

REPORT OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Thursday April 18, 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
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

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:

SEAC Vice-Chair Tara Culley 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: Denise Nickerson-System Lead Teaching & Learning, Michele Liverpool-Facilitator Literacy/Numeracy,

Regrets: SEAC Chair Eva Kyriakides, Trustee Kelly Miller

Absent: None

5. Approval of Agenda:

That the agenda for April 18, 2024, be approved with the following amendment: move Inclusive Student Services/Special Education Plan to the May 23, 2024 meeting and add the Transportation Advocacy letter:

MOVED BY: sensaRAneb Burrell

SECONDED BY: Rowin Jarvis

CARRIED

6. Approval of the Minutes:

That the minutes from March 21, 2024, be approved:

MOVED BY: Charmain Brown

SECONDED BY: Rowin Jarvis

CARRIED

That the minutes from April 3, 2024, Finance meeting be approved:

MOVED BY: Morgann Carmeron

SECONDED BY: Rowin Jarvis

CARRIED

That the minutes from April 3, 2024, Advocacy Event Planning meeting be approved:

MOVED BY: Jenn McLaughlin

SECONDED BY: Morgann Cameron

CARRIED

7. Staff Reports:

Superintendent Andrea McAuley shared updates from the Inclusive Student Services Department and expressed that she is looking forward to hearing from two exceptional instructional leaders Denise Nickerson and Michele Liverpool.

- Thrilled to have the Abilities Centre Summer Therapeutic Recreation program back for a third year this summer. The Durham Catholic School Board is third partner for the program. The program is open to all youth whose programming needs align with life skills, selfcare and readiness for the workplace. The Abilities Centre has already received great interest following registration opening. The program for Summer 2024 will consist of four two-week programs. Summer Therapeutic Recreation program also has a parallel program with youth and their community-based caregivers, allowing the youth to access the program and build community.
- Planning for the 2024-2025 school year and changes to special education programs. There were few shifts as we work with our partners in Teaching and Learning on Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and differentiation,

- Regular Class with indirect support remains the best and most inclusive placement for the majority of students with accommodation needs.
- Also, honoured as a district to continue to offer a range of programs for students.
- As we continue to build on UDL and inclusion in the regular classroom you will see a shift in the School Support Program (SSP) because it is a literacy/numeracy program, we are closing some of those programs, but there is a net add of Special Education placement classes in elementary. Opening additional Development Program and two new Practical Learning Programs (PLP) as well as another Structured Learning Class (SLC).
- At the Secondary level we still had a few schools with more than one SSP, as we build destreaming we can accommodate the programming needs of students at the senior course level through voice, choice, and interest in courses, therefore will be closing the program in locations where two classes remain: with exception of GL Roberts CVI.
- In secondary, opening of a PLP.
- A few of our classes will be relocating for September, considering the needs and location of who is accessing a little adjustment is required. The adjustments are student centred and in conversation with families, administrators, and school staff, as well as Facilities Services, Transportation, Finance as well as People and Culture for staffing supports.
- Working through the elementary gifted programs, we have had an increase in receipt of private (community practitioner facilitated) assessments.
- Team is continuing to monitor if additional secondary practical learning is necessary.
- This month ISS Impact Update is highlighting Social Work. Social Workers come along side students and parents/caregivers with wrap around care. They work mainly with tier 3 interventions around mental health and wellbeing.

Trustee Donna Edwards had questions about transition from grade six to seven supports in place for students learning to advocate for themselves during this time.

Superintendent Andrea McAuley responded in agreement that is a critical transition for students. Our Teaching and Learning partners have a team focused on that support for intermediate grades focusing on the 7-10 transition. As for individual students, the Facilitator, and the Special Education Resource Teacher (SERT), as well as the secondary team also support these transitions.

