

REPORT OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Thursday February 17, 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
Jenny McLaughlin, 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 Lead, 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: Rema Saati, Vice Principal - Carruthers Creek P.S. Shannon Robertson, Principal – Westney Heights P.S. and Dawn White, Principal - G.L. Roberts C.V.I

Regrets: Trustee Darlene Forbes, Kyla McKee

5. **Approval of Agenda:**

That the agenda for February 17, 2022 be approved: with the following amendments under item 10 house keep items: dates for finance; SEAC meeting dates for 2022-2023, Parents as Partners Conference update and Ontario Association and PPM 81 from Halton DSB.

MOTION BY: Donna Edwards

SECONDED BY: Tara Culley

CARRIED

6. **Approval of the Minutes from January 20, 2022:**

That the minutes from January 20, 2022 be approved

MOVED BY: Tara Culley

SECONDED BY: Christina Salisbury

CARRIED

7. **Staff Reports:**

SEAC: February 2022 Administration Report

Elementary schools have recently transitioned 1500 learners between in-person and DDSB@Home learning modalities. Secondary schools are now into routine with a semester, four courses, learning schedule.

Grove School, our ECPP programs, includes program timing accommodations for students. Through Quad Two, secondary students accessing mental health and learning programs through Grove, achieved 11 K course completions and 139.5 credits.

At February Standing Committee, an overview of mental health and well-being supports for students, ECPP program updates and community engagement & leadership connection supporting child & youth mental health were provided to Trustees. Highlights of that report were included in the Department update. Embedded as a foundation, is the tremendous efforts of students and the staff directly supporting them.

Echoing information from the letter the DDSB Mental Health Leadership team sent School Mental Health Ontario, included in the SEAC agenda package, there is research that supports the fact that the COVID-19 pandemic has greatly affected the mental health of children and youth across the province. In a survey conducted in the early days of the pandemic, nearly two-thirds of youth said that their mental health had gotten worse since the pandemic. This research is reflected in the direct service experiences of our clinical staff. Our staff, both Social Work and Psychological Services professionals, are reporting a significant increase in referrals, consultations, crisis situations, and suicidal ideation amongst young people; in fact, as reported in media and borne out in research the current situation is a crisis for our young people. A postvention approach to this pandemic and associated consequences will be necessary and is part of the planning considerations in the Durham DSB.

Planning for the 2022-2023 school year has commenced. In consultation with families, schools have submitted new placement or placement change requests for student access to special education class programs. We will be working, across a number of departments, to build the special education program plan for next school year. Considerations at this time include:

- Possibility of virtual based programs

- Program support needs, such as mental health services and life skills focused special education programs.

We look forward to bringing updates to SEAC on planning as we move through the months ahead.

Our district and department leadership teams are anticipating the release of the Ontario Human Rights Commission Right to Read report and the discussion that will come around tables including SEAC. The discussion at SEAC about the draft proposed revision to PPM81 is also important to our planning for programs and services supporting students and families. SEAC feedback on the DDSB Special Education Plan is sought; survey link provided to SEAC. Thank you in advance for your input.

This is our Administrator report for February 2022.

Board: Trustee Donna Edwards informed SEAC members that the Board of Trustees had presentations from: JCR students regarding entrepreneurial courses. Went through and consolidated by-laws, time lines around the Human Rights Policies. We are still a growing board, so we have to redistribute some schools to accommodate the growth. Earliest we have ever seen a request for School Board budgets from the Ministry.

8. **Inclusive Student Service Department Report- February 2022**

Updates this month include:

- Transitions: Shifts (In-Person to/from DDSB@Home).
- Mental Health & Well-Being Update.
- Employment Webinar-Transition Supports
- Special Education Programs-Planning for 2022/23
- Cultivating Genius – Educator Book Club
- Draft Revisions PPM81
- Invitation for Input: Special Education Plan Consultation
- Anti-Racism and Universal Design for Learning

Transitions: Elementary Shifts (In-Person to/from DDSB@Home)

Student Transitions

- Approximately 500 students from DDSB@Home returning to in-person learning
- Approximately 1000 students from in-person classrooms to DDSB@Home

Students Moving to DDSB@Home include:

- 76 students in mainstream with IEPs
 - 63 students in grade 5 and up
- 11 students in SE classes (all SSP)
 - Adding fourth SSP class to accommodate
- 8 students in Gifted program

Students Returning to In-Person Learning include:

- 33 students in mainstream with IEPs
 - 23 students in grade 5 and up
- 6 students in SE classes
- 8 students in Gifted program

Secondary Schools

Semester Model

Secondary schools have returned to a semester (4 course) timetable.

