

REPORT OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Thursday September 15, 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
Jennifer McLaughlin, Black Parents Support Group
Tara Culley, Durham Down Syndrome Association
Hannah Nguyen, Easter Seals Ontario
Donna Cook, 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

Staff: Superintendent, Andrea McAuley
Senior Manager and Clinical Lead-Speech Language and Hearing Services, Lisa Drake.

Recording Secretary: Lisa Wry

1. **Call to Order:**
SEAC Chair Eva Kyriakides called the meeting to order at 6:31 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:** David Robson-Principal Dr. S.J. Phillips P.S., Dawn White-Principal G.L. Roberts C.V.I., Rema Saati-Vice-Principal Southwood Park P.S., Tami Rayner-Principal Sherwood P.S.

Regrets: Vera Mercier, Darlene Forbes

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ek:lw

5. **Approval of Agenda:**

That the agenda for September 15, 2022 be approved:

MOVED BY: Tara Culley

SECONDED BY: Donna Edwards

CARRIED

6. **Approval of the Minutes from June 16, 2022:**

That the minutes from June 16, 2022 be approved:

MOVED BY: Tara Culley

SECONDED BY: Carolyn McLennon

CARRIED

7. **Staff Reports:**

SEAC: September 2022 Administration Report

There is a sense of joy in schools with the start of the school year that can be felt on school yards, in classrooms and in other spaces where students gather such as cafeterias and student services hubs. For some, this is return to in-person learning, both staff and students, for the first time since spring 2020 and the adjustment that comes with that. Links to the DDSB Welcome Back Video and school start information were included in the information distributed to SEAC with this month's agenda package.

As a district, current enrolment is higher than projections; particularly in kindergarten to Grade One. District enrolment currently at approximately 54 000 elementary students and approximately 22 800 secondary students for a total of 76 800 students. Classroom staffing adjustments are being made reflective of the changes. DDSB@Home enrolment is currently close to 1900 (1060 Elementary & 830 Secondary).

System leaders, school Administrators and Senior Managers spent a day together in August with focus on our learning related to implementation of three key policies and the related procedures:

- Indigenous Education
- Human Rights, Anti-Discrimination and Anti-Racism
- Safe & Respectful Workplaces.

Focus for the day was on Duty Bearer responsibilities and system barriers – understanding and breaking. We have significant listening, learning and actioning to undertake individually and as a system. The learning together continued within the professional learning days for school teams and Inclusive Student Services teams We are excited for where we will grow to in service to students and families and thank SEAC for continuing to help shape our planning and learning through your consultation.

To continue to grow our services and supports for students, new roles have been introduced this month including Developmental Support Worker pilot role, Senior Social Worker, Language Acquisition Worker and shift from pilot last year to permanent positions for the role of Child and Youth Support Worker. Information and updates on these roles will be shared with SEAC throughout the year.

- 7 Child and Youth Support Workers primarily working with Tier 1 intervention collaborate with Social Work and Psychological Services.

In October, we will share more information with SEAC about the commitments within the DDSB Mental Health & Well-Being Action Plan shared recently with Trustees at Standing Committee. The Action Plan for 2022-2025 identifies that good mental health and well-being are connected to students' success in the classroom and to a thriving working environment. The Action Plan centers staff and student well-being, whereas the previous version focused exclusively on students, and the Action Plan centres our commitment to identity informed and identity affirming practices.

The Accessibility Plan, also shared in the SEAC package this month, will be further discussed in our October meeting. SEAC feedback on the action items within the plan is appreciated.

This is our Administrative Report for September 2022.

