start
- For children 3-5 years old who are registered with the OAP
- Will be facilitated through community service providers; applications due in June
- Will include collaboration and transition planning – families/caregivers, Entry to School program team and school/district teams

Public information link for Applications Information:

http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/documents/specialneeds/autism/OAP-Entry_to_School_Program-CFA_Guidelines-EN.pdf

New DDSB AQ Course Accreditation

- Professional learning opportunities for teachers include Additional Qualifications (AQ) Courses through accredited partners such as Faculties of Education, District School Boards and organizations such as Ontario Principals Council.
- The DDSB has recently (May 10th) received accreditation to provide the following AQ course: **Teaching Students with Communication Needs (Autism Spectrum Disorder)**.
- Accreditation is valid for 5 years and will run through to May 2026.
- Funding, through a PPF, for teachers taking the course is available for interested DDSB educators.
- Course will be promoted through AQ fliers, communication with Administrators & SERTs for sharing with teachers. Funding is available through to August 2022.

9. Presentation:

Presentation A: Partnership Program Highlight – Supporting Students

Presenters: Kyla McKee and Folashade (Sade) Gbalajobi

10. a) **Open Discussion Period:**

The open discussion period was used to discuss the following topic: Partnership Program Highlight – Supporting Student Needs, Fostering Community Partnerships. Discussions took place among the committee members and the following reflections were shared:

- Youth Job Connect is having a challenging time finding youth employment, especially during the pandemic and for students with special needs.
- Currently students are involved with a virtual job skills programs, maintaining their job skills while still being paid. After school hours, 4-6 to work on their skills.
- Pilot focuses on the transition from secondary to post secondary for students with disabilities. Any student with an IEP can access the transition coordinator.
- Post secondary institutions provide many opportunities to and supports for students with IEP's.
- Special Education Heads, Guidance Heads, Student Support, all have this information, as a parent or student you can contact any post-secondary school, reach out to see what accommodations are available to students with IEPs.
- Accessible Learning Centre
- Encourage to interview the school not just the school interviewing the student.
- Accessible housing for students with disabilities.
- Parents helping navigate this transition-often first meeting is without parents because they are considered adults until they give permission to include parents.
- Stress to kids that there are a lot of supports for students with IEPs

Superintendent Andrea McAuley suggested that prior to COVID college and university representatives would attend at the schools and provide information about accessibility. We look forward to bringing this back to the DDSB for students. Students were able to form relationships and start feeling comfortable with the transition to post-secondary. This year it has pushed more assistance to be available virtually, however, there is less ability to form relationships which for a lot of kids gives them a feeling of safety, and comfort.

10. b) **Business Arising from the Minutes:**

Letter to MCCSS – feedback as soon as possible to be sent out May 25, 2021.

11. **Association Reports:**

No association reports at this time.

12. **Correspondence:**

- April 14, 2021 Letter from Metrolinx
 - Tentative SEAC Meeting Schedule for the 2021-2022 school year
- MOTION to Approve the SEAC meeting dates for 2021-2022

MOVED by Hannah Nguyen

SECONDED Darlene Forbes

CARRIED

13. **Community Concerns:**

14. Celebrations and Success:

National Accessibility week May 30-June 5
Red Shirt Day – June 2

15. Next S.E.A.C. meeting – Thursday, June 17, 2021.

16. Adjournment:

That the meeting does now adjourn at 8:12 p.m.

MOVED BY: Donna Edwards

SECONDED BY: SensaRNab Burrell

CARRIED

Report respectfully submitted by:
Eva Kyriakides, SEAC Chair\

ACTION PLAN

ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBILITY	COMPLETION
DSTS- Accessible busing in-person students	Superintendent A. McAuley	June 10, 2021
Finalize Letter to MCCSS	SEAC- Chair Eva Kyriakides	May 25, 2021