

REPORT OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Thursday, March 21, 2019, 6:30 P.M.

A meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee was held this date in the Education Centre, 400 Taunton Road East, Whitby.

ROLL CALL:

Claudine Burrell, Autism Ontario – Durham Chapter
Craig Cameron, Member At Large
Tara Culley, Durham Down Syndrome Association
Elizabeth Daniel, Ontario Association for Families of Children with Communication Disorders
Rowin Jarvis, Learning Disabilities Association of Durham Region
Kathy Kedey, VOICE for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children ******(left meeting at 8:06 p.m.) ******
Eva Kyriakides, Association for Bright Children (ABC) (SEAC Chair)
Carolyn McLennon, Member At Large
Hanah Nguyen, Easter Seals Ontario

Trustees: Donna Edwards Christine Thatcher

Staff: Superintendent Andrea McAuley
Special Education Officers Kyla McKee and Bobbie O'Dell

Recording Secretary: Diane Kent

1. Call to Order:

SEAC Chair Eva Kyriakides called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

2. Welcome Guests:

SEAC Chair Eva Kyriakides welcomed special guests: Jack Barclay, Elementary Representative and Janet Cairns, Secondary Representative.

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. **Regrets:**

Regrets:

- Donna Edwards, Trustee
- Hanah Nguyen, Easter Seals Ontario

4. **Approval of Agenda:**

That the agenda was amended to move item # 9 Staff Reports prior to Item # 8 b) Open Discussion Period.

That the agenda be approved as amended for March 21, 2019.

MOVED BY: Tara Culley

SECONDED BY: Rowin Jarvis

CARRIED

5. **Approval of the Minutes from February 21, 2019:**

That the minutes from February 21, 2019 be approved.

MOVED BY: Kathy Kedey

SECONDED BY: Carolyn McLennon

CARRIED

6. **Inclusive Student Services Report – March 2019:**

Spotlight: Social Work and Attendance Services

The first week of March is identified by the Ontario Association of Social Workers as Social Work Week. The theme this year, "From everyday issues to complex needs: Social Workers, it's what we do." This builds on the Association's ongoing campaign "Turn Issues into Answers – it's what we do" which promotes the range of services and supports that Social Workers provide. Videos created by the Association, one of which features DDSB Social Worker Tracey Grose, can be found at:

https://www.oasw.org/Public/Social_Work_Week_Tab/Issues_Videos.aspx

6. Inclusive Student Services Report – March 2019: (cont'd)

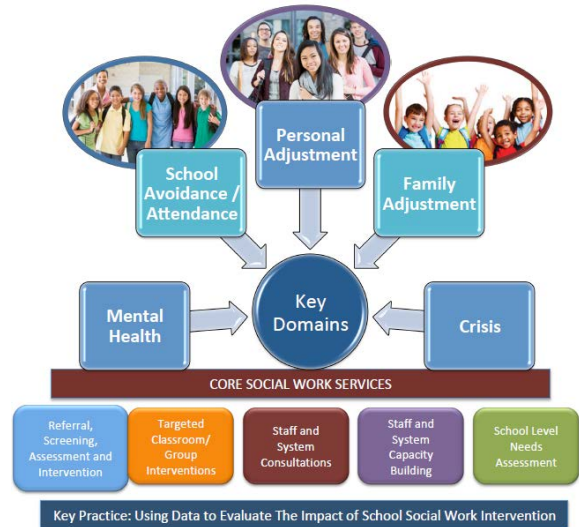
Spotlight: Social Work and Attendance Services (cont'd)

A new “[Framework for School Social Work in Ontario](#)” was recently finalized by the Association for Chief Social Workers. This document, based on research commissioned with support by a number of school boards including the Durham District School Board, will provide a transparent and comprehensive overview of Social Work in schools which has focus on the key domains of:

- Mental Health Concerns
- School Avoidance and Attendance
- Personal Adjustment Issues
- Family Adjustment Issues
- Crisis

The model includes use of evidence-based practices, reinforces assessment as key in driving appropriate service options, capacity building for educators and the importance of measuring impact.