Board: Trustee Donna Edwards shared with SEAC members that Board of Trustees has appointed a new Trustee to SEAC, Trustee Michelle Arseneault. Vacancy committee has met to prepare the process for filling the vacancy of the Oshawa seat, advertisements are out in the media. Human Rights Advisory Committee is being formed looking for expressions of interest. Passed a policy around board assessment. Waiting for the Ministry to share Grants for Student Needs*. Passed an education development bylaw.

Note: Core Education Funding (renaming of the Grants for Student Needs) was published subsequent to SEAC's meeting in April and prior to approval of the minutes reflective of the meeting in May.

8. Presentation:

A Road Map for Mathematics Excellence: Aligning Strategies for Enhanced Math Achievement.
Presenters: Denise Nickerson-System Lead Teaching & Learning, Michele Liverpool-Facilitator
Literacy/Numeracy.

Teaching and Learning Vision

Creating thriving learning ecosystems that prioritize student identity, Indigenous rights, and Human Rights in order to create the conditions for all students to thrive, achieving their fullest potential.

Ministry Priorities for Math

1. Ensuring Curriculum Fidelity
 - Intentional Strategies for Math Achievement
 - Curriculum Alignment with best practices
 - Implementation of Advancement Committee recommendations
2. Math Content Knowledge for Teaching
 - Provision of guidelines and resources
 - Establishment of a Curriculum Advancement Committee
 - Leverage coaching support for School Improvement Teams
 - High Impact Instructional Practices
 - Utilization of “Mathematics Companion guide Grades 1 - 12”
 - Increased educator and student growth
3. Knowing Your Student
 - Small Group Instruction
 - Direct Instruction
 - Tools and Representations
 - Deliberate Practice

Innovative Human Centered Professional Learning

- Commitment to support schools with Human centered learning prioritizing both student achievement and well-being through a critical thinking approach.
- Coaching/Mentoring supported by interdepartmental Family of School Teams

Daily Math Instruction and Collaborative Meetings

- Protected time blocks for math instruction
- Collaborative learning for deeper knowledge
- Dedicated support in priority schools

Humanizing the Learning Environment

- Anti-Oppressive Pedagogy and Practices
- Universal Design for Learning
- Destreaming
- Student Success

Understanding the Mathematics Learner

- Human centered approach to math learning
- Use of digital tools for targeted support
- Engagement in responsive educational practices

Tracking Progress and Outcomes

- Percentage of implemented recommendations.
- Educator engagement in professional learning
- Student achievement and well-being metrics

Commitment to Student Excellence

- Emphasis on Collaborative approaches
- Continuous improvement cycle

Members had the following questions and reflections for the team.

- How much cross curriculum learning is there? Interdepartmental department literacy/multilingual language learners/equity department/STEM/the outdoors in ways that are meaningful and important to the students.
- Culturally Relevant Responsive Pedagogy (CRRP), how do students see themselves reflected?
- Facilitators are working to understand students, their needs, and identities.
- Inequities in math, where math shows up in what are the interests of the students.
- The facilitators are engaged in professional learning re: anti-oppressive practices.
- Look at our assessment practices, how do you know what a student is demonstrating?
- Teaching and learning are working through collaborative assessments.
- What does math look for students with learning disabilities? Learning tailored within the classroom to bring out the best and the joy in the classroom.
- Tell me your thinking, engaging in math talk is richer than just putting it on a piece of paper.
- Humanity and identity, how are we using our diversity lens?
- Decolonizing the space is offering options for assessment and learning-example of outdoor learning, rich conversations about math and learning. Where does math bring joy, and teachers can be creative. Offering opportunities for more learning.

9. Open Discussion

Transportation Support for Students with Special Education Needs- Accessibility to Education and Multiple Pathways.

- Letter has been updated and is ready for sending, also include OPSOA on the send out.

MOTION TO SUBMIT THE LETTER

MOVED: sensaRAneb Burrell

SECONDED: Rowin Jarvis

SEAC Chair Eva Kyriakides has approved Vice-Chair Tara Culley to sign in her absence.

