

REPORT OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Thursday May 25, 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, Conor Jinkinson
Senior Manager & Clinical Lead-Speech Language & Hearing
Services, Lisa Drake

Recording Secretary: Lisa Wry

1. Call to Order:

SEAC Chair Eva Kyriakides called the meeting to order at 6:32 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: Anthony Phelan, Vice-Principal – Pickering H.S. Rema Saati, Vice-Principal – Southwood Park P.S.

Regrets: Trustee Deb Oldfield, Trustee Kelly Miller, Hannah Nguyen

Absent: Vera Mercier

SEAC Resolves to allow Easter Seals Ontario to continue as a member of this Committee until the end of the 2022/23 school year. SEAC decision of support required as Easter Seals SEAC representatives absent four consecutive meetings due to extenuating circumstances.

RESOLUTION: Tara Culley

SECONDED: sensaRAneb Burrell

CARRIED

5. **Approval of Agenda:**

That the agenda for May 25, 2023, be approved:

MOVED BY: Rowin Jarvis

SECONDED BY: Kathy Kedey

CARRIED

6. **Approval of the Minutes from April 20, 2023:**

That the minutes from April 20, 2023, be approved:

MOVED BY: Tara Culley

SECONDED BY: Rowin Jarvis

CARRIED

Trustees Miller and Oldfield would like to invite SEAC members to highlight items from within the minutes for presentation to the Board.

7. **Staff Reports:**

Administration Report to SEAC May 2023:

The Administrator's report this month has focus on the important role SEAC has in consultation to the district and in connection with families in the community.

Inclusive Student Services/Special Education Plan

First, thank you for the discussions over the past months about special education programs and services. The Inclusive Student Services/Special Education Plan for the 2023-2024 will be presented to the Board of Trustees during Standing Committee on June 5, 2023. The Plan will then be before the Board of Trustees with recommendation for approval during the Board meeting on June 19, 2023. The Plan includes revisions to the section on SEAC updated through motion during our April SEAC meeting, inclusion of the district's commitment to the recommendations from the Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC) Right to Read Inquiry, inclusion of the DDSB Mental Health & Well-Being Action Plan and draft changes to Inclusive Student Services staffing which were presented as part of the draft budget to Trustees during the recent May 17, 2023, Education Finance Committee meeting. Draft at this time, pending budget approval by Trustees, is an increase of 1.0 FTE Psychometrist, 1.0 FTE Social Worker and 3.0 FTE Speech Language Pathologists.

As a district, we recognize the importance of interdisciplinary/professional role collaboration in the support for evidence-based reading programming. Our work to support the implementation

of recommendations from the Ontario Human Rights Commission Right to Read Inquiry includes leveraging one-year funding to create school support teams. Support teams will include educators in the coach role and Speech Language Pathologists, working in collaboration with Indigenous Education team and Multi-Language Learning team, to work directly with teachers to facilitate learning around Right to Read.

SEAC Parent/Guardian Survey

Communications are confirmed for the upcoming SEAC Parent/Guardian Survey. Information about and link to the survey will be directly communicated to parents/guardians of students with IEPs (through IPRC) for the current school year and/or completed for the 2023-2024 school year. Families have received an introductory email. The link to the survey will be emailed separately when the survey opens on May 30, 2023, and will remain open until June 15, 2023.

Information about the survey will also be shared through the DDSB website and social media accounts. Schools have been asked to encourage parents/caregivers/students (as applicable) to complete the survey. School based communication strategies include sharing through classroom teams, including information within school newsletters and resharing of district social media posts.

The survey is available in Arabic, Dari, English, Farsi, Mandarin, Tamil and Urdu. If helpful, an email can be circulated to SEAC members for sharing within your organizations to help raise awareness about the survey and help encourage participation.

DDSB Multi-Year Strategic Plan

Drawing on recent communication to DDSB families: The Durham District School Board's current Ignite Learning Multi-Year Strategic Plan (MYSP) is approaching its end in December 2023. A Multi-Year Strategic Plan sets direction for the work of a school board by identifying values, priorities, and measures for success. It acts as a compass that guides collective actions for ongoing improvement across the learning organization. All members of the DDSB community are invited to participate in the consultation process to develop the new Multi-Year Strategic Plan.

