

REPORT OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Thursday, May 21, 2020 6:30 P.M.

An on-line meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee was held on this date.

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
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
Chief of Speech Language & Hearing Services Lisa Drake

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: Michelle Monk & Russ Davidson Secondary Representatives and Quincy James & Imran Syed, Elementary Representatives. Kelly Kennedy, SEAC Alternate for Ontario Association for Families of Children with Communication Disorders was also in attendance.

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:

- Craig Cameron, Member At Large
- Elizabeth Daniel, Ontario Association for Families of Children with Communication Disorders

4. **Approval of Agenda:**

That the agenda for May 21, 2020 be approved.

MOVED BY: Trustee Donna Edwards

SECONDED BY: Tara Culley

CARRIED

5. **Approval of the Minutes from April 16, 2020:**

That the minutes from April 16, 2020 be approved.

MOVED BY: Trustee Christine Thatcher

SECONDED BY: Tara Culley

CARRIED

6. **Inclusive Student Services Report:**

Lisa Drake, Chief of Speech Language and Hearing provided SEAC members with a PowerPoint presentation that provided an update on the following items in the Inclusive Student Services Department.

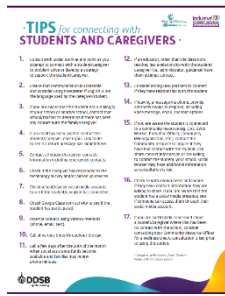
May is Speech and Hearing Month

The Speech Language Pathologists have started a social media campaign, "Did You Know?" on speech, language and hearing facts. The teams have created an Instagram account @DDSB_SLH featuring Instagram Live Story Time every Friday at 1:30 p.m. Also coming soon is a Virtual Speech Language Room that will provide links to resources, videos and information for parents, educators and beyond.

6. **Inclusive Student Services Report: (cont'd)**

Distance Learning Roles and Responsibilities

The Distance Learning Roles and Responsibilities document was previously shared with SEAC members at last month's meeting. Currently Inclusive Student Services clinical teams are continuing to provide support for students and families. IPRCs and Transition Planning will be held on the virtual secure Adracare platform for face to face video conferencing.



Student Safety and Risk Considerations when Engaging Students in Distance Learning

Tip sheets for administrators and educators has been created and highlight:

- Tips for Connecting with Students and Caregivers
- Children and Youth in Need of Protection
- Mental Health Concerns and Amended Suicide Protocol
- Amended Traumatic Response Protocol

Engagement Matters

Shift from attendance to engagement in school community and learning environment.

- Survey sent to schools
- 1700 students had questions about engagement
- Stop light system
 - Red - zero engagement and risk factors identified
 - Yellow – more questions, e.g. logistical/tech issues, language issues
 - Green – engaged on some level or family opted out and no risk factors
- Putting engagement and intervention plan layers in place for students/families where concern/risk may require further supports

LivingWorks Start



LivingWorks Start is an interactive, on-line training program to support individuals with the skills and knowledge to help keep others safe from suicide. The training focuses on how to start the conversation with the person having thoughts of suicide, and how to quickly link them with appropriate support. The Durham District School Board (DDSB) is pleased is partner with LivingWorks to offer this training program to Educational Assistants, Guidance staff, Special Education Resource Teachers (SERTs), and Inclusive Student Services/Mental Health and Safe School Team members.

7. **Presentation:**

IEPs: Documenting Accommodation and Programming During Distance Learning

Superintendent Andrea McAuley noted that an **Individual Education Plan (IEP)** is a written plan describing the special education program and/or services required by an

7. Presentation: (cont'd)

individual student, based on a thorough assessment of the student's strengths and needs that affect the student's ability to learn and demonstrate learning. All sections of a student's Individual Education Plan remain active during the period of distance learning.

To support programming access to learning for students with special education needs, IEPs remain in effect as continuity of learning strategies are implemented.

Students will not have the opportunity to demonstrate learning across what was planned for a full school year of learning. It is understood that a loss in learning time, as a result of school closures during this pandemic, will cause unavoidable impacts to the rigor and scope of programming. Flexible approaches, and consultation with families, to consider students' individual identities, needs and circumstances that impact distance learning need to be considered in focusing scope of programming and implementing accommodations and strategies to support individual students.