PPM 167 - Online Learning Graduation Requirement

- Current Grade 10 will require 1 course before graduation
- Current Grade 9s and beyond will require 2 courses before graduation
- Students have the option of request for accommodation from the requirement; more information pending.

Mental Health & Well-Being

An update on mental health & well-being supports and initiatives can be found in the DDSB Standing Committee Agenda Package (p.159)

Standing Committee Agenda-February 7, 2022

The report provides:

- Information on the implementation of a tiered approach to Mental Health & Well-Being supports for DDSB students and their families;
- Update on current service referrals;
- Highlights information about program partnerships supporting child & youth mental health;
- Highlights mental health related leadership collaborations within the community.

Mental Health & Well-Being – Community Leadership

Highlights from the report:

- Supports for Students – Tiered Model of Interventions – Updates;
- Current Staffing– January 2022;
- Mental Health Training Supports for DDSB Staff: Mental Health First Aid, LivingWorks Start, safeTALK, Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST);
- Update re: Engaged Partnerships Supporting Children and Youth including, but not limited to, agreements with CAREA, Frontenac and Pinewood Addiction Services.
- Further information can be accessed in the report.

Our team is committed to collaboration and advocacy to improve access and outcomes for children and youth in need of mental health services and appropriate supports.

This commitment is grounded in our understanding that navigating the system of community-based supports, especially for children who present with complex needs, is challenging for caregivers.

A strength in Durham continues to be growing a regional approach to supporting children, youth, and families. Our Mental Health Leadership Team works with community partners to support program access and, increasingly, in collaboration to optimize funding from various Ministries.

Current commitments include (not complete list):

- Durham Collaborative Walk-In Clinic Advisory Committee
- Durham Children & Youth Planning Network
- Grove Advisory Committee
- Human Trafficking Coalition
- Infant Mental Health Committee

Psychological and Social Work Services – Professional Learning

- Through interactive sessions with professionals in practice within the GTA, we have learned about the foundations of Anti-Black and Anti-Indigenous racism in Canada, and teams have begun to deepen our understanding of intergenerational trauma related to systemic racism.
- Engaged in self-paced modules through Rainbow Health Ontario (Sherbourne Health), to provide better mental health supports to youth who are part of the 2SLGBTQ+ community.
- Engaged in sessions focused on developing our skills with building meaningful and culturally-informed therapeutic alliances with Black children and youth, becoming authentic allies, and centering identity in the services we provide.
- Entering these learning spaces as an integrated mental health team has also allowed our Psychological Services and Social Work staff to strengthen our own relationships, which benefits our learning communities, learners, and their caregivers.

Current Active Service Referrals

Current service referral data for DDSB students shows increased mental health support requests and access for students. Concurrent to increasing youth needs, staffing pressures for community partners, including unfilled roles, and increased wait times for community based mental health services, is resulting in lowered community access points for students with Tier 3/3+ needs.

September to December 2021 Referral Data

- 2226 active referrals to Psychological Services.
- 1458 active referrals to Social Work

New Referrals – January 2022

- 65 Psychological Services
- 81 Social Work & Attendance Services
- 49 Speech Language Services

Mental Health & Well-Being: Bell Let's Talk Day Highlights

What is Bell Let's Talk Day?

A day to engage in a national conversation around mental health, and increased awareness and acceptance that mental health affects us all.

Why does DDSB support this day?

The vision of the DDSB and our Well-Being and Mental Health Plan is to *create welcoming, safe, and inclusive learning and working environments for Students **and** staff*, where mental health and well-being conversations can happen safely.

Webinar: Transitions Supports – Employment

Hosted Thursday February 10, 2022 at 6:30 pm, 30 Households participated.

