

REPORT OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Thursday January 20, 2022 6:30 P.M.

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

ROLL CALL:

Eva Kyriakides, Association for Bright Children (ABC) (SEAC Chair)
sensaRAneb Burrell, Autism Ontario – Durham Chapter
Carrisa Lewis, Black Parents Support Group
Tara Culley, Durham Down Syndrome Association
Christina Salisbury, Easter Seals Ontario
Rowin Jarvis, Learning Disabilities Association of Durham Region
Carolyn McLennon, Member At Large
Donna Edge-Bean, Member At Large
Elizabeth Daniel, Ontario Association for Families of Children with Communication Disorders
Kathy Kedey, VOICE for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children
Vera Mercier, Early Years Consortium – Non-voting member

Trustees: Donna Edwards Darlene Forbes

Staff: Superintendent, Andrea McAuley
System Leads, Kyla McKee and Conor Jinkinson

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: Anthony Phelan, Vice Principal H St. H.S, David Robson, Principal Dr. S. J. Phillips, Tami Rayner, Principal Sherwood P.S., Rema Saati, Vice-Principal Curruthers Creek P.S.

Regrets: Donna Edge-Bean, Darlene Forbes

Absent: Kathy Kedey

5. **Approval of Agenda:**

That the agenda for January 20, 2022 be approved with the following amendments: addition to open discussion – nursing shortages; and to correspondence - funding PAAC on SEAC, letter from Lakehead Public Schools and DRAFT 2022-2023 school year calendars.

MOTION BY: Elizabeth Daniels

SECONDED BY: Donna Edwards

CARRIED

6. **Approval of the Minutes from December 16, 2021:**

That the minutes from December 16, 2021 be approved

MOVED BY: Tara Culley

SECONDED BY: Christina Salisbury

CARRIED

7. **Staff Reports:**

SEAC: January 2022 Administration Report

Currently being in the third week of January, we have already moved through multiple phases of school and child care for students and families.

Over the December holidays, a provincial announcement delayed the return to learning by two days. Further announcement on Monday, January 3rd, directed schools to move to remote learning until at least January 17th. Within that announcement, districts were given opportunity for in-person learning for students with special education needs who cannot learn remotely. In DDSB, 45 students, across 21 schools as we kept student access at their program host site, returned to the classroom on January 10th.

Students, families and staff across the province prepared for a return to in-person learning on January 17th, Inclement weather resulted in a closure of elementary schools and secondary schools moving to virtual for two days. DDSB@Home continued to support students on their regular schedule.

At this time, schools are back filled with the sounds of students, connections and learning.

Families/caregivers continue to navigate choices for their children. At this time, elementary families/caregivers are able to select a move between in-person learning and DDSB@Home for the secondary term.

Teams will be analyzing the survey responses and making program and staffing decisions through next week inclusive of the considerations for students with special education needs and where change in access modality is indicated. Deadline for families/caregivers to change preference is tomorrow (January 21, through the Parent Portal)

As a district, we understand that some families may be choosing to keep their children at home at the current time or will be required to isolate at home due to illness or exposure to COVID-19.

As a short-term measure, DDSB will be providing a limited Temporary Remote Broadcast Learning program with resources for students in grades Kindergarten through Grade 8 who are remaining at home until mid-February. After mid-February, students who have registered for virtual learning for the remainder of the school year 14 will switch to DDSB@Home and all other students will return to in-person learning.

Highlights of appreciation and gratitude:

Report Special Education Advisory Committee (cont'd)
January 20, 2022

- Flexibility and resilience of students and families.
- Make A Difference staff volunteers who continue to ensure that families have access to food and clothing resources.
- Inclusive Student Services team members who quickly put full day drop in sessions in place on Monday to support colleagues with IEP and report card connections.
- Cross department team who quickly developed and are providing temporary short-term broadcast learning for students across elementary grades.
- Innovation Technology team members who mobilized report card connect sessions.
- We acknowledge, with Immense appreciation, the work of the DDSB Facilities Services team. In schools, custodians continue to invest great care in cleaning of schools and shone this week in site care with the inclement weather. Central Facilities Services staff have moved 2040 HEPA filters into learning spaces and a team was in over the weekend assembling COVID testing kits for distribution to schools.

Your input as SEAC is important. Please take opportunity to provide feedback on the draft 2022-2023 calendars.

This concludes our Administration report for January.

Concerns were discussed regarding the shift to virtual for small classes:

- All of our programs work best in person.
- Layers of complexity
- Some families felt pressured to accept virtual
- Conditions have changed within the pandemic, masking, vaccinations
- If we had to continue after January 17 the number of students in person would have been significantly different.
- DDSB@Home have been running small classes and they were able to share resources with staff to assist in virtual learning.