The DDSB IEP Guide: Documenting Accommodations and Programming During School Closures, distributed to SEAC with the agenda, was created to guide school teams in the ongoing commitments to consultation with students & families, provision of programming and documentation of programming.

This resource is available on the DDSB website at:

<https://www.ddsb.ca/en/programs-and-learning/distance-learning.aspx>

8. Business Arising from the Minutes:

SEAC Chair Eva Kyriakides collected all the SEAC discussion topics that were received from committee members. Eva will collate the topics into one document and e-mail to SEAC members for their information.

9. Staff Reports:

Administration:

Superintendent Andrea McAuley

Superintendent Andrea McAuley started the Administrators' Report with a thank you to our SEAC partners, community agencies, families, and at the centre - our students. The creativity, collaboration and compassion with which we have together responded to COVID-19 and school closures is impressive and heartwarming. On behalf of the Inclusive Student Services team, Superintendent McAuley shared appreciation for the ongoing conversations as we work together for both well-being and continued connections during Distance Learning. Valuable input from families continues to help us individualize supports and, on an ongoing basis, make refinements.

9. Staff Reports: (cont'd)

Superintendent Andrea McAuley (cont'd)

Our students, both those engaged in Distance Learning, those immersed in home and family commitments, teach us so much. The learning is reciprocal.

School Closure Updates

- Ministry announced school closures, continuation of Distance Learning, through to end of June 2020
- Board system team is currently planning 1) student and staff retrieval of materials and 2) reopening considerations for the 2020-2021 school year

Our commitments in the layers of planning for the 2020-2021 school year include supporting staff and student needs both in terms of school, class and those with individualized supports. The health guidelines that will form the foundations to educational programming for the next school year are not yet known but an integrated team is looking at all aspects of planning.

The team is currently immersed in Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC) planning with families and schools. The foundations set in conversations starting back in January which framed the foundations for Special Education Programs and lead into related IPRCs for students including those accessing special education class placement programs. As a team, we continue to foster inclusive programming and accommodation within all placement options and maintain emphasis on regular class placements being best placement for majority of students. For the 2020-2021 school year, we have shifted a few of our programs. For example, reduction of some School Support Programs to add Developmental and Practical Learning Programs to meet student needs.

Transition Planning During COVID-19 Related School Closures

Concurrent to IPRCs, teams are working on shifts to transition planning with a focus on key transitions such as Gr8 to Gr9 and secondary to adult pathway. The strategies will look different but the core commitments of individualizing and supporting with resources such as transition books, social stories and opportunities to form connections with staff remain constant.

Inclusive Student Services Staffing Updates

A few staffing updates highlight the importance and skill of team members in the leadership of inclusive programming. Michelle Doiron, current Instructional Facilitator supporting Gifted Learners and START Team Lead, was announced as a successful candidate to the Elementary Vice-Principal pool. Cheryl Wellwood, Facilitator with the Autism Resource Team, is also on the Secondary Vice-Principal pool list. Both educators will be back with the Inclusive Student Services Team for September pending any changes. Our department leadership model also expands to two Educational Officers next year. Michelle Crawford-Eade, currently Principal at Uxbridge SS, joins Kyla McKee providing system leadership.

9. Staff Reports: (cont'd)

Superintendent Andrea McAuley (cont'd)

Budget 2020-2021

At this time, Boards have not yet received budget information for the 2020-2021 school year. As an important advocacy voice, SEAC's opportunity to provide deputation to the budget and finance committee remains within planning.

Parents as Partners Conference

We would also like to highlight that the upcoming Parents as Partners Conference will be facilitated through an online format in the evening of May 28th. Flier information will be sent directly to SEAC members and we respectfully request that you share within your organizations.

Thank you for your continued support of families and our Inclusive Student Services team.

Andrea - on behalf of the Inclusive Student Services Team



Board:

Trustee Christine Thatcher informed SEAC members that the Board of Trustees received a presentation on the Culturally Responsive and Relevant Pedagogy Implementation and Support for Distance Learning Update and the policy for the new student dress code was passed at the virtual Board meeting that was held on Tuesday, May 19, 2020

It was also noted that Trustee Donna Edwards as representative for the K-12 Standards Development Committee wanted to thank SEAC members for providing their feedback to the questionnaire.