Board: Trustee Donna Edwards informed SEAC members that the Board of Trustees received information and presentations on: there was a Special Board meeting before the Standing Committee meeting on September 6, to address 2 Trustee vacancies. Received information regarding the significant enrolment increase as well as a presentation on the Mental Health Action Plan 2022-2025. Changes to process for permits for Community Use of Schools. Trustee Edwards wanted to draw the attention of SEAC members to the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act which is reviewed every four years, and encouraged members to visit the website and include their opinions
<http://aodareview4.com/>

8. **Inclusive Student Service Department Report- September 15, 2022**

Updates this month include:

- School Start Up Information
- DDSB Mental Health & Action Plan 2022-2025
- Role Highlight: ASL Interpreters
- New Role: Language Acquisition Support Worker
- Focused Role: SLP – AAC

Highlights: Start of the 2022-2023 School Year

Drawn from Director's Message:

We are thrilled to have students back in our classrooms and to build meaningful and engaging learning opportunities for them. Each year brings with it the opportunity for a fresh start to optimistically think about all the possibilities of how we will support students as they grow.

School Information for Students and Families:

[Return to School Page](#)

DDSB 2022-2023 Welcome Back Video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LYpx7iv4ael>

Facilities Services Supports Inclusive Programming

THANK YOU to team members from Facilities Services – both at the district and school levels.

We specifically note, team members who:

- Cleaned schools including learning spaces and furniture
- Renovated learning spaces
- Built customized furniture to meet accommodation needs when we could not source the tables needed for Developmental program spaces.

DDSB Mental Health & Well-Being Action Plan 2022-2025

The Mental Health & Well-Being Action Plan was developed in support of and alignment to the **District's Operational Goal** specific to student mental health and well-being.

It is grounded in our commitment to developing a safe, inclusive, and respectful working and learning spaces for students and staff. It recognizes that good mental health and well-being are integrally connect to student's success in the classroom and to a thriving school environment.

The DDSB Mental Health & Well-Being Action Plan was shared during September Standing Committee on September 6, 2022.

We believe it is important to **learn** how we can support the everyday mental health and well-being of students and staff.

We commit to provide for our students and staff inclusive, identity affirming, and culturally relevant **supports** as needed.

We strive to **connect** all students and staff to, from, and through the pathways for those supports.

The plan, in this high-level form, reflects the interactive and dynamic conversations and the development process engaged in by the interdepartmental and multidisciplinary Design and Development Team. It provides a template for the actioning of the key priority areas with the development of specific action plans that will be informed, developed, revised, and monitored as a result of critical conversations and intentional listening to students, families, staff, and community partners, leading to our collective learning/unlearning as a District.

This action plan has foundation in understanding that school and system level mental health approaches are not stand-alone actions or practices designed to only respond to individual needs. Rather, healthy, and advanced school and work communities seek to embed universal and individual practices throughout all aspects of the learning and employment environments. These environments tend to think deeply, broadly, and inclusively with respect to the interplay of a variety of strategies and approaches that both support positive mental health and respond to concerns.

Update from Summer Learning & Mental Health Supports

A fulsome report on summer learning and mental health supports is being presented to Trustees as part of the Board Meeting on September 19, 2022. A link to the report and meeting recording will be shared with SEAC.

In advance, a few highlights related to Special Education are highlighted:

- Accommodation supported embedded in summer learning including Special Education Resource Teachers (SERT), access to virtual learning hub (summer credit learning programs), Educational Assistants

- Continuity of direct Psychological service for 9 students; 1 concluded service during the summer and 8 have service plans continuing into the school year.
- Social Work services provided mental health supports to 29 students which included 2 connections with community agencies; 9 concluded service during the summer and 20 have service plans continuing into the school year

Assessments

Members of the DDSB Psychological Services and Speech Language Services teams provided access to clinical assessments through July and August:

- Psychological services team members provided 14 psychological assessments (3 secondary and 11 elementary);
- Speech-language pathologists provided 62 (elementary) comprehensive speech and language assessments.

Education Community Partnership Programs – Grove School

Grove School operates twelve months of the year to provide education and clinical supports to children & youth.

