

**REPORT OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
**Thursday November 7, 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  
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.

**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.

**3. Welcome Guests:** Ashley Romano Transition and Work Experience Coordinator Tracy Running - Secondary Representative, Kim Argier - Elementary Representative, Maritzia Basaran Autism Ontario Alternate.

**Regrets:** Charmain Brown, Rowin Jarvis, Trustee Michelle Arseneault.

**Absent:** None

**4. Approval of Agenda:**

That the agenda for November 7, 2024, be approved. With the addition of an item under section nine; membership request from the Abilities Centre

MOVED BY: Tara Culley

SECONDED BY: Allyson Eamer

CARRIED

**5. Approval of the Minutes:**

That the minutes from October 3, 2024, be approved with the correction of a typo.

Highlight for Board Augmentative and Alternate Communication (ACC) presentation, include some of the questions and answers after the presentation.

MOVED BY: Tara Culley

SECONDED BY: Elizabeth Daniel

CARRIED

**6. Staff Reports:**

Superintendent Andrea McAuley shared information and updates from the Inclusive Student Services department:

- The Psychological Services department has a new revised information flier. This flier is now on the Board website and available for circulation. If there are any questions or feedback, we are happy to share with Dr. Sara Schleien.
- The Mental Health Leadership team were looking for different affirmation cards and finding it difficult to source cards that were all appropriate; they decided to create their own with support of the Creative Services team. Andrea McAuley invited each member to choose a card from the created deck that spoke to them today.
- There is a working group of educators looking at and creating an Individual Education Plan (IEP) guide for schools, to keep formatting consistent across all schools, this will be a K-12 document; working group is a shared commitment with ETFO.
- A transportation programming working group is being created now, to create a resource for school teams to support student transportation skills (student transportation and public transportation).
- Professional Development (PD) day on November 1, 2024 this PD was Principal lead including focus areas such as student learning, attendance & engagement.  
November 15 – all Educational Assistants will be involved with professional learning.
- November 20 is Classroom Support Staff Appreciation Day: ASL Interpreter, Intervenor and Educational Assistants.
- Board of Trustees move into their annual organization meeting November 18, 2024. SEAC will be reorganizing at the December 5 meeting.
- SEAC has committed to a survey every two years which puts us in a position to develop another for release in the Spring of 2025.

7. **Board:** Trustee Kelly Miller shared with SEAC members that the Board of Trustees received information at the October Standing Committee meeting: EQAO results memo, advised that the full report is on the DDSB website; updated math achievement plan; and a presentation on experiential learn. Ignite Durham Learning Foundation update. Food and nutrition memo for supports in school. Information on DDSB student participation in the Skills Ontario Events, allows students to access skilled trade learning they may not be exposed to.

8. **Presentation & Discussion: Integrated Transition Planning**

Presenter: Ashley Romano – Transition and Work Experience Coordinator

- Integrated Transition Planning is combined effort between
  - School teams – who connect with families on the day to day and share information on services and get consent from parents, caregivers, and guardians to access Inclusive Student Services teams.
  - Psychological Services – who provide assessments in support of Developmental Services Ontario (DSO) applications.
    - 2023-24 school year 27 referrals for assessments for DSO
    - 2024-25 school year 81 referrals for assessments for DSO
  - Transition Coordinator (TC) services – received 181 new referrals for TC services in the 2023-24 school year.
    - Maintain relationships with over 50 agencies and service providers in Durham Region and Ontario
- Growth in referral may be due to parents/caregivers becoming more aware of the services and the fact that we are growing in enrollment.

Ashley also shared the DRAFT overview of the Integrated Transition Planning Guide resource for student/parent/caregiver and staff resource.

- Outlines post-secondary pathways for students with developmental and intellectual disabilities with examples of what each pathway might include – pathways are fluid – helps students and families build a vision for the future.
- Also, outlines transition pathway at a glance and works as an overview of all key milestones for transitional aged youth with developmental and intellectual disabilities.
- Integrated Transition Planning earlier is key – transition milestones start at age 14.
- The next step for this resource will be making it available online with interactive pieces to genuinely work as a transition planning guide, individualized to each student.
- Complimentary to this Transition Planning Getting Started resource is the Life Beyond High School Event guide; shared digitally last week.
- These resources provide the what, why and how along with a catalog of local agencies and service providers.