Board: Trustee Donna Edwards informed SEAC members that the Board of Trustees had a special Board meeting and a motion was passed to have kindergarten students wear masks at school. Renaming of 2 schools were considered, Sir John A. McDonald will be renamed in honour of Biidassige Mandamin an Anishinaabe elder, and residential school survivor who dedicated her life to speaking about the Great Lakes and conservation of the worlds water. It was decided that Julie Payette P.S. would not be renamed. Information around the budget, and bell time reviews-public consultation will be available. May still have a shortage of bus drivers. Preliminary discussion with Durham Region Transit and bussing; however, this may not reduce the issue with driver shortages. Reviewed the DRAFT calendars for 2022-23 and distributed for consultation. Budget information and Capital project information.

- Superintendent Andrea McAuley provided the pronunciation of Biidassige Mandamin, and the explanation that permission has been granted by her husband for the use of her Indigenous name which means Leading Light.

Trustee Donna Edwards thanked the staff of the DDSB for all of the work they have done over the past weeks, implementing the Ministry mandates.

8. Inclusive Student Service Department Report- January 2022

Updates this month include:

Report Special Education Advisory Committee (cont'd)
January 20, 2022

- Grade 8 to Grade 9 Transition Supports
- Mental Health and Well-Being
- ISS Leadership Update
- Starting to Plan for the 2022-2023 School Year
- Service Animals in the DDSB – Current Data
- Speech Language – Transition Support Initiative Update
- Professional Learning for EAs – January PD Day (Elementary)

Student Well-Being & Learning: January Update on Schools

During the December break, two key announcements were made about schooling in Ontario:

- First, a delay to return to learning announced moved school return to Wednesday, January 5th.
- Further announcement, on Monday, January 3rd, directed schools to move to remote learning until at least January 17th. Within this announcement, districts were given opportunity for in-person learning for students with special education needs who cannot learn remotely.
- Using criteria very similar to that engaged in the Spring of 2021, and noting both variant conditions as well as learning that helps enhance remote learning, schools engaged families in a process of consultation based on Individual Education Plans (IEPs)
- 45 students planned to access in-person learning commencing January 10th.
- On January 12th, the Ministry announced a return to school for Monday, January 17th.

January 17, 2022 – Inclement Weather Day

Due to inclement weather on Monday, January 17th, the following was implemented for the day:

- Secondary schools switched to remote learning.
- Elementary schools, including on-site child-care, were closed.
- DDSB@Home (Elementary & Secondary) continued per scheduled learning day.

To support elementary educators in the preparation of Term 1 Report Cards/IEPs, Special Education Facilitators quickly moved to put full day educator drop in sessions in place accessing through MS Teams:

"Open drop-in session for all elementary teachers and SERTs for support around report card writing for students with IEPs in place. Special Education Facilitators will be available to answer your questions or support any teacher needs. Drop-in anytime from 10:30AM through to 3:00PM today; no formal agenda, support to ask questions, consult, get support."

Mental Health & Well-Being

Mental health & well-being information for students, families & caregivers continues to be shared through a number of platforms including:

- Information on the DDSB website [Mental Health - Family and Community Support](#)
- School sharing through social media.
- Access through school team members such as Administration, SERTs, Guidance and classroom teams.

- Staff providing mental health services have confidential voicemail and work cell phones. Connection can be made through DDSB general switchboard: 905-666-5500.

Grade 8 to Grade 9 Transition Information Session

January 13, 2021 - 6:30-8:00 pm

- Facilitated in partnership between Inclusive Student Services and Student Success teams. Focus was supporting positive transitions from grade 8 to grade 9
- Provided in advance of localized secondary school events, this virtual session supports students & families with information regarding overview of the Grade Nine program, board-wide supports, provides guidance about questions to ask at local events, as well as explain changes in structures from the elementary to secondary panel.

[Slide Deck](#)
[Recording of the Event](#)
[Question & Answer Document](#)

Inclusive Student Service Leadership Update

Inclusive Student Services is pleased to welcome **Dr. Sara Schleien** to the role of **Senior Manager & Clinical Lead – Psychological Services**.

Dr. Schleien brings high clinical skill, compassion and experience into her leadership of both teams and as part of department & district leadership. Her experience includes both work in the community and service in three different district school boards. Sara's commitments, as evidence in her focused studies and leadership of team learning centres on examination of impacts of bias and stereotypes then actioning change to address.

Prior to this promotion, Sara was Senior Psychologist for the DDSB. We are currently working through hiring for this position.