10. Business Arising from the Minutes

Advocacy Event date commitment

- September 24, 25 or October 1, 2024
- Tuesday October 1, 2024, was the date decided upon

11. Association Reports & Committee Reports

Association highlight: Learning Disabilities Association of Durham Region (LDADR)
Rowin Jarvis shared with the committee information about the association.

WHO WE ARE

- The Learning Disabilities Association of Durham Region (LDADR) is a charitable, non-profit organization dedicated to improving the lives of children, youth, and adults with learning disabilities.
- One of fourteen chapters representing various regions of Ontario

MISSION STATEMENT

- The Learning Disabilities Association of Durham Region's mission is to advocate, support and educate the Durham community about learning disabilities and to enable persons with learning disabilities to reach their full potential.

WHAT IS AN LEARNING DISABILITY(LD)?

- Learning disabilities (LDs) are brain-based difficulties that affect one or more ways that a person takes in, stores, remembers or uses verbal (speech) and nonverbal (non-speech) information.
- LDs are difficulties in processing information. LDs occur in people with average or above average thinking and reasoning abilities.
- Specific Learning Disorder (DSM-5) - Different from intellectual disabilities, developmental disabilities or neurological or motor disabilities.
- LDs are not caused by environmental factors such as language differences or socio-economic status, but those factors may compound the impact of an LD.
- LDs can interfere with learning basic skills such as reading, writing, and math. They can also interfere with higher level skills such as organization, time management and social communication skills.
- LDs and their effects are different from person to person, so a person's pattern of learning abilities need to be understood in order to find good, effective strategies for compensation.

Dyslexia = "A sustained difficulty in learning how to read and acquiring reading and writing fluency in children who are intelligent, who are receiving a standard education and who do not present with sensory-based issues or pre-existing psychological issues."

<https://www.ldatschool.ca/dyslexia-when-hidden-talents-are-awakened/>

Dysgraphia = "Even when provided with an appropriate amount of instruction and practice, children with dysgraphia fail to progress typically in the acquisition of handwriting . . . handwriting lacks consistency and is variable in size, form and orientation across several trials . . . Reflects a lack of automaticity at the cognitive level."

<https://www.ldatschool.ca/literacy-skills-handwriting/>

Dyscalculia = "Dyscalculia is a math learning disability that impairs an individual's ability to learn number-related concepts, perform accurate math calculations, reason and problem solve, and perform other basic math skills." <https://www.additudemag.com/what-is-dyscalculia-overview-and-symptom-breakdown/>

Rowin provided an example of how text may appear for someone with a learning disability. This text allowed members to experience what students with an LD may experience.

Services provided by LDADR:

- Advocate for LD individuals by participating in SEAC (Special Education Advisory Committee) for both Durham school boards as well as other groups.
- Host workshops on a variety of topics relating to LD.
- Provide a monthly resources/events e-newsletter.
- Provide resource facilitation.
- Provide advocacy services (* free for members)
- We are run entirely by a dedicated group of volunteers.

Trustee Donna Edwards shared that she has often referred families to the LDADR association.

12. **Correspondence**

- Easter Seals Association Letter-still looking for an alternate

MOTION WHEN AN ALTERNATE IS PROVIDED FOR EASTER SEALS ONTARIO, SEAC WOULD MAKE A RECOMMENDATION TO THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES THAT EASTER SEALS ONTARIO BE APPROVED FOR MEMBERSHIP.

MOVE: sensaRAneb Burrell SECONDED: Elizabeth Daniel

- Expression of Interest-DDSB Human Rights Advisory Committee

13. **Community Concerns**

Concerns about classes closing, hopefully as the month moves along there will be more information for families.

