

**REPORT OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
**Thursday February 16, 2023 6:30 P.M.**

**ROLL CALL:**

Eva Kyriakides, Association for Bright Children (ABC) SEAC Chair  
sensaRAneb Burrell, Autism Ontario – Durham Chapter  
Tara Culley, Durham Down Syndrome Association  
Hanah Nguyen, 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  
Kathy Kedey, VOICE for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children  
Vera Mercier, Early Years Consortium – Non-voting member

Trustees: Kelly Miller Debora Oldfield

Staff: Superintendent, Andrea McAuley  
System Lead, Michelle Crawford-Eade  
Senior Manager & Clinical Lead of Psychological Services,  
Sara Schleien

Recording Secretary: Lisa Wry

**1. Call to Order:**

SEAC Vice-chair Tara Culley called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

**2. Land Acknowledgement:**

Superintendent Andrea McAuley 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 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 learning and working environments that centre human rights and equity and are safe, welcoming, respectful, equitable, accessible, inclusive and free from discrimination.

4. **Welcome Guests:** Jennifer Machin- Senior Manager of Finance, Margeaux Levy, Vice-Principal-Gordon B. Attersley, Dawn White – Principal, G. L. Roberts CVI.

**Regrets:** Eva Kyriakides, Rowin Jarvis, Hanah Nguyen, Trustee Deb Oldfield

**Absent:** Vera Mercier

5. **Approval of Agenda:**

That the agenda for February 16, 2023 be approved:

MOTION BY: Kathy Kedey

SECONDED BY: Elizabeth Daniel

CARRIED

6. **Approval of the Minutes from January 19, 2023:**

That the minutes from January 19, 2023 be approved:

MOVED BY: Kathy Kedey

SECONDED BY: Elizabeth Daniel

CARRIED

7. **Staff Reports:**

Superintendent Andrea McAuley, shared with members a brief update on a few consultative items as well as touched on the collaborative department report:

- Acknowledge the commitment of staff across the board for coming together in service of kids particularly those with special education strengths and needs, as well as mental health and well-being
- Planning for next year is in full swing as well as the budget process planning
- Options for virtual and in-person selection has been provided for families and course selection is open to secondary students for the 2023-2024 school year
- The District drafts next school year calendars in collaboration with the Durham Catholic District School Board in order to assist in aligning PA Days and holidays, which in turn is helpful for transportation planning
- This draft is then shared through school and consultative bodies like SEAC for feedback prior to going to Board
- Four academic calendars Elementary and Secondary as well as modified calendars for 2 elementary and 3 secondary both which begin school in August and vacation weeks are distributed throughout the school year
- Part of the design for starting with the PA day on the first Tuesday gives opportunity for new enrolments which may alleviate some reorganization needs
- January and June dates show an 'S' which is for the summative period where the ministry required 30% summative course evaluation will take place, which may or may not include an exam

**Board:** Trustee Kelly Miller shared with SEAC members that Board of Trustee received information and presentations on: Excellence in Black student achievement which included Administrators as well as students.

**8. Inclusive Student Service Department Report- February 16, 2023**

Updates this month include:

- DDSB Let's Listen
- Program Highlight: GL Roberts CVI
- February is Psychology Month
- Professional Learning Highlights

**DDSB Mental Health & Well-Being**

"The most basic and powerful way to connect to another person is to listen. Just listen. Perhaps the most important thing we ever give each other is our attention."

– Rachel Naomi Remen

**GL Roberts CVI: Students Visit Melly's Café**

**@GLRobertsCVI on Twitter:**

So much gratitude to Melly's Workplace, Café + Marketplace for hosting our Practical Learning Program students. Melly's is a training centre for youth with disabilities, providing youth the chance to learn skills, in a 6-month program, such as: handling financial transactions & food service.

They truly work through an asset base lens.

**February is Psychology Month**

DDSB Psychological Services team members provide:

- Consultation services
- Assessment services
- Direct services (individual and group)
- Capacity building
- Crisis response (in partnership with colleagues in Social Work services)

Understanding that relationships are essential to well-being, trust and sense of belonging, we offer services that respect student and caregiver identity and voice. We embrace a strength-based approach, and collaborate with students, their caregivers and team members to promote inclusive, safe and welcoming school communities.

**Highlight: BeMe Conferences**

Members of Psychological Services and Social Work have formed the BeMe (Black Excellence Made Evident) Collective, and are wrapping up their first round of secondary school conference events

- Based on feedback from last year's virtual sessions, the Collective has run two sets of two-day conferences – Ajax HS and Pickering HS, with another planned event for this spring at GL Roberts.
- Feedback so far has been very positive. The Collective has worked with over 80 students on topics that affirm and validate Black youth identity and well-being.

