

REPORT OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Thursday November 10, 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
Jenn McLaughlin, Black Parents Support Group
Tara Culley, Durham Down Syndrome Association
Hanah Nguyen, Easter Seals Ontario
Rowin Jarvis, Learning Disabilities Association of Durham Region
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 Christine Thatcher

Staff: Superintendent, Andrea McAuley
System Lead Michelle Crawford-Eade

Recording Secretary: Lisa Wry

1. **Call to Order:**
SEAC Chair Eva Kyriakides called the meeting to order at 6:33 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:** Margeaux Levy- Vice-Principal Gordon B. Attersley, Dawn White-Principal G.L Roberts C.V.I.
Regrets: sensaRAneb, Hanah Nguyen, Trustee Linda Lowery
Absent: Vera Mercier

5. **Approval of Agenda:**

That the agenda for November 10, 2022 be approved:

MOTION BY: Kathy Kedey

SECONDED BY: Tara Culley

CARRIED

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

That the minutes from October 20, 2022 be approved:

MOVED BY: Elizabeth Daniel

SECONDED BY: Eva Kyriakides

CARRIED

7. **Staff Reports:**

SEAC: November 2022 Administration Report

We are looking forward to recognizing Classroom Support Staff Appreciation Day next Wednesday, November 16 across the DDSB. Classroom Support Staff includes individuals in professional roles working alongside students in their well-being, learning and connections. Roles include ASL Interpreters, and Developmental Support Workers, Educational Assistants, Intervenors, and Language Acquisition Support Worker. We are looking forward to highlighting the incredible work of these team members through social media and through the activities engaged across individual schools in recognition of team members.

Next Friday, individuals in these same roles will engage in a day of professional learning. The DDSB is committed to addressing barriers that affect students' well-being, learning and success. An inclusive model of special education identifies, prevents and addresses barriers that may affect students' well-being and ability to learn. It is through knowledge building and an examination of our practices that we will ensure that we better serve all our learners and support staff. Supported by teams from across Inclusive Student Services, learning opportunities include topics such as, but not limited to, Behaviour Management Systems training, Inclusive Technology, Mental Health & Justice, Tier One Mental Health & Well-Being, Engaging Early Communicators Through Play, Augmentative Communication and Language Modelling and much more. We thank community partners such as Grandview and Lake Ridge Community Support Services for providing teams to facilitate sessions on: An Overview of the Ontario Autism Program - Early Transition to School program, Lift and Transfer Training. A listing of courses will be shared with SEAC.

We are at the point in the school year where we begin planning for 2023-2024. Schools are preparing for the administration of the CCAT (Canadian Cognitive Abilities Test), group testing, as part of Gifted screening. This fall, just over 2200 students, mostly in Grade three, will take part through self-nomination.

Please stay tuned for the announcement of an Additional Qualifications Course subsidy for special education related teacher courses. An emphasis is on courses including: Equitable & Inclusive Education, Hearing, Deaf, Deaf/Blind, Vision qualifications and Special Education Parts 1, 2 and Specialist. The information flier, to be distributed shortly throughout the DDSB, will be shared in the December SEAC package.

This concludes our Administrator report for November 2022.

Board: Trustee Christine Thatcher informed SEAC members that the Board of Trustees is delighted to welcome new Director Camille Williams-Taylor. Camille was with our board for several years as Superintendent and has a strong focus on equity inclusion and diversity, collaboration and teamwork. The Board of Trustees also received information and presentations on: the consolidated School Community Council (SCC) and Parent Involvement Committee (PIC) document. Ontario Public School Board Association (OPSBA) will be holding an advocacy day on November 28 where Trustees will have an opportunity to speak with local MPPs and bring forward any concerns. Request to SEAC members for matters that Trustees could bring to the attention of MPPs.

SEAC Chair Eva Kyriakides would like the Special Incident Portion (SIP) letter shared. Members can share any concerns that they would like to have brought forward with Eva and Lisa Wry.

8. Inclusive Student Service Department Report- November 10, 2022

- Updates this month include:
- Classroom Support Staff Appreciation Day
- Professional Learning

Classroom Support Staff Appreciation Day – November 16

Professionals in classroom support staff roles are critical in the support of student well-being and learning.

Roles include:

- ASL Interpreter
- Developmental Support Worker
- Educational Assistant
- Intervenor
- Language Acquisition Worker

We would like to recognize the health role that nurses support in schools through community partnerships and health funding.

Professional Learning: Acceptance & Commitment Therapy

- Staff members from Social Work and Psychological Services participated in training: Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT)
- ACT is a therapeutic approach included in what is often known as the 'third wave' of therapies
- ACT develops psychological flexibility and is a form of behavioral therapy that combines mindfulness skills with the practice of self-acceptance
- In total, 35 staff members participated in the training that was offered on a live webinar group format as well as an individual learn-at-own pace format

New to DDSB: Educational Assistant Supply Orientation

The Durham DSB continues to hire professionals into the role of Education Assistant – Supply. On October 24th, 51 new to DDSB staff in this employee group participated in a full day orientation and on-boarding training.

The day was supported in collaboration between: CUPE, Health & Safety, Inclusive Student Services, Innovative Technology and Recruitment.

Topics of focus included, but was not limited to:

- Overview of DDSB Strategic Plan and special education model
- Overview of Classroom Support Staff Health & Safety Go-To Guide (e.g., well-being and mental health, ergonomics, health practices)
- New to the Role - EA Orientation
- Supply booking system and online resources for staff
- Health & Safety – Keeping Safe
- How to access support: CUPE, district staff and school staff

Professional Learning – CNIB Connecting the Dots Conference

On October 25th, the Vision Resource Team attended the CNIB Connecting the Dots Conference. Connecting the Dots is Canada's largest educational and professional development conference focused on education, technology, and employment for people who are blind or partially sighted.