Presented in partnership with the YMCA and Agilec, the DDSB Transition Coordinator Team (Sade & Braden) facilitated a webinar on “**Aiming for and Obtaining Meaningful Employment After High School**”. During the webinar, both agencies shared information on their services and how students can develop employment skill, access supports while employed (i.e., job coaches, self-advocacy support) and how parents/caregivers can support with advocacy. A recording of the event can be found here: [Transition Supports - Employment](#)

Special Education Programs - Planning for 2022-2023

- Planning is based on student needs with a 3-5-year timeframe where possible.
- Interdepartmental consultations are key to planning a positive experience for students and families which centres on communities.
- Student transitions – cohort of learners with placement in Practical Learning Program moving from elementary and secondary
- With the implementation of inclusive programming (Grade 9), team is monitoring student learning and well-being for support considerations

Educator Book Club: Cultivating Genius

Facilitated as part of New Teacher Induction Process (NTIP) supports for new educators, the second selection for the 2021/2022 Book Club season is:

***Cultivating Genius: An Equity Framework for Culturally and Historically Responsive Literacy* by Dr. Gholdy Muhammad**

- NTIP teachers, NTIP mentors and Administrators are participating in a 4-part series over February 2, February 9, February 16 and February 23.
- Dr. Gholdy Muhammad will be presenting to DDSB staff on March 2, 2022.

DRAFT Revision – PPM81 Health Care Supports in Schools

DRAFT Revision of PPM 81 distributed with SEAC Agenda Package

The memorandum replaces Policy/Program Memorandum 81: Provision of health support services in school settings (July 1984) and other related PPMs such as Speech Language Services (1988) and Catherization and Suctioning. (1989).

Key goals of the update are:

- Strengthening evidence-based practices
- Improve access to and quality of health, rehabilitation and community-based clinical services in schools
- Clarify roles and responsibilities to address gaps in service

Invitation for Input: Special Education Plan

- The Inclusive Student Services Leadership team invites your input and feedback about the [DDSB Special Education Plan \(2021-2022\)](#) as we begin updates for the 2022-2023 school year.
- All feedback is welcome. Feedback specific to the accessibility of information and content scope is specifically sought.
- Your input is requested by March 10, 2022 through

Antiracism and Universal Design for Learning Building Expressways for Success

–Andratesha Fritzgerald

Central facilitators, across departments, are engaged in meaningful and collaborative dialogue supported from big ideas from “*Anti-racism and Universal Design for Learning-Building Expressways to Success*”.

This work has central teams examining their daily practice, provision of professional development, and support of professional dialogue with colleagues that centers on student identities and looks to disrupt and rethink our historical practices.

"Students need spaces to name and critique injustice to help them ultimately develop the agency to build a better world. As long as oppression is present in the world, young people need pedagogy that nurtures criticality." A. Fritzgerald, p.12

Discussions took place and inquiries were answered among the members with the following reflections:

- Community Partners are stretched which puts additional pressures on our Board staff.
- Increased rates of referrals and needs
- Transition to employment session was recorded and can be found here [Transition Supports - Employment](#)
- Superintendent McAuley offered to purchase the resource *Antiracism and Universal Design for Learning* for each member to review and ask questions relating to their association.
- Questions regarding impact to Early Years students in their socialization after isolation.
 - Seeing the effects of the pandemic there are definitely social impacts.
 - Our little ones coming in have spent half of their lives in the pandemic, play based learning assists them in learning social skills and conflict resolution.
 - ISS department continues to work very closely with the Early Years teams aligning our practices.
- Inquiry about how secondary students are transitioning in High School.
 - An escalation in mental health and well-being related needs. The semester system is new to many students. time management and social skills.
- Local partners have applied and been excepted to facilitate the Entry to School Ontario Autism Program.
- Request for community partners to present at a SEAC meeting and answer questions.
- Invitations for the Ontario Autism Program are going straight to the families and will need a response as soon as possible to take advantage of this opportunity.