After the presentation members had a brief discussion

- Michelle Crawford-Eade shared- we had a wonderful Life Beyond High School Event which was highly attended.
- Two copies of the Life Beyond High School Event Guides have been provided to each SEAC member; one as own resource and one for sharing.
- Goal is to increase the knowledge and fill a gap for families.
- Trustee Donna Edwards suggested that it might want to be considered moving up the transportation training earlier.
- Ashley and Braden have been working with schools and getting the message out to

- educators.
- A Google classroom has been created and shared with schools. Within the Google classroom there are links for guidance departments and ISS Heads for supporting students with an IEP.
- Administrative Council recommended the resource be reviewed at DDSB's Indigenous Advisory Circle for their feedback at their meeting in December, to ensure that the resource was sensitive to the culture experiences of Indigenous students and families.

## 9. **Business Arising from the Minutes**

- SEAC Parent Involvement Committee (PIC) Representative:  
Jennifer McLaughlin has volunteered to be the SEAC representative on PIC.
- SEAC Webinar Update  
Planning committee will include Jennifer McLaughlin, Charmain Brown and Eva Kyriakides
- SEAC Member at Large Sub-Committee Recommendation  
SEAC Chair Eva Kyriakides thanked all applicants for their interest. Candidate of interest has children with special education interests, strengths and needs and is a work as a communicative disorders assistant and provide speech therapy in remote communities.

Looking to put that person forward to the Board of Trustees for approval with a motion.

MOTION TO THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES TO APPROVE THE SEAC RECOMMENDATION THAT CANDIDATE J.W. BE APPROVED AS REPRESENTATIVE FOR MEMBER AT LARGE.

MOVED BY: Tara Culley      SECONDED BY: Elizabeth Daniel  
The name of the nominee is Jessica Wells.

We will reach out to applicants and thank them for their application and to Jessica to let her know that she will be putting forward to Board for approval to be a member of SEAC.

- Membership request from Abilities Centre – not a parent association. Can SEAC have service providers that are non-voting members. The voice is intended to be family and caregiver membership. If they had an alternate, we could offer them a non-voting membership which would need to be approved by Board.

MOTION TO APPROVE ABILITIES CENTRE AS A NON-VOTING MEMBER SHOULD AN ALTERNATE IS BE ESTABLISHED

MOVE BY: Allyson Eamer      SECONDED BY: Elizabeth Daniel

- Tara Culley shared Joseph Wrigley Principal of Lakeside P.S. is hosting a listening circle and Tara will be presenting about what SEAC is and what the associations represented.

## **10. Association Reports & Committee Reports**

- Durham Down Syndrome Association Presentation

Tara Culley shared a presentation about the Durham Down Syndrome Association (DDSA)

### **History**

- Started in 1983, the Durham Down Syndrome Association (DDSA) was created to provide a support system for persons living with Down Syndrome (DS) and their families.
- Today, we proudly support 90 families within the Durham region.
- The association is a source of information & support for new and existing parents/caregivers of children with Down Syndrome.
- The association actively fundraises and receives donations as an official registered charity, to support its members.
- The association provides a wealth of programs and events for its members and others who wish to participate.
- There are also larger organizations at the provincial and Canadian levels.  
Down Syndrome Association of Ontario (DSAO)  
Canadian Down Syndrome Society (CDSS)

**World Down Syndrome Day was designated by the United Nations in 2012 as the 21<sup>st</sup> day of March and is recognized internationally annually.**

Our Mission:

- To continue building a supportive, inclusive community by providing social and active events for people with Down Syndrome and their families.

Our Vision:

- To build a supportive and welcoming community for people with Down syndrome and their families, by creating opportunities for social interaction, active participation, family networking and resource sharing.
- To build support for our members within the Durham Region community by raising awareness of Down Syndrome and fostering inclusive relationships with our neighbours and other community organizations.

### **What is Down Syndrome?**

A typical human has 46 chromosomes (arranged in 23 pairs), but people with Down Syndrome have 47.

That extra chromosome usually sits on the 21<sup>st</sup> pair.

