

REPORT OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Thursday April 20, 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 Deb Oldfield

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 6:34 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 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: Shannon Robertson – Principal, Westney Heights P.S., Dawn White – Principal, G.L. Roberts C.V.I.

Regrets: Hanah Nguyen, Morgann Cameron, Trustee Deb Oldfield, Kathy Kedey

Absent: Vera Mercier

5. Approval of Agenda:

That the agenda for April 20, 2023, be approved:

MOVED BY: sensaRAneb Burrell

SECONDED BY: Tara Culley

CARRIED

6. Approval of the Minutes from March 23, 2023:

That the minutes from March 23, 2023, be approved:

MOVED BY: sensaRAneb Burrell

SECONDED BY: Tara Culley

CARRIED

7. Staff Reports:

The Ministry of Education released the Grants for Student Needs (GSN) funding for the 2023-2024. Team is undergoing analysis.

Initial highlights:

- List of Grants for Student Needs (GSN) priorities inclusive of addressing student learning and well-being – mental health and special education.
- Strength: Integration of supports for students with special education needs into Math and Reading focused supports and related funding.
- Special Incidence Portion (SIP): Review of SIP funding process to be engaged; benchmark, rather than claim submission, to be used for 2023-2024. This is significant in the hours of professional services staff turned back to direct student support.
- Education, Community, Partnership, Programs (ECPP): Renewed commitment to ECPPs and move to one annual submission cycle from twice/year. As each program class is submitted separately each cycle and DDSB has 50 program classes, this is significant for our ECPP team.
- Removing Barriers for Students with Disabilities: Opportunity for an application for funding. Intention is to submit before the May 29, 2023, deadline.
- Developmental Disabilities Pilot: Student Transitions: Application based. Durham DSB was one of two lead boards when the pilot first launched. Engagement in the project launched the Transition and Work Education Coordinator role and related coaching to schools/direct support to families. We are interested in taking a look at the further details of the project scope for 2023-2024 and how the funding may extend our support for students with developmental and intellectual disabilities in fostering pathways beyond secondary. We will submit by the May 29, 2023, deadline for consideration.
- Co-operative Education Supports for Students with Disabilities: We have a strong work education program in Durham. Three-year project launching in 2023-2024 school year. Funding allocations for identified Boards will follow. We will not need to apply for this funding but will hope to be identified as a participating Board.

- Appreciation for Summer Supports for Students with Special Education Needs and Summer Mental Health Supports for Students. Expenditure specific to summer months is specified in the memo. Local data/student voice is sought service during the school year and low uptake in available supports when provided during summer months.

Members inquired about the funding release:

- Several years ago, we were able to apply for funding to better serve students with developmental disabilities and/or intellectual disabilities in their pathway between secondary education and beyond.
 - We were able to fund a full position where we focused on integrated transition planning.
 - We developed opportunities for student in work placement.
 - Looking to grow the program should the funding be available to us.
- Anticipating new Language curriculum effective for September
- Inclusive Student Services (ISS) is closely integrated with classroom and school supports as a team to for planning and support of *Right to Read*.

Board: Trustee Kelly Miller shared with SEAC members that Board of Trustees had a discussion around the values held as a Board. Topics also explored were how we connect with community, perhaps community nights.

SEAC Chair Eva Kyriakides – Thanked Trustees for taking SEAC’s March 2023 message to Board

8. **Inclusive Student Service Department Report- April 20, 2023**

Special Education Program Planning for 2023-2024

- Highlights: Collaborative Partnerships
- Supporting Transitions into School

A report about special education programs, accessed through Identification Placement Review Committee (I.P.R.C.) placement, was shared with Trustees during the April 3, 2023, Standing Committee. The report, and accompanying presentation, included information about:

- Inclusive School Practices
- Regulation 306: Special Education Plans
- Professional Roles Supporting Student Learning and Well-Being
- Identification, Placement, Review Committee (I.P.R.C.) Process
- Special Education Class Placements Accessed Through I.P.R.C. Placement
- Planning for 2023-2024
- Highlight of upcoming SEAC Parent/Caregiver Survey

The report can be found in the [Standing Committee April 2023 Agenda Package](#)

The accompanying presentation is available [link](#); commencing at 21:30

Special Education Classes Accessed Through Placement

The DDSB is committed to providing inclusive programs for all students that foster positive learning experiences and lead to successful outcomes. This is a foundation on which special education programs are provided for those who require more intensive supports.

The [School Support Program](#) is an intensive intervention program that provides students with specific programming to close gaps in literacy and numeracy and develop important executive functioning skills such as self-advocacy, task initiation, planning/prioritization, goal setting, and self-regulation. The School Support program is not a pathway. As we increase inclusive practices in all classrooms, including inclusive design courses at the secondary level, the need for this program will be reduced.

Across the District we continue to experience a trend in the number of students, both existing and new to DDSB that require individualized programming, including functional literacy and numeracy, communication skills, and supports for activities of daily living. This has been a trend for the past few years, and it indicates a need to continue expanding [Developmental](#) and [Practical Learning Programs](#), particularly at the elementary level.

