

REPORT OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Thursday June 20, 2024 6:30 P.M.

ROLL CALL:

Eva Kyriakides, Association for Bright Children (ABC) SEAC Chair
Charmain Brown, OPVIC Ontario Parents of Visually Impaired Children
sensaRAneb Burrell, Autism Ontario – Durham Region Chapter
Tara Culley, Durham Down Syndrome Association
Allyson Eamer, Easter Seals Ontario
Rowin Jarvis, Learning Disabilities Association of Durham Region
Elizabeth Daniel, Member at Large
Morgann Cameron, Member at Large
Jennifer McLaughlin, Sawubona Africentric Circle of Support

Trustees: Donna Edwards Kelly Miller Michelle Arseneault

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, live, and learn.

This statement was co-created in partnership with the Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation and the Chippewas of Georgina Island.

3. DDSB Human Rights & Equity Statement

The Durham District School Board recognizes Indigenous rights are distinct. In the exercise of those rights, Indigenous staff and students shall not be subject to action with the aim or effect of depriving these distinct rights.

The Durham District School Board is committed to providing learning and working environments that centre human rights and equity and are safe, welcoming, respectful, equitable, accessible, inclusive, and free from all forms of discrimination, oppression, harassment, and harm.

4. **Welcome Guests:** Tracy Running, Secondary Principal Rep

Regrets: Trustee Kelly Miller, Jenn McLaughlin, Trustee Michelle Arsenault

Absent: sensaRAneb Burrell

5. **Approval of Agenda:**

That the agenda for June 20, 2024

MOVED BY: Trustee Donna Edwards SECONDED BY: Tara Culley

CARRIED

6. **Approval of the Minutes:**

That the minutes from May 23, 2024, be approved:

MOVED BY: Tara Culley SECONDED BY: Elizabeth Daniel

CARRIED

7. **Staff Reports:**

Superintendent Andrea McAuley

- Highlighted the Inclusive Student Services- Impact Update for June focus on Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC). This was a new position for the 2023-2024 school year for one of our Speech Language Pathologists.
 - Position was implemented to deepen learning about AAC and build consistency of practice across Speech Language team.
 - Promethean Boards, work with new addition of clicker.
 - What is funded for home use and what is funded for school use? Helping synchronize
 - The AAC assignment SLP works with the school based SLPs to train assist them with implementing the AAC.
 - If family's consent, there is collaboration between the community based SLP and the school SLP as well as the classroom teacher to program home and school devices to have the same bank of words for use in both spaces.
- Ontario Autism Program (OAP) team last year had 180 children enter kindergarten. The OAP Entry to School team stays with us for the transition into school teams.
 - This year we have 160 little ones moving into our kindergarten system.
- The DDSB 2024-2025 Budget and the Inclusive Student Services Special Education Plan were passed by the Board of Trustees.
- Fifty additional permanent EA positions have been added for the upcoming school year.
- Due to student transfers/completion, not known earlier this spring, two intervenors were surplus staff.
- A sincere thank you to SEAC when we reflect on this year consultation has provided immense time and care to experience to students and families.

- An invitation was extended to members of SEAC to make suggestions/recommendations for ISS Impact Update topics for 2024-2025
- A video of the Abilities Track and Field meet was shared; video is posted on DDSB social media.

Trustee Donna Edwards inquired about arranging wheelchair accessible bussing for the Abilities Track and Field meet, and suggested some barriers to attending might be trust with a new and different environment. Perhaps sharing the video with families prior to the event. Consider reaching out to the taxi companies for sponsorship with transportation.

The Abilities Track and Field Meet was attended by many families as well as our Director and CUPE218 EA Chairperson Stephanie Dezsi.

8. **Board:** Trustee Donna Edwards shared with SEAC members that Board of Trustees has passed the budget for the 2024-2025 school year. Noting that working within the funds released to us to support students and families as well as uphold our strategic plan has been challenging. Projection for more growth also, the usual influx on new students in September adds additional pressure. The Chairperson's Scholarship was awarded, as well as the Abilities Scholarship. There will be a special Board meeting on Monday June 24 to name the new North Oshawa School. The Parent Involvement Committee (PIC) also attending the Board meeting.

Rowin Jarvis shared that the Abilities Scholarship was awarded to Kylie McKirdy, and it was nice to see so many students apply for the scholarship. The student awarded the scholarship is going on to college in the Social Service Worker program and is planning to volunteer to help other children that may also have Learning Disabilities. Kylie was also recognized at the student recognition night.

SEAC Chair Eva Kyriakides - Are there (budget) adjustments made when we have an influx of students? The answer is yes, they do adjust for additional student after the October and March reports to the Ministry of Education.

School Boards also have the Priorities and Partnerships Funding that are additional to Core Education Funding; they are special projects which we can use when offered but this funding is not guaranteed to continue long-term.