Summer 2022 partnerships: Durham Family Court Clinic (DFCC), Enterphase, Frontenac, Lakeridge Health Oshawa, Murray McKinnon House and Ontario Shores

- 87 youth participated in ECPP Summer Programming
- 90.0 course credits and 5 K-course requirements achieved
- 2 youth completed final credits to achieve graduation

Therapeutic Recreation

Therapeutic Recreation provided opportunity for students in secondary life skills foundations to their Individual Education Plans, most commonly accessing programming through the Practical Learning Program, to participate in community and activity-based programming to improve well-being, physical and mental health and participation in partnership with the Abilities Centre.

- Two four-week programs on site at the Abilities Centre
- Support team included 2 DDSB Educational Assistants
- 21 participants (13 DDSB students and 9 DCDSB students)

2022-2023 Individual Education Plan (IEP) Dates & Focus

IEP Dates 2022-2023

- Elementary Modified: September 20, 2022
- Secondary Modified: October 7, 2022
- Elementary/Secondary Regular Calendar: October 18, 2022

Emphasis this fall is on consultation during the first 30 days.

It is important for:

- student & parent/caregiver voice to be embedded within the development of the IEP
- current and relevant assessment be part of the foundation of program, strategy decisions.

Role Highlight: ASL Interpreters

Role: facilitate communication between ASL and English

- DDSB interpreters are qualified through an interpreter education program or have relevant skill and experience.
- During the interview process, DDSB partners with the PDSB school and a Deaf individual for evaluation.
 - Both ASL quality and accuracy of interpretation are evaluated by a member of the Deaf Community to ensure language accuracy.
 - Ensures that students who access ASL interpretation are receiving appropriate support.

NEW Role: Language Acquisition Service Worker (LASW)

- Historically – ASL interpreter only role involving ASL at the DDSB
- Identified a need for students who come to our schools not knowing ASL and cannot access English; these students have often experienced language deprivation
- APSEA (Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority) - have worked with LASWs to help young students learn ASL within their classrooms and later transition to interpreter support
- DDSB's first Language Acquisition Service Worker (LASW) has been hired to support student learning ASL

Members discussed the new role with the following conclusions;

- There is a shortage of Interpreters for Post Secondary students.
- One school offered a course in ASL during the 2021-2022 school year.
- Language acquisition is also needed for student that are hearing but non-verbal.
- Question around how information will be shared with families regarding this new role.

Focused Speech Language Pathologist Role: Augmentative & Alternative Communication AAC

- Approximately 500 students who use augmentative & alternative communication (AAC) received speech and language services last year
- High-tech (digital device) and low-tech (paper-based) systems are being used by our students
- Dedicating one SLP to this specialized part of the field will help to support:
 - Creation of service pathways based on best practices
 - Ensuring current knowledge of technology, apps and other resources
 - Networking and information sharing with Holland Bloorview's Communication and Writing Aids clinic and other school board AAC teams
 - Collaborating with other DDSB departments to support student access to communication technology

Additional Qualifications Courses for Teachers

Through June 2022, the Ministry provided funding to the DDSB to support teachers in accessing Teaching Students with Communication Needs.

Between April 2021 and March 2022 (reported in June 2022 to the Ministry), 47 educators completed the course and received \$525.00 reimbursement towards course cost.

Within the Partnerships & Priorities Funds for 2022-2023, funding is being provided and eligibility expanded to include Special Education Part 1, Part 2 and Specialist. We look forward to receiving further details including timelines framing the eligibility. To support educators, we have communicated that completed Summer 2022 courses will be supported for reimbursement at the above rate.

McCaskills Mills PS. – Brock Township Accessibility Award

The McCaskills Mills PS team was recently (June 20, 2022) recognized by Brock Township for fostering inclusive learning spaces and programs.

9. Open Discussion:

SEAC Members engage in conversation which touched on a number of topics:

- DDSB Accessibility Plan; members will review and share with their associations and generate feedback.
- SIP – Special Incident Portion, during the 2021-2022 school year SEAC wrote a letter to the Ministry before the election regarding SIP.