Our team has received initial overview of the document and looks forward to implementation.



Staffing Announcements

Chief of Social Work and Attendance Services, Georgia Jenkins, retired from the Durham DSB on February 28, 2019 culminating thirty years of service to students and families. We welcome Carolyn Ussher to this role. Carolyn joins the Durham DSB team with over 25 years Social Work experience supporting children, youth and families in roles ranging from front line provision of direct service to leadership of programs and services. In addition to strong skills as a clinical supervisor, Carolyn is a leader in strategic planning, organizational alignment and change management. These are skills developed through her leadership experiences and participation in the Executive Leadership Program at the Rotman School of Management. Carolyn joins the Durham DSB from her position as a Director at the Children’s Aid Society of Toronto officially beginning on April 2, 2019. As support to the Social Work and Attendance Team, Dr. Steve Graffi is coordinating Trauma Response, Superintendent Andrea McAuley is looking after Human Resource related items and, with appreciation, Social Worker Ravi Saravanamuttu has moved into the position of Acting Chief to provide clinical guidance to the team on the interim basis.

We also congratulate Anila Punnoose, **Chief of Speech Language and Hearing Services**, on her retirement which is official at the end of March. We are currently engaged in the process of hiring for this position. Providing interim support to the team, Sharon McConney Ellis will provide clinical guidance to the team as Acting Chief, Officer Bobbie O’Dell will support our Interpreters and Intervenors and Superintendent Andrea McAuley will look at Human Resource related items for the teams.

6. Inclusive Student Services Report – March 2019: (cont'd)

Family Engagement

Twenty parents in Pickering participated in an Inclusive Technology Night on February 26, 2019. Focus of the session was on Read and Write software. Parents had an opportunity to use software functions such as "text extraction" which is used by students to pull key information from written texts. Information was sent to an additional fifteen families who were not able to attend.

Grove School – Care and/or Treatment, Custody and Correctional (CTCC) Programs

Principal Patrick Belmonte and Vice-Principal Joanne Docherty are working with their CTCC colleagues in five other Districts on a "Measuring Impact of CTCC Education Programs" Leadership Initiative. Moving from data based on number of students/clients served to impact data is an important shift. The group meets through online platforms and is sharing in the learning and work of creating measures of impact for their programs.

The Grove Team, with campuses across the Region, held their February staff meeting using Google Hang Out Meets with over 50 staff logged in. This platform, new to the team, helped mitigate travel while ensuring access for collaboration for all Grove team members.

Professional Development Opportunities

| Workshop/In-service | Date (s) |
|---|-------------------------------|
| Behaviour Management System (BMS) Basic Training | March 18, & April 5, 17, 2019 |
| SLP Language Acquisition through Motor Planning (LAMP)- Helping Children who are Non-Verbal use the LAMP Words for Life App on their SEA iPad | March 29, 2019 |
| Developmental Class Teacher Capacity Building | April 2, 2019 |
| BMS Refresher | April 5 & 8, 2019 |
| Caring for Your Voice as an Educator | April 16, 2019 |

7. Presentation:

There was no presentation at this time.

8 a). Business Arising from the Minutes:

- “Draft” Update – SEAC Membership By-Laws

Tara Culley provided her interpretation of Regulation 464 regarding the appointment of applicants from for-profit businesses applying for SEAC membership. Superintendent Andrea McAuley noted that she also would follow up with Legal Council to review phrasing.

- SEAC Sub-Committee: Self-Advocacy Parent Information Session

SEAC Chair Eva Kyriakides asked SEAC if any members were interested in participating in a Self-Advocacy Parent Information Session sub-committee to stay after the meeting to set up and information planning session. Current sub-committee members are: Janet Cairns; Eva Kyriakides and Carolyn McLennon.