9. **Open Discussion – Advocacy Event Planning**

- There was a virtual planning meeting June 18.
- Great thoughts around in-person or virtual (possible barriers, childcare, transportation, distances)
- May need to connect with the media team to help with planning especially if this is the first SEAC event.
- Decided not to have too many breakout rooms.
- Possibly a keynote speaker-perhaps from LDADR
- Breakout rooms for IPRC what is involved.
- Another breakout room for IEPs
- Chain of advocacy-where to start at the school level and beyond.

- Communication supports e.g., sentence starters for parents to have conversations with educators.
- Student self-advocacy, do students know and understand their strengths, needs and interests in advocacy for embedding in their programs.
- The breakout rooms could have a presentation and then a brief question and answer period.
- Let families know that the meeting is being livestreamed, so conversation needs to be kept general.
- How to reach out to SEAC members
- Determine a start time.
- Need volunteers for breakout rooms.
- Set up another meeting in August.
- Keynote could be great; we want to make sure we are being very inclusive. Consider intersection of identities and how individuals experience education system.
- What have association members learned over time.
- Presentations have been done in the past where questions can be submitted in advance and questions can be answered directly to the questioner. And then in the end the questions and answers can be compiled and shared with attendees keeping personal information private.
- Send out the live recording of the presentation with the questions and answers and who answered it, and how to connect with the associations.
- Decide if it is in person or virtual – in person is often difficult for our families.
- Families would need to register in advance and the link would be shared with them in advance.
- Goal is to connect with as many families as possible.
- Consider having an ASL Interpreter; those at home would be able to use closed captioning.
- Difficult to have an ASL interpreter on a virtual presentation signing as the presentation runs, better to have the presentation prepared in advance and have it interpreted before the presentation is shared.
- Sometimes coming to the Board office can be intimidating for families.
- Building awareness of SEAC for families and caregivers
- Consider breaking it down into a series of events of 4 or 5 webinars-easiest accessibility.
- Advertised as a series.
- The information is more bite size.
- Marketing of the event needs to be done well, to draw attendance.
- Feedback from the first presentation to build and improve with each module.
- Want to get information out in a time sensitive manner, complimenting the flow of the school year.
- A series will need to be preplanned dates and topics.
- Webinar series, general topics, reminders sent out, ability to add new participants and send out links on the day of the event.
- LDADR advocacy presentation may be a good place to start.
- Consider using different nights of the week to make it more flexible for families.
- First presentation will focus on IEPs.

10. Business Arising from the Minutes

- SEAC Obligations & Expectations reviewed and adopted by SEAC.
- If we have an Indigenous Trustee, we should have an indigenous representative on SEAC.
- The SEAC Obligations and Expectations will be posted to the website replacing the SEAC Handbook.

11. Association Reports & Committee Reports

- Update the website to include Easter Seals
- All documents shared at SEAC can be shared with associations.
- ISS Impact Update is meant to be shared widely so please do share with your associations.

12. Correspondence

- PAAC on SEAC Meeting Recommendations
- Ministry of Education Parent/Caregiver Letter – Changes to OSSD Requirements
- MACSE Meeting Highlights
- Durham Region Transit (DRT)- response from the DDSB SEAC letter.
 - All concerns in the letter were raised at the Ajax DRT meeting.
 - DRT does not seem to understand what SEAC is and what we represent.
 - Consider inviting Durham Region Transit to SEAC.
 - Need to consult those involved with the multi-organization Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)
 - Concern did not come from the Board, but from SEAC, as a committee, representing the community.
 - How do we respond to this letter? Perhaps invite them to a meeting with an explanation of what SEAC is.

13. Community Concerns

None

14. Celebrations & Successes

Tara Culley shared that Adam came home with two first place ribbons from the Abilities Track Meeting

Donna Edwards shared that her daughter received a silver medal and also the recipient of a dance scholarship.

15. Next S.E.A.C Meeting

September 5, 2024

16. Adjournment

That the meeting does now adjourn at 8:26 p.m.

Report Special Education Advisory Committee (cont'd)
June 20, 2024

Adjournment called by SEAC Chair Eva Kyriakides

MOVED BY: Rowin Jarvis SECONDED BY: Elizabeth Daniel

CARRIED

Report respectfully submitted by:

Eva Kyriakides, SEAC Chair

Table 1 Action Items

ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBILITY	COMPLETION
Dates for Webinar series	SEAC Members	ASAP
Doodle poll for sub- committee for advocacy webinar series. Meeting to occur in August	Eva Kyriakides	July 2024
Addition of Easter Seals to DDSB SEAC brochure and related space on website	Lisa Wry	July 2024
SEAC Obligations and Expectations to be posted to website; replacing Handbook	Lisa Wry/Andrea McAuley	July 2024