- Affects ~95% of people with DS

As such, the typical medical diagnosis is called Trisomy 21.

- Translocation – the extra chromosome sits on another chromosomal pair
- Mosaic (means “combination”) – some cells have 3 chromosomes, some just 2

This manifests in many ways, in varying degrees in each person.

- Physical issues and heart defects
- Speech and language delays
- Hypotonia (low muscle tone)
- Cognitive delays

Resources

- Durham Down Syndrome Association: [www.ddsa.ca](http://www.ddsa.ca)
- Down Syndrome Association of Ontario: [www.dsao.ca](http://www.dsao.ca)
- Canadian Down Syndrome Society: [www.cdss.ca](http://www.cdss.ca)
- World Down Syndrome Day: [www.worlddownsyndromeday.org](http://www.worlddownsyndromeday.org)

A community of support for families which includes special events for young people and families.

Additional Association Information:

- Autism Ontario is offering a 'Pathways to Special Education Support: Meet & Greet for Families-future dates still available.
- LDADR is having a few presentations at the Ajax Library on November 17 from 1:00-3:00.

**11. Correspondence**

- University of Toronto OISE Psychology Clinic-Offering psychological assessments

**12. Community Concerns**

No community concerns raised.

**13. Celebrations & Successes**

Tara Culley shared that her son Adam just celebrated his 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.

**14. Next S.E.A.C Meeting**

December 5, 2024, is the SEAC organizational meeting, it is very important to have quorum at this meeting.

The Board will organize on November 18.

**15. Adjournment**

That the meeting does now adjourn at 8:09p.m.

Adjournment called by SEAC Chair Eva Kyriakides

MOVED BY: Tara Culley      SECONDED BY: Allyson Eamer

CARRIED

Report respectfully submitted by:

Eva Kyriakides, SEAC Chair

Report Special Education Advisory Committee (cont'd)  
November 7, 2024

*Table 1 Action Items*

ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBILITY	DATE COMPLETED
Send previous Survey and results out to members	Lisa Wry	November 8, 2024
Link to the Standing report from November 4	Lisa Wry	November 8, 2024
Link to donations Ignite Learning Foundation	Lisa Wry	November 8, 2024
Share with Administrators Psychological OSIE Clinic- Psychological Assessments and Supports for Students	Lisa Wry	November 29, 2024

# Inclusive Student Services Impact Update

2024-2025 • Issue 2

## Integrated Transition Planning

In a commitment to supporting achievement, well-being and pathways within School Achievement Plans, how we plan for, support and celebrate students whose achievement is other than an Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) is important.

[Integrated Transition Planning](#) begins at age 14 for youth with developmental and/or intellectual disabilities. Early planning is key to ensuring that students, and their families/caregivers:

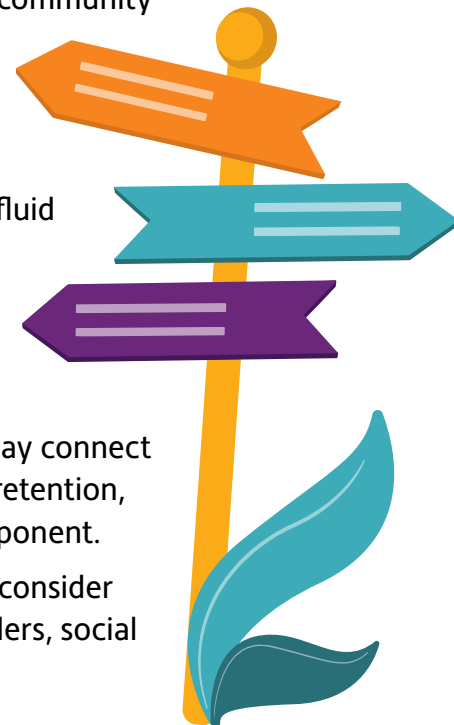
- are centred in planning (goals/hopes);
- have access to information and;
- that supports such as [Developmental Services Ontario](#) (DSO) application requirements such as recent assessment are planned.

Transition planning is personalized for each student. All transition plans should include a range of considerations, both long and short-term. Long-term considerations may include the transition to postsecondary activities and services like day programs, while short-term considerations may lead to opportunities through their school and in the community before transitioning to post-secondary pathways.