8 b). Scheduled Discussion Period

The open discussion period was used to discuss the following topic:

- Ontario Autism Program Funding

Committee members divided into smaller groups and shared their concerns about the Ontario Autism Program Funding:

- Not all details are available as of today/information still rolling out
- New influx of students with complex needs into school system – Is there going to be an increase in supports?
- Are the Speech Language Pathologists(SLPs) prepared for this – Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) – more SLP resources?
- Engagement with families are so critical
- One PA Day or one course – it’s a lifetime of work -stress to staff
- Autism Ontario – base line – but as a worker – families are becoming frustrated and confused – things keep changing, some families that are good at navigation and advocating are now confused.

Discussions took place among SEAC members and it was suggested to draft a letter to the Ministry of Education to express their concern about the OAP funding.

MOTION:

THAT A LETTER BE SENT TO THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION TO EXPRESS SEAC’S CONCERN WITH THE ONTARIO AUTISM PROGRAM FUNDING.

MOVED BY: Kathy Kedey

SECONDED BY: Tara Culley

CARRIED

8 b). Scheduled Discussion Period (cont'd)

SEAC Chair Eva Kyriakides asked committee members to forward further input to her via e-mail to incorporate into the letter. A "draft" letter will then be sent to committee members for their review and feedback prior to the next SEAC meeting.

Discussions took place among SEAC members and it was agreed upon to defer next month's topic of "Inclusive Classrooms" to allot time to discuss "Supporting Students in Regular Class Placements/Mainstream".

9. Reports:

Administration:

Superintendent Andrea McAuley

March - Easter Seals Month - raising awareness for kids with physical disabilities - highlighting facilities that are accessible

Today: March 21st - World Down Syndrome Day - thank you for "Rocking Your Socks!"

Ontario Autism Program

Ministry of Education Announcement – March 11, 2019

\$12 300 per pupil amount

- This is the standard per pupil amount the board receives as part of regular funding

Teacher access to Professional Development: Teaching Students with Communication Needs- ASD, a PA Day focus and Geneva Centre course access

- DDSB currently receives \$32 800 (includes almost \$14 000 received this week) which is funding access for 102 staff to the various online programs through the Geneva Centre

After School Skills Development program will be extended to all DSBs

- DDSB currently runs "Teach Town" through four elementary sites: Bolton C Falby PS, Clara Hughes PS, Eagle Ridge PS and Nottingham P, serving twenty students. Supporting Transitions through Connections for Students

Minister MacLeod (Ministry of Children and Youth Services) Announcement - March 21, 2019

Continue:

Plan proceeds to eliminate waitlist over course of next 18 months

\$140 000 max lifetime funding to age 18

Direct funding model - \$ to families

Doubling number of current Assessment Hubs

9. Reports: (cont'd)

Superintendent Andrea McAuley (cont'd)

Enhancements to the Ontario Autism Program (OAP 2019):

- Income testing for funding scaling- removed
- Autism as spectrum recognized - next steps will be further assessment towards provision of additional supports for children with ASD and complex needs
- Contracts* for current services (community based therapies) - extended another six months (* *Behaviour Support Agreements*)

2019/2020 Planning

- Ministry announcements on March 15, 2019 included impact to class sizes: No change K-3, +1 student class average Grade 4-8 and a change in secondary class average from 22 to 28 students.
- Principals, both elementary and secondary, have been notified of any changes to the Special Education classes at their schools.
- Next steps will be informing staff and families impacted by changes; minimal this year as we are not past the two-year implementation of the review in elementary and moving into year two of changes at secondary.
- Inclusive Student Services will then, working with families and schools, move through process of placement considerations, offers and transition planning.
- To support information for families, a brochure has been created for each Special Education class type. This information will be shared publicly as well as with families in specific placement considerations.

Special Education Plan

We continue to welcome input on the DDSB Special Education Plan as our team turns attention this Spring to the creation of the plan due to the Ministry at the end of the school year. Please send any feedback to Diane Kent.

Pathway to Intervention

We thank SEAC for previous input on revisions to the Pathway to Intervention. We have brought a revised draft with us this evening for further feedback prior to the document being finalized.