Motion to refresh and resend the Special Incident Portion letter reviewing funding including both the shadow ministers and the Ministry of Education's two parliamentary assistants:

MOVED BY: Tara Culley

SECONDED BY: Donna Edge-Bean

CARRIED

- Enrolment - Observation and questions around the significant increase in enrolment was discussed
- Inquiries were made around students that need more than 1 full adult support they probably also have costs for families at home. These families may be seeking less costly areas to live; consequently, moving out of the downtown Toronto area.
- Durham Region has significant new build growth which is desirable as these are easier to modify to create more accessible homes.

10. Business Arising from the Minutes:

The updated DRAFT SEAC survey was discussed with the following observations:

- Much more streamlined
- Look at inclusive language
- Question 23 might want it to include more data collection than personal.
- Sought information: SEAC seeking trends for the top challenges.

- Remove questions 9 and 13.
- What are the top 3 supports and services you would like to continue, and what are the supports and service that are not being provided?
- The DDSB has a strong Assessment and Accountability department they will analyze the data.
- What is the intention of the survey-what feedback is SEAC seeking through this survey is what we need to ask while building the survey.
- Survey will be intuitive.
- How does socio economic situation impact supports that are sought.
- Are there any other significant barriers or factors we should know?
- Decided not to tie to individual student census; important layers of communicated intention of data collection, building trust and research protocols
- Words are clearer and are preferred to stars.
- Knowledge of the services available
- Do you understand roles, rights and what supports are available to advocate for children.
- At the end of the survey add the link to the SEAC brochure page on the DDSB website, invitation to connect. If you need help with advocacy, please feel free to reach out.

11. Association Reports & Committee Reports:

- OAFCCD Newsletter -new members will be announced later in the year.

12. Correspondence:

- Upper Canada DSB – re: PPM81

14. Community Concerns:

Appeal Process within the Identification Placement Review Committee (IPRC) Process

- There to support the individual and come to a reasonable conclusion for student supports.
- Many other community partners were not able to assist.
- School Boards are required to publish the number of appeals each year in the Special Education Plan.
- If there is a disagreement for placement, an Appeal Committee is formed. The Districts names a member and the family names a member and together they pick a third to build the IPRC appeal review committee.
- These three members cannot have provided direct involvement or services to the child.
- Advocates are welcome to support but are not part of the committee.
- A support person for the caregiver does not need to be a member of SEAC but cannot be someone that has provided direct service to students.

Elizabeth Daniels has announced she will be stepping down in November from her seat at SEAC. Members of SEAC thanked Elizabeth for her valuable voice at the table.

15. Celebrations and Success:

- Grandview Kids- CEO will be retiring in February 2023
 - significant shift for one of our Partners Lorraine has been an incredible advocate for accessibility. Centring kids and families.

Motion made to have SEAC is to write a letter to of congratulation and acknowledgement.

MOVED BY: Elizabeth Daniels

SECONDED BY: Tara Culley

CARRIED

- With Carolyn McLennon stepping down we need to post for a vacant position for Member at Large
- Volunteers for the selection committee: Donna Edge-Bean, Tara Culley, Eva Kyriakides.

16. Next S.E.A.C. meeting – Thursday, October 20, 2022.

October 20, 2022 meeting will be held in the person at the Durham District School Board 400 Taunton Rd. E. Whitby. In person allows for small group discussions and makes for a more fulsome meeting.

17. Adjournment:

That the meeting does now adjourn at 8:32 p.m. Adjournment called by SEAC Chair Eva Kyriakides

MOVED BY: Tara Culley

SECONDED BY: Donna Edge-Bean

CARRIED

Report respectfully submitted by:

Eva Kyriakides, SEAC Chair

Table 1- Action Plan

ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBILITY	COMPLETION
ASL in secondary schools this year	Andrea McAuley	October 20, 2022
Invite to absent members for Member at Large selection committee	Lisa Wry	September 16, 2022
Letter of Congratulation – Lorraine Sunstrum-Mann, CEO Grandview	Eva Kyriakides	November 2022