Great Beginnings – Kindergarten Registration

- Registration for new to Kindergarten for the 2022-2023 school year started January 11, 2022.
- More information about the kindergarten and registration can be found through this link:

[Kindergarten Registration Information](#)

To register a child in Kindergarten:

- Use the [school locator](#) tool to find schools designated as the home school in your area;
- Create a parent account or log in to your existing account;
- Once your parent account has been created, **please be sure to select the 2022-2023 school year.**

Special Education Programs - Planning for 2022-2023

Together with families, school and Inclusive Student Services teams, have begun planning for students and considerations specific to special education programs.

- Planning is responsive to student programming needs and strengths and is community centred.

- Information about DDSB special education programs can be found online:
[DDSB Inclusive Student Services - Many Paths to Success](#)
- Program brochure has been updated inclusive of formatting increasing accessibility.
- Key change: Projected and communicated close of the Self -Regulation Class program (1 class remained for 2021-2022 and most students are transitioning out of the two-year intervention program).

Resource Revision: ISS New to DDSB Registration Package

To help support program planning and continue to remove barriers to communication, the ISS New to DDSB Supplemental Registration Package (formerly referred to as "High Needs Intake Package") launches this month.

The ISS New to DDSB Registration Package is requested when a student new to the DDSB is likely to require extensive program modifications and/or alternative curriculum.

Key updates to the package include:

- Strengthen of process specific to ensuring informed consent.
- Strengthening of information (including retention & storage of the document).
- Clarification of observables (e.g., change to scale for self-care skills).
- Removal of where information was previously duplicated.

The ISS New to DDSB Registration Package has two versions:

- 1) For students with previous school experience (e.g., transition in Intermediate grades).
- 2) For students entering school for the first time (e.g., transitioning from support through Infant & Child Development through the Durham Region Health Department)

Speech-Language Transition Support – Project Overview

- Through approved use of Special Education Reserve Funding, an 8-week Speech-Language focused position with focus on transition support was mobilized as part of school year start supports.
- September – November 2021.
- Temporary SLP for students requiring additional transition support due to communication needs.
- Provided multiple, goal-specific sessions within the classroom to 1) increase communication and 2) build educator capacity.
- Goal Attainment Scaling (GAS) was used to create goals and track progress.

Speech-Language Transition Support – Data

- 10 students referred through SLP team – 9 diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder and 1 with no formal diagnosis
- Grades SK – 5, most students in grade 1
- Goals were developed in the following areas:
 - Developing intentional communication (verbal/non-verbal) within play-based/motivating activities (3)
 - Expanding existing verbal communication/language (3)
 - Supporting/introducing AAC systems (3)
 - Social stories to teach social skills and routines (1)
- Students received an average of 4 visits
- Progress was reported for all students

- GAS = goal is written to capture up to 3 'steps' of progress
- Average across all students = 1.8 'steps'

Update to DDSB Traumatic Events Response Protocol

To support school communities when a traumatic event is experienced, the DDSB has a multi-department response plan.

The protocol helps ensure that the appropriate supports are engaged in a coordinated way supportive of the individuals most impacted, school team and those in roles supporting response.

Revisions being implemented at this time include:

- Thinking about responsive service that is culturally responsive to students & families impacted.
- Amplification of supports for administrators leading through Traumatic Events.
- Amplification of supports for mental health staff (Psychological Services & Social Workers) providing intensive support when a Traumatic Event has been experienced and support is needed.

Service Animals: PPM 163

PPM 163 School Board Policies on Service Animals 2019 sets out expectations for all boards in Ontario:

- Allow a student to be accompanied by a service animal in school when doing so would be an appropriate accommodation to support the student's learning needs and would meet the school Board's duty to accommodate students with disabilities under the Ontario Human Rights Code;
- Make determinations on whether to approve requests for a service animal on a case-by-case basis, based on the individual needs of each student;
- Put into place consistent and transparent processes that allow for meaningful considerations of request for service animals to accompany students in school.

Service Animals in the DDSB – Current Data

The Durham District School Board has developed a positive reputation for support of service animals where use is an appropriate accommodation.

- Where in place, service animals provide important accommodation support for their handlers and contribute to inclusive school environments and understandings.
- Most recent revision to the DDSB procedure "Service Animals in Schools" went into effect on January 1, 2020. Policy reflecting current legislation and PPM was approved by Trustees (March 2020). The DDSB procedure includes transparent reporting with SEAC and Board of Trustees (later provided through SEAC Minutes).

Service Animals in the DDSB – Current Data

- At this time, 6 service animals are currently working in DDSB schools and Education Centre.
- 6 of the service animals, all dogs, are active in regular accommodations support to students who are in Grade 5-12.
- 1 of the Autism Service Dogs is currently practicing his skills when accompanying his current handler in the Education Centre. Titus is a fully trained and licensed service dog who has recently joined a DDSB family. Titus

accompanies his current, primary handler who is a Hearing Resource Teacher both at the Education Centre and at a number of schools.