Board:

Trustee Christine Thatcher informed SEAC members that the Board of Trustees received presentations on "There is Magic in My Melanin"; and an Early Years Update at the March 18, 2019 Board Meeting.

9. Reports: (cont'd)

Board: (cont'd)

Director Lisa Millar provided the Board of Trustees an outline of the recent announcements from the Ministry of Education. Topics discussed the following:

- Increase of class sizes for secondary school, capping at 28 students per class.
- The requirement that students in secondary school must complete four academic credits through eLearning.
- The cellular phone ban in classrooms, when they are not used for educational purposes.

The Board of Trustees feel that these changes demonstrate a lack of understanding of the issue and impact on families and classrooms. As a result, an advocacy ad hoc committee has been formed to support families and address the Board concerns.

Trustee Christine Thatcher handed out a letter from DDSB Trustees that outlines concerns about the new Autism funding. Additionally, an electronic copy will be sent to all SEAC members.

10. Association Reports:

Association for Bright Children of Ontario (ABC)

The 2019 Annual Free Family Event: Making the Connection will be held on Sunday, April 14, 2019 at the TIFF Festival Tower, King & John Toronto ON from 11:00 am - 3:00 pm.

Hosted by ABC Ontario | Co-sponsored by TIFF
Children's Programme: Film-in-a-day Workshop co-hosted by TIFF

Adult Programme: Making the Connection
Keynote Speaker: Dr. Joanne Foster
Networking & Discussion Groups, SENG Model Parent Group (SMPG) Intro
SEAC Sharing Session, Chapter Boot Camp, Provincial Council & AGM

Autism Ontario – Durham

April 2, 2019 is World Autism Awareness Day – Raise the Flag will be taking place at various locations in Durham Region.

Hollylynn Towie Scholarship

The purpose of this memorial scholarship is to provide financial assistance directly to adults with ASD in Durham Region who are pursuing their dreams and attending a post-secondary institution at any level within Canada. Applications are now being accepted for the 2019-2020 year. The deadline to apply is April 19, 2019. Further details are available on-line at www.austimontario.com/durham.

10. Association Reports: (cont'd)

Durham Down Syndrome Association

March 21st – Flag Raising Ceremony at Oshawa's City Hall at 12:30 p.m.

March 24th – World Down Syndrome Day Celebration at the Abilities Centre in Whitby from 2:00 – 4:00 p.m.

VOICE for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children

VOICE has set up the Gift of Hearing Fund to give back to members who require financial assistance in order to obtain an upgrade for their child's hearing technology. VOICE members may apply by April 12, 2019.

Workshop on Strategies for Parents of Deaf and/or Hard of Hearing Children will be held on Tuesday, April 2, 2019 – 5:00 p.m.- 6:30 p.m. @ Canadian Hearing Society (Oshawa).

Sir James Whitney School for the Deaf Open House (Belleville) will be held on Thursday, March 28th, 2019 from 8:45 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

11. Correspondence/Attachments:

- PaAC on SEAC
- Minister of Education
- Durham CDSB

12. Questions and Comments:

There were no questions or comments at this time.

13. Celebrations and Success:

Tara Culley raised over \$400.00 this year in her Dye Your Hair Awareness Campaign for Down Syndrome.

14. Next S.E.A.C. meeting – April 25, 2019 in Room 2007.

15. Adjournment:

That the meeting does now adjourn at 8:11 p.m.

MOVED BY: Tara Culley

SECONDED BY: Trustee Christine Thatcher

CARRIED

Report respectfully submitted by:
Eva Kyriakides, SEAC Chair

| ACTION PLAN | | |
|--|--|----------------------|
| ACTIVITY | RESPONSIBILITY | COMPLETION |
| Draft Ministry OAP Funding Letter | SEAC Chair Eva Kyriakides | By next SEAC meeting |
| Defer Open Discussion of "Inclusive Classrooms" to May SEAC agenda | Diane Kent Administrative Assistant | May, 2019 |