14. **Celebrations & Successes**

- As we approach the end of the school year, we are preparing for transition celebrations for students, Superintendents will be joining various celebrations.
- This week is the week of *Suits and Gowns for Grads* with Durham Regional Police Services. Teams from the high school fashion programs were on hand for alterations. This was a great event full of joy and excitement.
- Abilities track meet has been confirmed for June 14, 2024 - if you are able to attend between 10:30 and 1:00 you will be able to see this amazing event.
- Oshawa Basketball Tournament for the students in the Practical Learning Program was April 17, 2024, at Seneca Trail P.S. Appreciation to the school team for coordinating and welcoming athletes & teams.
- Tara Culley is celebrating that her son James and his peers achieved second place in the skills competition. Their project was on green energy.
- Trustee Donna Edwards shared that Trustees enjoyed spending time at the Simcoe County District School Board outdoor centre learning about how they integrate leadership courses for students with disabilities.

15. Next S.E.A.C Meeting

May 23, 2024

16. Adjournment

That the meeting does now adjourn at 8:15 p.m.

Adjournment called by SEAC Vice-chair Tara Culley

MOVED BY: Morgann Cameron

SECONDED BY: sensaRAneb Burrell

CARRIED

Report respectfully submitted by:

Tara Culley, SEAC Vice-Chair

Table 1- Action Plan

ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBILITY	COMPLETION
Transportation Letter Distribution	Lisa Wry	Completed

Inclusive Student Services Impact Update

2023-2024 • Volume 8

Social Work Services

The Social Work team at the DDSB is comprised of a diverse group of registered Social Workers with varied professional expertise and lived experiences. Social Workers provide voluntary, student-centered services from anti-oppressive, equity focused, trauma informed, and identity affirming perspectives. Social Workers partner with students, caregivers, educators and other professionals to support student success and well-being.

Your Social Worker Gets You!

The Social Work team supports student mental health, well-being, student/school engagement, and attendance needs. We recognize that students have unique lived experiences and narratives about the issues and circumstances that are a source of stress for them. These may include but are not limited to:

- emerging or intensifying mental health needs;
- experiences of interpersonal and systemic racism and oppression;
- non-affirming identity related stressors;
- Bullying, harassment, discrimination;
- school engagement;
- family and community concerns; and
- various psychosocial needs

These stressors can intersect in ways that may impact a student's mental health, well-being, and sense of safety influencing how they may experience school and personal success. We work with young people to amplify their voice, leverage their strengths, elevate their unique perspectives, and build skills to improve day to day functioning.



"Most importantly, they are the safe, caring adults in our building that have made life-changing differences to those in need."

—Hayley, Administrator

Members of the Social Work team serve students and school communities through a variety of services such as:

- consultation to support student goals and experiences;
- delivering direct mental health services for students, either individually or in a group setting;
- providing crisis and traumatic incident support for students and school community;
- offering targeted classroom/group interventions; and/or
- facilitating staff and system capacity building.

As members of a multi-disciplinary Inclusive Services school team, Social Workers often work in collaboration with members of Speech Language Services, Psychological Services and educators in a variety of roles to provide support for students.

"Our Social Worker approach their interactions with students, staff, and families from an Anti-Oppression lens and have a keen sense of understanding where individuals are with respect to the understanding of barriers that may be preventing students from achievement and success."

—Brandon, Administrator

"The support provided by our Social Workers has made an invaluable difference to our Student Success Team. The direct support that they provide to our students has significantly impacted their engagement and success, as well their consultation has guided our team to be able to consider the best approach to determining the needs of students requiring support."

—Tracey, Administrator

How to Access School Social Work:

Services are primarily referral-based and offered according to the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers' requirements. School-based staff follow the Inclusive Student Services referral pathway. Services can also be offered to students if they, or their caregivers, make a request through the [Connect with our Mental Health Team button](#) on the DDSB website.

Connect with our
Mental Health Team



"I wanted to reach out to you and tell you how thankful I am for all your support, wisdom and kindness this year. I think about you and your role in our journey all the time. I truly know that you were the pillar of strength (and my family) in our darkest hours..."

—Parent

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