SEAC is an important advisory group to provide contribution in guiding the development of the new Strategic Plan. During our June SEAC meeting, Josh Fullan and Katie Konstantopoulos from Maximum City, the consultant firm working with the Board on the MYSP, will be with us with 45 minutes dedicated to gathering your input.

Abilities Track and Field Meet

A reminder of invitation to SEAC for the Abilities Track and Field Meet on Friday, June 16 at Oshawa Civic Fields. If able to join for part of the day, please RSVP to Lisa Wry to receive a copy of the schedule for the day.

Board: Trustees sent regrets for May SEAC and will update SEAC at the June 22, 2023 meeting

8. Inclusive Student Service Department Report- May 25, 2023

Updates this month include:

- Children's Mental Health Week
- Speech, Language and Hearing Month

Children's Mental Health Week

Each year, schools across the DDSB mark the first full week of May as Children's Mental Health Week. This important week is about:

- Increasing awareness of child and youth mental health
- Decreasing stigma, and
- Understanding that supports are available.

Resources were developed for schools to acknowledge this week. A sample of those resources include;

- A calendar with a week of daily mental health and wellness activities organized around themes for each day (Mindful Monday, Talk about it Tuesday, Wellness Wednesday, Thankful Thursday, and Fitness Friday)
- A series of short videos focused on themes such as an Introduction to Children's Mental Health Week, Stress management and coping skills, sleep, and social media use. A sample video has been included for you to view: [Student Senate's Introduction to Children's Mental Health Week](#)

Speech, Language and Hearing Month

- Speech-language pathologists, hearing resource teachers and American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter collaboration on school-based awareness promotions
- Focus is reflection of the importance and impacts of:
 - oral language and literacy for peer interaction, academics and behaviour,
 - hearing as a critical aspect of all communication, and
 - honouring ASL as a distinct and valued language.

Highlights

- Speech-language pathologists - supporting structured literacy within classrooms, focused on foundational learning and practices that support thriving
- Hearing resource teachers – professional development in structured literacy practices and adapting for students who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing (DHH)
- Hearing resource teachers and ASL interpreters – created a field trip to the Metro Toronto Zoo (elementary) and McLaughlin Art Gallery (secondary) to bring students across the district who identify as DHH together as a community of students

- ASL interpreters – continual advocacy and education to the system in promotion of ASL and awareness of supportive educational practices
- ASL interpreters – planning/creating a field trip to Sir James Whitney School for the Deaf to see their production of Charlie and the Chocolate Factory in ASL

Senior Manager and Clinical Lead of Speech Language and Hearing Services, Lisa Drake presented what team members have been engaged in during Speech, Language and Hearing Month.

- Always excited to celebrate the month
- This year all our team members came together along with our American Sign Language (ASL) Interpreters and created a quiz that prompts the user to think about the impact of literacy, oral language, peer relations and academics.
- How frustration of not being able to express oneself may show up as behaviours.
- Focused on hearing, and ways to promote ASL.
- Supporting Structured literacy within classrooms.
- Video was shared “Best Friends in Hearing Loss”

SEAC Members had the following observation and recommendations:

- Are there communication disorders assistance employed at the Durham District School Board? Communication Disorders Assistance (CDA) is not currently a role within the Durham District School Board, future potential. Team is exploring information from other districts with the CDA role within their service complement.
- Concern with some of the messaging within the quiz; may want to look at the language
- Cochlear implants are about \$25, 000/ear which in Ontario is not covered by Ontario Health Insurance Program.
- Rowin Jarvis (Learning Disabilities Association of Durham Region) loved the video and reflected that we learn from everyone we can possibly learn from.

9. 2023-2024 Inclusive Student Services – Special Education Plan

The 2023-2024 Inclusive Student Services – Special Education Plan will be presented to the Standing Committee during June as an information item and for feedback. The Plan is then before the Board for approval on June 19.