Transition Planning

Why Transition Planning is Important: A transition is defined as a process of change that requires attention and flexibility and creates vulnerability and anxiety. From our youngest students to our most senior staff, we are challenged as we navigate this particular transition together. Layers of planning include well-being and mental health considerations, leveraging strengths, bolstering strategies and supports in areas of anticipated challenge. Flexible approaches, consultation with families/caregivers to consider students' individual identities, needs and circumstances that impact transitions, need to be considered in focusing scope and implementing transition strategies and supports for individual students. Collaboration and ongoing communication are essential to exploring options and determining workable strategies.

- Entry to School
- School to School
- Class to Class
- Grade to Grade
- Changes in School Support
- School to/from Community Program
- Elementary to Secondary
- Secondary to Post-Secondary
- School to Community Service
- School to Work
- Program Placement Change

Role Highlight: Transition and Work Education Coordinators

The Transition and Work Education Coordinator team supports school teams in developing Individual Education Transition Plans for students with special education strengths and needs, by implementing a student-focused approach that identifies the student's goals for work, further education, and life in the community. This coordinated planning allows our students and their families to plan, connect to services and programs, set goals with their school teams, and access appropriate community agencies to reach their full potential. The team focuses support on:

- Integrated Transition Planning
- Work Education Support for the Transition to Work and Practical Learning Programs
- Preparation Support for Workplace or College
- Parent/Caregiver Engagement
- DDSB Team Support

- Community Connections

More information can be found: [Transition and Work Education Coordinators](#)

Transitions To, From and Through Mental Health Supports

The Durham DSB Mental Health and Well-Being Action Plan specifically references the importance of transitions to, from and through mental health supports.

Examples include intentional transition planning engaged by Education, Community Partnership Programs (ECPPs/Grove School)

Collaborative Partnerships Support Transition into School

Durham Region Infant & Child Development Support to First Time School Start

- [Infant & Child Development Program](#) (ICD) partners with families to provide early intervention services, service coordination, and resources for children between the ages of birth to school entry. ICD Consultants work with families to enhance the growth and development of children, including those with a developmental disability and/or who are at risk of developmental delay.
- 22 children, and families, have planned transition from ICD services to school entry for the 2023-2024 school year
- ICD & DDSB have a partnership which support transition planning that centres the children and their families. Process includes: connections with schools and ISS teams, individualized transition planning (e.g., visits and resources) and resource considerations (e.g., equipment and services)

Ontario Autism Program (OAP): Entry to School Program

- The [Ontario Autism Program – Entry to School \(ETS\)](#) program provides children with access to programming in the six months leading up to school start.
- The DDSB partners with the compilation of community partners involved in the program including, not limited to, provision of space in schools for the program, transition planning inclusive of the Senior Managers for Psychological Services & Speech Language Services involved in transition planning and school/EY/ISS team support.
- There is opportunity for some children, based on assessment of support needs and family voice, to extend an additional six months in the program.
- Student information will be shared with districts by end of May. Program currently supporting 190 children within the OAP:ETS Durham Region service area; this time last year approximately 80% of the participants started school with the Durham DSB.

Campbell Children's School/GrandviewKids to Durham DSB Transitions

- [Campbell Children's School](#) is a health-based program that partners clinical program with educational programming.
- From the Campbell School website,
"The Campbell School program combines each student's academic and therapeutic goals in a small class setting. All students have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) and are supported by an education team made up of an Ontario Certified Teacher (OCT) and Registered Early Childhood Educator's (RECEs). Students learn inside and outside the classroom setting in the accessible playground and yard. The school team encourages all students to strive to meet their individual best."

At this time, we are anticipating 29 students, currently attending Campbell School with GrandviewKids, to transition to the DDSB for the 2023-2024 school year.

March 7 – Think Bowl Competition

- Students from all grades in gifted program classes across the Board participated in a virtual event using Google Classroom and Meet. Screens were set up in libraries and classrooms across the district and students participated live.
- Each school chose one or two teams of four students in two categories to participate in the competition – Junior (Grades 4-6) and Intermediate (Grades 7-8)
- Think Bowl is a problem-solving challenge where teams have an opportunity to use creative thinking skills to examine a challenge and are given resources, a limited amount of time and certain parameters and come up with a solution. They then act out the solution to the challenge presented.
- The two challenges : Juniors – were given info around boredom in schools – students then examined the issue and presented their ideas about the pros and cons and a possible solution
- Intermediates – were given information around Artificial Intelligence (AI) in schools – students then examined the issue and presented pros and cons and decided on a stance
- It was an exciting day, and everyone involved had a great time. It was wonderful for students to connect with each other through a virtual format. The creative ways students analyzed the problems and the solutions they derived were impressive! The dramatic presentation of their solutions was quite entertaining and amazing to watch!