## Post-Secondary Pathways

Each student's pathway will look different shaped by students' unique strengths, needs, and vision for the future. Post-secondary pathways are fluid and change over time.

- Continuing Education: Students wanting to continue their education may look into modified college programs like Co-Operative Education through Community Integration (CICE).
- Employment: Students looking to follow the pathway to employment may connect with employment service providers for support with job searching and retention, employment readiness programs, or programs with a volunteering component.
- Community: Students wishing to explore community participation may consider connecting with community-based services such as day program providers, social groups, sports leagues, or other supported opportunities.





## Importance of Families/Caregivers

Integrated Transition Planning is about future planning. Families and caregivers share the responsibility with school teams to initiate conversations on transition planning for their child. When families and caregivers take an active role in the development of their child's transition plan, there is a better chance the plan is successful and appropriate for the child's future. Families and caregivers hold a wealth of information on their student's unique strengths, needs, and vision for the future.



*"Having support as we navigate the transition to adult services and plan for life after high school really helps. I know I don't have to do everything alone."*

—Parent

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## Importance of School and District Support Team

Each student's classroom team is their first circle of care and support at school. Classroom teams include professionals in a variety of roles including Teachers, Educational Assistants and may include others, for example Intervenors and ASL Interpreters.

The school team is central in transition planning processes with students and families/caregivers. The team is also able to draw on the expertise of district staff to support Integrated Transition processes. Two examples:

**Transition Coordinator Team** members support school teams in developing Integrated Transition Plans for students with intellectual or developmental disabilities. This support is tailored to meet the unique needs and pathways of each student. Coordinated planning can include transition meetings with students, families, school teams and community partners. During the 2023-24 school year, 181 new referrals were made to Transition Coordinators. There are currently 315 students being supported by Transition Coordinators. Further, Transition Coordinators collaborate with key community partners across the region to ensure that relevant resources, programs and services supporting the transition to adult services are shared with students, families and school teams in a timely manner. The Transition Coordinator team maintains contact with over 50 services providers across Durham Region and Ontario.

**"The Transition Coordinator knows of resources, how to access resources, and is another caring adult who our families can rely on. As well, I've been able to locate information for myself that lets me do a better job as a Practical Learning Program class teacher".**

—Anderson C.V.I. Teacher

**Psychological Services** team members may provide assessments that support application to DSO. These assessments can occur anytime during the young person's school career, as they can also inform transitions that occur from class to class, grade to grade, and elementary to secondary school. This support is responsive to individual student needs and pathways; the number of assessments fluctuates year to year as a result. During the 2023-2024 school year, 27 assessments in support of DSO access were completed. At this time in 2024-2025, information is currently being reviewed based on 81 referrals. Consideration will be made for what information is already available as some students already have assessments considered current for purpose of programming and application and assessments will be confirmed for those requiring.

**"Transition coordination has been seamlessly integrated into our annual planning to support both students and families on a yearly basis. Together, in combination with Guidance and Inclusive Student Services, transition coordination has taken student success and achievement to the next level!"** –Eastdale C.V.I. Inclusive Student Services Team

## Importance of Community Partners

Integrated Transition Planning plays an integral role in getting students and families connected with community partners. This is one of the first opportunities for families to familiarize and engage with community partners as they prepare for life beyond high school. When looking at student's pathways, this often includes direct support from community partners through their services. Engaging with community partners is essential for effective transition planning, helping families and caregivers understand the services available when students turn 18 or 21. Community partners provide comprehensive information on support and services available.

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"The Transition Coordinator team is very passionate about their role and supporting teens with disabilities. That passion really shows up in their commitment to help all teens and parents—there hasn't been a question or request that they haven't been able to support us with."

–Melly's Workplace, Community Partner

"I would tell students and families to gather as much information as they can from the transition coordinator, take advantage of the meeting times they are offered and really use them as a resource and a guide to transitioning from children's services to adult services."

–Community Living Ajax Pickering Whitby, Community Partner

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**For more information about the  
DDSB Inclusive Student Services Impact Update,  
please visit [DDSB Inclusive Student Services](#).**