9. **Open Discussion:** PPM 81

- The Ministry has allowed sharing with SEAC for consultation.
- PPM 81 revised in 1984
- Intentionality of integrated service MCCSS Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education
- Concerns around downloading Regulated Health Acts.
- Need a deep look at the funding.
- Real planning needs to take place to implement PPM81
- OAFCCD noted that Speech and Language is unified.
- Currently none of our schools have funded clinical spaces or the infrastructure to accommodate some of the requests.
- Concerns about regulated and unregulated practitioner supervision
- PPM 81 has a lot of potential for kids; however, many logistical situations to sort.
- When we look at student safety; well-being, mental health and physical health; who is doing the wrap around care to support students after therapy within the school day.
- Concerns that early years hearing supports are not mentioned.
- Families are integral to the early years therapies and with it being school based this may exclude these important connections.
- Memorandums of Understanding MOUs are contracts between 2 organizations coming together to support kids.
- Where MOUs become difficult is liabilities and insurance of individual practitioners
- Principals carry responsibility for safety and security of students within their building.

Report Special Education Advisory Committee (cont'd)
February 17, 2022

- Intensive consultation with our union partners, not to slow the process, but to get it right for kids.
- Because of the complexities and what is required a working group needs to be put together to establish a framework.
- Consistent transparent plan across all schools, standards to adhere to.
- September deadline is not logical or possible.

The members discussed options for response to PPM81 and the tight timeline for feedback.

MOTION for SEAC members to write a letter providing feedback on PPM81.

MOVED BY: Kathy Kedey

SECONDED BY: Donna Edwards

CARRIED

10. House keeping

- Community consultation on the 2022-23 budget will be opened the end of March.
- Tentative SEAC meeting dates for 2022-2023 were discussed and the following changes were made: November 10, 2022, May 25, 2023 and June 22, 2023 for the final meeting of the school year.

MOTION: to approve SEAC dates for the 2022-23 school year with above listed amendments

MOVED BY: Rowin Jarvis

SECONDED BY: Carolyn McLennon

CARRIED

11. Business Arising from the Minutes:

- Letter SIP
- Draft Definition of a Disability
- Shared with Legal because it is a request to make a change to legislation.
- Track changes with suggestions from DDSB Counsel where shared.

MOTION: To approve Track changes to the *Definition of a Disability* letter.

MOVED BY: Donna Edwards

SECONDED BY: Kathy Kedey

CARRIED

12. Association Reports & Committee Reports:

- PIC Minutes – December 2021
- Parents as Partners
 - Thinking of changing the name to make it more inclusive.
 - Tentative Date May 18 – 6:00-8:00 p.m.
 - Decided on a panel discussion “*How to Build Health Relationships*”.
 - Also include breakout sessions

Report Special Education Advisory Committee (cont'd)
February 17, 2022

- Looking for an Indigenous community member to share some art work after the Land Acknowledgement
- Closing with student visual arts.
- School SLP Services Report need for continued integration of SLPs in school
Concerns:
 - PPM81 -fragmentation of services, and long wait times.
 - Preschool to school transitions
 - Continued challenges during COVID-19 pandemic

13. Correspondence:

- Algoma DSB
- DDSB SIP Letter
- DDSB Definition of a Disability
 - Track changes
 - Revised DRAFT
- DDSB Mental Health Leadership to SMHO
- DRAFT: PPM81

14. Community Concerns:

- Thoughts about inviting members of affinity groups to attend SEAC to share ideas and have discussion
- SEAC members are able to participate in DDSB professional learning opportunities at the moment we have paused on this outside of PD days, will be available again and will be shared.
- There is a provincial election coming up, there will be materials available for groups to consider invitation to candidates for debate on education items.

15. Celebrations and Success:
None at this time.

16. Next S.E.A.C. meeting – Thursday, March 10, 2022.

17. Adjournment:

That the meeting does now adjourn at 8:48 p.m.

MOVED BY: Donna Edwards

SECONDED BY: Elizabeth Daniels

CARRIED

Report respectfully submitted by:

Eva Kyriakides, SEAC Chair

Table 1- Action Plan

ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBILITY	COMPLETION
Data about DDSB@Home and Special Education	System Leads Conor Jinkinson & Kyla McKee	April 21 2022
Care load comparisons from previous years	Superintendent, Andrea McAuley	April 21 2022
Transition to Employment Recording	Lisa Wry	Included in the minutes
Letter to Ministry regarding PPM81	SEAC Chair, Eva Kyriakides & Trustee, Donna Edwards	February 25, 2022
Community Partners Ontario Autism Program - Entry to School Program	Superintendent, Andrea McAuley	April 21, 2022 Meeting