10. Association Reports:

Easter Seals Ontario

Changes in Programs and Services for Easter Seals:

- With overnight camps cancelled, we will be offering a Virtual Summer Camp which is open for all Easter Seals clients who would be eligible for camp. Details on the registration process will be available soon. Consent will be required from parents as it will be using internet and video conferencing.
- Equipment Program Funding – Approved applications for this year are still moving forward. New approvals are still on pause, but applications continue to be accepted with the hope that more funds may be available later in the year.
- Incontinence Supplies Grant continues to accept and process applications, with some delays.
- Top Up Grant will be open in 6 - 8 weeks, for those who are eligible.

VOICE for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children

Dress Loud Day can be any day this month. Dress in bright colours and share with the #VOICEDressLoud hashtag.

The following link: <https://www.voicefordeafkids.com/covid-19-resources> contains resources for accessibility and mental health that have been shared with DDSB staff.

VOICE Camp is tentatively scheduled to run in August of this year at Bark Lake Leadership & Conference Centre: 1551 Bark Lake Drive Irondale, ON K0M 1X0. Attending this two night weekend getaway will give parents the opportunity to interact and meet other families who have children with hearing loss and kids and teens have the chance to spend a fun-filled weekend together. Further registration details are in the following link: <https://www.voicefordeafkids.com/event-3658827>

11. Correspondence:

- Hastings & Prince Edward DSB
- Nipissing Parry Sound CDSB DSB

12. Community Concerns:

Hanah Nguyen, SEAC Representative from Easter Seals Ontario has received concerns from families regarding transitioning back to school, worries about large gatherings; and if there will be enough Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) in place for staff as many children with special needs have vulnerabilities.

Superintendent Andrea McAuley responded that when individual families dialogue it creates ideas that are great to share in the planning across school boards. Orders have already been placed to restock the DDSB's PPE that was previously donated the front-line workers at LakeRidge Health.

12. Community Concerns: (cont'd)

Tara Culley, SEAC Representative from Durham Down Syndrome Association (DDSA) has received concerns from families who are getting tired trying to keep students focused and engaged in Distance Learning and what does that look like for some students needing support as parents are returning to work.

Superintendent Andrea McAuley replied that school boards were also just made aware on the Ministry's release and there is a lot of information still to be determined. She also agreed that parents have been exhausted as well as staff that have been doing the provisionally services as well are trying to balance that approach.

Tara Culley asked a follow up question regarding the anticipation in returning to school, students may be anxious and may not want other students to come near them; how schools will handle these types of situations.

Superintendent Andrea McAuley responded that she understands some students may be eager for the social classroom connection again while other students are concerned about maintaining social distancing. Educators will be well prepared with social stories; scripts and games that don't require close proximity outside.

13. Celebrations and Success:

The following committee members shared their good news stories during the COVID-19 school closures:

- Tara Culley mentioned that her son Adam has been actively participating in on-line tea parties with his friends.
- Kathy Kedey shared that her daughter who is an avid reader received a social distance visit from her teacher and did a book drop off at their house.
- Eva Kyriakides noted that her younger daughter's teacher dropped off hand written notes to all her students. She also shared that her older daughter has successfully completed his first year of university.

14. Next S.E.A.C. meeting – June 18, 2020.

15. Adjournment:

That the meeting does now adjourn at 7:56 p.m.

MOVED BY: Trustee Donna Edwards

SECONDED BY: Kathy Kedey

CARRIED

Report respectfully submitted by:
Eva Kyriakides, SEAC Chair

Report Special Education Advisory Committee (cont'd)
May 21, 2020

ACTION PLAN		
ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBILITY	COMPLETION
E-Mail SEAC Discussion Topics to committee members	SEAC Chair Eva Kyriakides & Administrative Assistant Diane Kent	May 25, 2020



Hastings and Prince Edward District School Board

Possibilities
TODAY & TOMORROW

Lucille Kyle, Chair of the Board
Sean Monteith, Director of Education

February 14, 2020

The Honourable Stephen Lecce
Minister of Education
438 University Avenue, 5th Floor
Toronto ON M7A 2A5

Dear Minister Lecce:

As representatives of the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) for Hastings and Prince Edward District School Board (HPEDSB), we are writing to express our support to concerns expressed in letters from Durham District School Board (dated June 3, 2019), Greater Essex County District School Board (dated July 5, 2019) and Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board (dated December 11, 2019) SEACs. Our group feels strongly that the concerns expressed in each of these letters will pose serious risks for our students, especially those with special needs and students who attend schools in rural areas and/or with declining enrolments.