10. Open Discussion Period:

The members discussed the deputation report from SEAC for the DDSB Education Finance Committee. The following considerations were discussed around the Ministry of Education funding for 2023-2024.

- Concerns-Specialist High Skills Major funding support have been reduced by almost half.
- Proposal that kids can move directly into a trade after grade 11.
- Some students learn better with hands on.
- Do we want clarity on safety?
- Many trades have a college component and therefore would require a high school diploma
- Concerns around limiting options at an early age.
- Clarification with the Ministry on whether this program will conclude with a high school diploma

MOTION: TO REQUEST CLARIFICATION FROM THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION FOR
ON THE SECONDARY PATH TOWARD TRADES

MOVE BY: Rowin Jarvis

SECONDED BY: sensaRAneb Burrell

CARRIED

- Still waiting for Mental Health and Well-Being summer funding project expenditure allowances
- Additional concerns surrounding the decrease in funding for transportation, taxis and caravans
- Sometimes use caravans and taxis; under the new transportation funding model these have been removed.
- In DDSB, there are currently 14 routed caravans, and our taxis are fluctuating depending on individual student needs
- Some of these vehicles have safety plexiglass
- Smaller buses are usually the ones that are fully accessible
- Local priority fund – clarification whether this will be year over year.
- The Ministry is still using census from 2006
- Special Incident funding is a significant short fall-the funding formula is going under review during the 2023-2024 school year.
- SEAC appreciates that the Board always seems to be able to fund the difference between enveloped funding for special education and our planned service model and corresponding expenditures.
- Significant decrease for in funding for Indigenous Education Supports
- SEAC recognizes that by decreasing funding for marginalized groups there is a perpetuation of systematic ableism.
- SEAC deputation to Education Finance presentation (PowerPoint) will be updated. It will be submitted as a written submission to the DDSB Education Finance Committee.

MOTION: TO WRITE A LETTER TO THE MINISTRY TO REGARDING TRANSPORTATION
(TAXIS AND CARAVANS) FOR STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATION STRENGTHS AND
NEEDS.

MOVED BY: Kathy Kedey

SECONDED BY: Tara Culley

CARRIED

11. Business Arising from the Minutes:

- Student recognition night May 29, 2023 – SEAC members asked to RSVP to Lisa Wry if you interested in attending.

12. Association Reports & Committee Reports:

- Sawubona-Summer Event 2023 all other associations are welcome to attend

13. Correspondence:

- KPR-Special Incidents Portion Funding Letter to the Ministry

- RRDS-Special Incidents Portion Funding Letter to the Ministry
- Abilities Centre-Therapeutic Recreation Summer Program Flier

14. Community Concerns:

- Recent anti-black racism and hate fliers – a number of posters promoting anti-black racism/hate
- Inclusive Student Services (ISS) has had staff supporting within the community and onsite supporting those schools
- Messages did go out to families within these communities.
- Living Compendium Engagement Event of the district's actions around anti-black racism – we had the Abilities Centre filled, both in terms of elementary program supports and youth leadership was held on May 18.
- There has also been an increase in anti 2SLGBTQIA and anti Islamic racism.
- Appreciate this may have some intersectionality for some families and staff.
- We did have at the most recent Board meeting, hate messages put out into the space,
- The Director of Education, Camille Williams-Taylor, has addressed in a communication to all staff and community.

15. Celebrations and Successes:

- Thank you to Anthony Phalen and Dawn White as secondary representatives and we appreciate your thoughtful contributions to SEAC.
- Tara Culley shared that one of our PLP teachers called Tara and asked if Adam would like to be included as a member of the baseball team, and the team members are all including him and giving him positive encouragement.

16. Next S.E.A.C meeting – June 22, 2023:

17. Adjournment:

That the meeting does now adjourn at 8:30 p.m.

Adjournment called by SEAC Chair Eva Kyriakides

MOVED BY: Kathy Kedey

SECONDED BY: Jenn McLaughlin

CARRIED

Report respectfully submitted by:

Eva Kyriakides, SEAC Chair

Table 1- Action Plan

ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBILITY	COMPLETION
Share video from Kathy Kedey	Lisa Wry	May 26, 2023