Note:

- The pandemic has impacted training facilities for service animals and significantly reduced the number of graduating service animals and pairings with children & youth who are on waitlist for this support.

Educational Assistants: Professional Learning (Elementary)

January 21st is a PD Day for Elementary schools.

On this date, Educational Assistants will be engaged in professional learning including:

- A Pathway to Resiliency – with Dr. Robyne Hanley Dafoe; paired with learning from the Well-Being Youth Worker Team
- Foundations in Anti-Black Racism
- Behaviour Management Systems (BMS): Certification & Recertification
- Supporting Non-Verbal Learners
- Strategies for Early Communicators
- Understanding the role of CAS
- Inclusive Technology Tools

9. Open Discussion: Nursing Shortage

- Letter circulated last week from Niagara Board regarding nursing shortages in schools.
- Some students cannot attend school unless they have nursing in place at school.
- Barriers for families from the Ministry in regard to funding.
- Complex situation
- Nursing is funded by the Ministry of Health
- Gap is where the nursing care is not scheduled, for example seizure medication.
- Ministry considers this emergency
- Home and community care hold the fund and those funds transfer to community partners.
- Most of our nursing supports come from one community organization
- This fall we were really challenged with information.
- Asked for data regarding our students requiring nursing, the request was not granted on the concern for privacy.
- Looking at one nurse serving more than one student in a school at a time.
- We do have some students that are not able to attend because of a lack of nursing, this is true across the province.
- K-12 Educational Standards contains sections with services recommendations.
- Impacting Easter Seals families, even those with minimal medical needs are being affected.
- The challenge does not lie between families and schools – families are usually very forth right and share freely.
- The missing piece is the district data sharing.
- This problem extends to may areas that may harm vulnerable people.
- Including the “shadow ministers” on correspondence might help bring concerns forward.

Superintendent Andrea McAuley inquired whether SEAC would like to have the DDSB General Counsel look into “Circle of Care” and whether school boards would be included in that.

MOTION to have administration seek clarification on *Circle of Care* from DDSB General Counsel

MOVED: Elizabeth Daniels

SECONDED: sensaRAneb Burrell

CARRIED

11. Business Arising from the Minutes:

- DRAFT SIP Letter
 - **Funding is not finalized until enrolment has been confirmed.**
 - **The increase was announced during the election, and then was taken back.**
 - Intention to send now before election and bring attention to other issues outside of COVID.
- DRAFT Definition of Disability Letter
 - Bring the attention to the current government, but also other parties.

Superintendent Andrea McAuley suggested because of the legislative nature of this letter, if it is the will of SEAC, a request can be made to seek a review by in house Council, prior to sending it through.

MOTION to seek review of the letter by Councillor Cotter.

MOVED Tara Culley

SECONDED Carolyn McLennon

CARRIED

- DRAFT Letter language on IEP
 - Still being developed.

12. Association Reports & Committee Reports:

- Ontario Autism Program re: Invitation Letter for Ontario Autism Program (OAP) Entry to School program.
- Entry to school program has been launched.
- Letters have been sent to families with children up to 6 years old and this will be their first-time entering school.
- Turn around time is quick responses due by February 11, 2022.
- 6-month group-based program.
- Special program for student with Autism.
- Interested to see how the students do with the transition to school.

13. Correspondence:

- DSNB-SEAC Nursing Shortages
- WRDSB-FASD support for Bill 172
- Lakehead Public Schools – PSW shortage
- DRAFT Calendars for 2022-2023 school year.
- PAAC on SEAC

14. Community Concerns:

- No concerns at this time

15. Celebrations and Success:

- Eva is celebrating her daughter acceptances to university one that includes a scholarship.

16. Next S.E.A.C. meeting – Thursday, February 17, 2022.

17. Adjournment:

That the meeting does now adjourn at 8:20 p.m.

MOVED BY: Tara Culley

SECONDED BY: sensaRAneb Burrell

CARRIED

Report respectfully submitted by:

Eva Kyriakides, SEAC Chair

Table 1- Action Plan

ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBILITY	COMPLETION
Write a letter to the Ministry regarding IEP information	Trustee Donna Edwards to draft Chair Eva Kyriakides to finalize	ASAP
SIP letter	Chair Eva Kyriakides	ASAP
Letter to both the Federal and Provincial governments-definition of disability	Review by DDSB General Council	Feb. 17, 2022
Clarification of Circle of Care	Review by DDSB General Council	Feb. 17, 2022