Professional Learning – Orton-Gillingham Literacy Training

- In-partnership with the curriculum team, Inclusive Student Services team members are engaging in an intensive Orton-Gillingham-based literacy training
- Increasing understanding of structured literacy practices as outlined in the Right to Read Inquiry
- Supporting literacy instruction and intervention across the tiers continues to be critical, ongoing work among our teams

Life Beyond Highschool: Community Connections

An invitation:
Monday November 14, 2022
7:00-9:00 pm
DDSB Education Centre

Opportunity for students and families to meet with Durham based partners in the areas of:

Community/Recreation Supports:

- Abilities Centre
- Developmental Services Ontario (DSO)
- Tania's Place
- Sunrise Youth Group

Financial Support

- Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP)

Health Supports

- Carea Community Health Centre
- Durham Mental Health

Educational Supports

- Durham College Community Integration for Cooperative Education (CICE)
- Fleming College (CICE)
- Ontario Tech – Student Accessibility Services
- Durham College Academic Upgrading

Employment Supports

- YMCA Durham Employment Services
- Agilec

Consideration for future events: the possible barrier of geography and transportation.

9. Member at Large

Elizabeth Daniel excused herself from the elections due to a conflict of interest.

The SEAC subcommittee reviewed 11 applications, seeking new voices at the table and those that may be missing

Candidate A

- Speech and Language - which will no longer be at the table (OAFCCD no longer with a SEAC member representative)
- SEAC experience
- Speech Language Pathologist

Candidate B

- BA Psychology
- Certificates in addiction and mental health
- Family Service Worker at Dnaagdawenmag Binnoojiiyag Child & Family Services.
- Brings a lens we may be missing in our discussions

SEAC members will put forward a recommendation to the Board of Trustees and final approval is made by the Board.

MOTION TO THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES TO APPROVE THE SEAC
RECOMMENDATION THAT CANDIDATES ELIZABETH DANIEL AND MORGANN
CAMERON REPRESENT THE SEAC POSITIONS OF MEMBER AT LARGE.

MOVED BY: Rowin Jarvis

SECONDED BY: Kathy Kedey

CARRIED

10. Preparations for Annual SEAC Elections:

December is our organizational meeting, at this time we will elect a chair and vice-chair of SEAC. As Trustees hold a voice as members of the Board it has been decided that the vice-chair will be a member representing an association.

- If you are not able to attend the December meeting it is important to have your alternate attend as quorum will be necessary.

January review the SEAC handbook to update may need significant updates.

- Consider updating every 5 years.

10. Open Discussion:

Members divided into small groups and discussed the DDSB Accessibility Plan and provided feedback and observations:

- Employment goals - tool and format
- How do we monitor ensuring diversity at the table for implementation
- Incorporating new communication methods - student learning with new technology
- Self advocacy - children can learn to advocate for themselves to have their needs met
- Superintendent Andrea McAuley - suggested having members of the DDSB Planning team attend a SEAC meeting to share feedback and accommodations for new builds
- K-12 building standards existing AODA building code is not reflective
- Less costly to add accessibility from the beginning than to retrofit already existing buildings
- Audits may need to be done on older buildings
- Every new school is opening with a clinical space, and two purpose built special education classrooms with additional spaces within each classroom to allow for ease of integration

11. Business Arising from the Minutes:

- SEAC Survey - circulate for December meeting
- The DRAFT letter regarding SIP was reviewed

MOTION TO APPROVE THE DRAFT SPECIAL INCIDENT PORTION (SIP) LETTER TO THE MINISTRY

MOVED BY: Kathy Kedey

SECONDED BY: Tara Culley

CARRIED

12. Association Reports & Committee Reports:

None

13. Correspondence:

None

14. Community Concerns:

Concerns around the bus driver shortage, there are issues with equity and access to buses.

- The bus driver shortage is a province wide issue
- Student learning is disrupted
- Bell times did help to accommodate some of the issues, however the significant enrolment increase has caused greater strain
- Conversation with Durham Region Transit has been on going about reinstating some routes that have been removed during COVID and now re-establishing these routes with discounted rates in the works

Concerns around schools that run dual track programs

- Disproportionate class sizes
- Whitby - found that 1/3 English to 2/3 French Immersion prior to COVID and since then we have seen a shift to more 50/50
- Southwood Park P.S. is more of a 20/80 split
- Boundary planning is often met with resistance

- Concerns around supporting within a small cohort
- Look at support for students in the French Immersion
- Perhaps kids are being withdrawn from French Immersion because they may not be receiving supports in French
- Look at the whole dual track school system and compare how many have identifications

15. Celebrations and Success:

Tara Culley is celebrating her sons 16th birthday.

Eva is celebrating that her daughter is well into her first semester of university and is living her best life.

16. Next S.E.A.C. meeting – Thursday, December 15, 2022.

17. Adjournment:

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

MOVED BY: Kathy Kedey

SECONDED BY: Elizabeth Daniel

CARRIED

Report respectfully submitted by:

Eva Kyriakides, SEAC Chair

Table 1- Action Plan

ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBILITY	COMPLETION
Share list of EA PA Day courses	Lisa Wry	December Department Report
Latest version of the SEAC Survey	Lisa Wry	For December meeting.
Circulate the SEAC handbook for roles and responsibilities	Lisa Wry	Friday November 25, 2022