- During the conference, youth and members of the Collective engage on strategies to confront marginalization and Anti-Black Racism, promote positive leadership amongst Black students, engage in mentorship opportunities and build connection to community.
- These are presented by Black and racialized members of the DDSB's Social Work, Psychological Services & Youth Outreach teams who facilitate and mentor.
- Anticipated outcomes of the BeMe symposium include student reports of increased sense of affirmation and support in their school spaces, increased sense of connection to peers in their school community, and development of strategies that help Black youth to confront marginalization.

### **Mental Health & Well-Being Learning Opportunities**

Supporting Student Mental Health Community of Practice: Focus- Attunement  
PA Day learning opportunity for Classroom Support Staff

- School Based Learning with Teams with focus on policy into practice: Indigenous Rights, Human Rights & Equity
- BMS Full training / Refresher / Physicals Refreshers
- Well-Being: Two-part learning session with focus in: 1) Social Emotional Learning led by the Child and Youth Support Worker team and 2) Compassion Fatigue & Empathy Strain facilitated by TEND Academy.
- <https://www.tendacademy.ca/>

### **Highlight: Speech-Language/Occupational Therapy Collaboration**

- Speech Language Pathologist (SLP) team recently met with Communication and Writing Aids through Holland Bloorview Kids Rehab and Occupational Therapy (OT) through Grandview Kids Treatment Centre.
- Discussions centred around reviewing pathways and identifying system needs for students who have Augmentative and Alternate Communication (AAC) needs at school and home.

### **Special Education Class Planning Process**

The interdepartmental planning process for the 2023-2024 school year has begun.

- Process begins with individual student considerations, individual program/class considerations and an examination of current trends at a district/regional level.

Trends at this time include:

- Expression from students and families of value of range of outcome-based programs where a child/youth requires more intensive support
- Increasing requests in pace with regional growth
- Increases to students with complexity of strength and needs

### **Grade 8 to Grade 9 Transition Information Night**

- Student Success and Inclusive Student Services collaborated to offer an information session /focused on preparing and informing students and families who are receiving Inclusive Student Services supports to transition between Grade 8 to Grade 9
- Over 150 attendees participated. Many participant questions were responded to during the live session.
- Participants will have an FAQ and connection to the presentation sent to them and the presentation will be offered publicly for those who may want to review or were not able to attend.
- Information regarding this session was shared with families by school SERTs and Administrators, in Social Media and on websites.
- Secondary schools also host Transition to High School nights which includes Inclusive Student Services support.

### **9. Presentation: Special Education Funding**

Senior Manager of Financial Services Jennifer Machin shared with members a break down of special education funding and the budget process.

Highlights included:

- Some key terms and language
- Special Education Grants
- Support for Students Funding
- Priorities and Partnership Fund (PPF) Grants
- Accumulated Surplus-Special Education Reserve
- 2022-23 Special Education Budget

The members had a few questions

- Funds were allocated to facilitate the addition of EAs for an 8-week period at the beginning of the school which was very helpful in transitioning students back to school
- Education and Community Partnership Program (ECPP) from a provincial lens we are second in size only to Toronto
  - Clinical program and Education programs work concurrently in these settings.
  - Some are situated in school and some are located inside of medical partners spaces.
  - Thinking about fund and who we are serving and how we are serving them in terms of everyday conditions and Mental Health and positive well-being the Durham Boards commitment is very strong
  - These are intervention programs not the totality of a student's education
- SEAC members are reminded that the Public Deputation will be presented in the near future.
- When we look at totality of budget, 96% is staffing and benefits; this does not include transportation, facilities.
- Might be helpful for new members to know the process and information used last year to inform the request for the deputation
- Might be helpful to include what feedback and pressures are you seeing within members associations and communities.

**10. Open Discussion Period: SEAC Handbook**

- What would be helpful to new members joining to SEAC.
- In need of a refresh
- Perhaps including links to videos

**11. Business Arising from the Minutes:**

Decision was made to share document where track changes can be made with suggestions.

**12. Association Reports & Committee Reports:**

None

**13. Correspondence:**

None

**14. Community Concerns:**

None

**15. Celebrations and Successes:**

Superintendent Andrea McAuley and System Lead Michelle Crawford-Eade are thrilled to be Heading the Uxbridge Secondary School on February 24, for the Practical Learning Program Culinary Skills competition.

**16. Next S.E.A.C meeting – March 23, 2023:**

**17. Adjournment:**

That the meeting does now adjourn at 7:56 p.m. Adjournment called by SEAC Vice Chair Tara Culley.

MOVED BY: Kathy Kedey

SECONDED BY: sensaRAneb Burrell

CARRIED

Report respectfully submitted by:

Eva Kyriakides, SEAC Chair

**Table 1- Action Plan**

ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBILITY	COMPLETION
Circulate SEAC Handbook	Lisa Wry	February 23, 2023