Administrators in our district's smaller secondary schools have reported to us for many years that building timetables to meet the needs of all students, in all pathways, can be very challenging once they are faced with declining pupil populations. The proposed increases to average class sizes by our presiding government will decrease the availability of compulsory courses, and more specifically electives courses, that many of our students require or are interested in, to further their interests and help them gain employment advantages. As stated in previous letters submitted to you by other concerned districts, "An increase in average class size will only exacerbate the issue in smaller schools that are already challenged with decreased course selection." Reducing the number of caring adults in the lives of our youth stands to detract from our focus on creating successful outcomes for our future community leaders.

Further to increased class sizes, the introduction of mandatory online courses would not meet the needs of individuals with learning disabilities, developmental disabilities and other learning differences who require additional support from their educators. We agree with other school boards that the online format is simply not suitable for everyone and making them compulsory does not recognize the individual needs of students.

We urge the Ministry of Education to review its position and revise the plan for education based on the recommendations of relevant stakeholders, including parents and community experts. We also hope that the Ministry will investigate and implement the suggestions outlined by the Durham District School Board, specifically:

1. Provide e-learning opportunities to students across the Province as an option, but not make it mandatory for all students.
2. Encourage professional learning for staff, and e-learning exposure for students in Learning Strategies courses to allow for specific opportunities to explore the D2L platform and gain direct experiences with digital learning with the support of their special education teachers. This will allow students to self-assess their confidence and suitability to this learning delivery method.



Hastings and Prince Edward
District School Board

Possibilities
TODAY & TOMORROW

Lucille Kyle, Chair of the Board
Sean Monteith, Director of Education

3. Allow students access to all pathways (community living, workplace, college, university) online, should they wish, including during alternative school times, to encourage students to explore other opportunities (e.g., summer courses).
4. Slow down changes to class size and establish clear guidelines to measure and monitor the impact on students, particularly those with special needs.
5. Provide further transparency about students' pathways and monitor how changes are impacting pathways, including students earning a Certificate of Achievement and Certificate of Accomplishment.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Kelly Allan

Kelly Allan,
SEAC Chair

Lisa Anne Chatten

Lisa Anne Chatten,
SEAC Vice-chair

c.c. Lucille Kyle, Chair of the Board
Ken Dostaler, Superintendent of Education – Student Services
Todd Smith, MPP Bay of Quinte
Daryl Kramp, MPP Hastings-Lennox & Addington
Chairs of Ontario Special Education Advisory Committees

File

April 29, 2020

Honourable Stephen Lecce
Minister of Education
Mowat Block, 900 Bay Street
Toronto, ON M7A 1L2

Honourable Stephen Lecce:

Re: Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education (MACSE)

On behalf of the Nipissing-Parry Sound Catholic District School Board and its Special Education Advisory Committee, I am writing in support of the concerns brought forward by both the Durham District School Board (DDSB) and the Greater Essex County District School Board (GECDSB) regarding the current status of the Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education (MACSE). We agree with the statements put forward by both the DDSB and GECDSB, that with the growing number of students with special education needs and complex profiles, MACSE plays an even greater role in providing ongoing information and guidance to school boards and Special Education Advisory Committees (SEACs).

Furthermore, we are in agreement with both the DDSB and the GECDSB's recommendations to have representative members selected from each of the SEACs in the six Ministry of Education's regional areas. This approach would allow MACSE membership to be more representative of the varying geographical contexts across the province of Ontario.

We agree that the current structure of MACSE that includes representation of the various exceptionalities is necessary, as these individuals bring vast knowledge and experience and offer valuable input to the MACSE. In addition, in an effort to support MACSE being a more active provincial advisory council, we ask that consideration be made to host MACSE meetings in a virtual environment. This approach would remove potential barriers for those who see much value in being part of MACSE however are unable to travel to face-to-face meetings, thus preventing them from volunteering to be part of the advisory council. This would particularly be helpful for those travelling from the Northern regions of the province.

We kindly request consideration of our suggestions outlined above to fill current MACSE vacancies in a collaborative and equitable way.

Sincerely,



Leo de Jourdan
Chair

- c. Ontario District School Boards SEAC
Hon. Vic Fedeli, MPP - Nipissing
Marie Derosier, NPSC SEAC Chair
Anna Marie Bitonti, Director of Education