May 9 – Poetry Slam

- Virtual Event where all students in gifted program classes will be able to participate through a Google Classroom and Google Meet.
- Students will write, share, and perform spoken word poetry.
- Resources have been shared with all teachers in gifted classes across the Board so that all students can tap into their talents to create poetry.
- Schools will choose two students from each grade to present their poems the day of the event.
- A guest speaker has been invited - Patrick de Belen, a spoken word poet in Toronto, who will present to all students across the Board in the gifted program through a broadcast event.
- He will lead a writing workshop and students will have an opportunity to use his teaching to write together that afternoon.
- We are all looking forward to another exciting event!
- The virtual platform allows students to connect without the additional costs of transportation and supplies.

Plan for the 2023-2024 school year is four district-wide events; looking to engage and enrich learning opportunities for students with gifted identifications accessing through regular class placements as well as those with accessing learning through placement in the self-contained program.

Members and staff shared school/home communication and information sharing options and concerns.

- Concerns that generally school information/event sharing is geared toward families of neurotypical students.
- SERT ebuletin is information that goes out to all Special Education Resource Teachers (SERTs) bi-weekly. This is a wonderful way to share information and receive feedback and is also shared with administrators. All members of the Inclusive Student Services team contribute to the ebuletin.

Durham Integrated Arts Camp (DIAC)

- Durham Integrated Arts Camp Grades 7-12 is comprised of DDSB staff and artists whose primary income is through their artistry. 2 Educational Assistants and 2 Child and Youth Support Workers (CYSW) are part of the staffing for the September 2023 camp; there will be two separate locations for health care: Nursing for first aid and physical health, another to be known as the "chill hub" for well-being support.

- Opportunity for DIAC is shared through school communications as well as teachers of arts related subjects.
- Students that have a keen interest may be directly contacted to apply.
- Changes to the Individual Education Plan (IEP) with the addition of "interests" might be a good way to initiate conversation about opportunities such as arts/DIAC.

9. **2023-2024 – Proposed SEAC Meeting dates**

- September 21, 2023
- October 19, 2023
- November 9, 2023 (a week earlier as teacher conferences on the following Thursday)
- December 14, 2023
- January 18, 2024
- February 15, 2024
- March 21, 2024
- April 18, 2024
- May 23, 2024
- June 20, 2024

MOTION: To approve Draft Dates for 2023-2024 School Year SEAC Meetings

MOVED BY: Tara Culley

SECONDED BY: Rowin Jarvis

10. **Open Discussion Period:**

MOTION: Approval of the SEAC portion DDSB Special Education Plan

MOVED BY: sensaRAneb Burrell

SECONDED BY: Rowin Jarvis

New title for the Special Education Plan from the ISS department will be *Inclusive Student Services – Special Education Plan*, centering the student.

11. Business Arising from the Minutes:

- Ontario Parents of Visually Impaired Children (OPVIC) – email was sent to request and alternate, have not yet received a response.
- Hanah Nguyen indicated concluding, at this time, her availability to represent Easter Seals at SEAC; Easter Seals is working on a replacement.
- SEAC Handbook-highly recommended that everyone takes a good look at the document
- Many of the document links within the SEAC Handbook are very old and outdated, would need a refresh.
- Public budget deputation from SEAC will be on May 31, 2023 – Vice-Chair Tara Culley will be sharing the Draft Deputation at the May 25, SEAC meeting.
- Professional Learning has become more job embedded learning with coaches working within the classroom settings.
- Right to Read is a constant conversation within the school setting, there is an excitement and encouraging gains.
- Literacy Launch Pad is a shared data base that is constantly evolving based on school team feedback and is always available to educators.
- SEAC members enjoy being involved with Professional Learning to assist the families they support. Current focus on job embedded coaching, rather than large session form, is basis for most professional learning in the district.
- The Literacy Launch Pad is constantly evolving and being updated and is available to all educators.

12. Association Reports & Committee Reports:

- Autism Ontario - Resources for Connecting with your School Team

13. Correspondence:

- OPSBA Submission to the Fourth Review of the AODA
- SEAC Chair Eva Kyriakides inquired if members would like to review and decide if they would like to respond with comments Highlights – Recommendation to have a separate section that refers to Special Education, Right to Read, K-2 screening recommendation, K-12 education standards.

14. Community Concerns:

None

15. Celebrations and Successes:

Tara Culley shared that her son is independently getting up and getting breakfast and fully ready for school completely on his own.

Annually the district hosts Student Recognition Night. This event will be held May 29, 2023, at Sinclair.

16. Next S.E.A.C meeting – May 25, 2023:

17. Adjournment:

That the meeting does now adjourn at 8:17 p.m.

Adjournment called by SEAC Chair Eva Kyriakides

MOVED BY: Elizabeth Daniel

SECONDED BY: Jenn McLaughlin

CARRIED

Report respectfully submitted by:

Eva Kyriakides, SEAC Chair

ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBILITY	COMPLETION
Student Recognition Night Let Lisa know if you would like to attend	SEAC members	Before May 29
SEAC Survey	Lisa Wry	May 25, 2023

Table 1- Action Plan