



Special Education Advisory Committee

Minutes - April 13, 2022

A meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) was held virtually on Wednesday, April 13, 2022 at 7:00 p.m. with the following members in attendance:

Trustee: Kathi Smith, Cindy Watson

Association Members: Jennifer Checkley (Easter Seals), Christine MacDonald (Learning Disabilities Association of Wellington County), Jane Martin (Ontario Federation of Cerebral Palsy), Roberta Thompson (Waterloo Wellington Down Syndrome Society)

Association Alternates: Jeff Senior (Waterloo Wellington Down Syndrome Society), Shannon Taylor (Epilepsy South Central Ontario)

Non-Association Members: Carmen Sutherland (Waterloo Region Family Network)

Board Staff in Attendance: Leonilda Gil (Administrative Assistant), Stephen McCrae (System Administrator), Scott Miller (Superintendent, Student Achievement & Well-Being)

Regrets: Dale Babiy (Autism Ontario), Deb Jack (Family & Children's Services - Indigenous Services), Michelle Hughes (FASD/ONE Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder/Ontario Network of Expertise), Sara Penny (Epilepsy South Central Ontario), Selena Saini (WRDSB Student Representative), Angela Sider (Parents For Children's Mental Health - Waterloo Region), Kathy Waybrant (Ontario Federation of Cerebral Palsy)

Guests: Teresa Dunat (Special Education Consultant), Melanie Gravel (WRDSB Speech-Language Pathologist Lead), Jennifer Seale and Jennifer Welch (WRDSB Elementary Teachers), Quinn Plummer (Disability Advocate & WRDSB Grade 8 Student)

Call to Order

Scott Miller called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Welcome & Territorial Acknowledgement - Scott Miller

Approval of Agenda

Moved by Roberta Thompson, seconded by Carmen Sutherland:
That the agenda of the April 13, 2022 meeting, Special Education Advisory Committee meeting, be approved.

- Carried -

Approval of Minutes

Moved by Shannon Taylor, seconded by Jennifer Checkley:
That the minutes of the February 9, 2022 and March 9, 2022 meetings, Special Education Advisory Committee, be approved.

- Carried -

Business Arising from the Minutes

- None

WRDSB Special Education & Student Well-Being Report – Scott Miller

- Autism Awareness Month - Guest Presenters: Teresa Dunat (Special Education Consultant), Melanie Gravel (WRDSB Speech-Language Pathologist Lead), Jennifer Seale and Jennifer Welch (WRDSB Elementary Teachers), Quinn Plummer (Disability Advocate & WRDSB Grade 8 Student)
 - [Autism Acceptance Presentation](#)
 - Requested how SEAC members can support the Autism Working Group. Melanie Gravel will speak to her team and get back to us with more information.
 - Inquired about students with dual diagnoses such as down syndrome and autism. Acknowledged that the working group continues to research supporting students with dual diagnosis.

- Budget and Staffing Update
 - As a board and across the province continue to struggle with having the essential staff of Educational Assistants and Child Youth Workers to support our students
 - Provincial struggle to recruit and hire Educational Assistants and Child Youth Workers decrease in enrollment in college programs
 - Salaries/wages are set by the province. Suggested that WRDSB SEAC write a letter to the Ministry to provide support for the review and increase of hourly wages for EAs and CYWs.
 - Currently the Special Education Staffing has remained status quo and in some cases has increased in the last 2 years
- WRDSB Literacy Planning
 - The Right to Read Report influences our decisions as a board and how we will support and lead the teaching of reading
 - We continue to use the Empower reading tool and have had great success with this intensive program
 - Universal screening and a structured literacy approach based on the Science Of Reading will be a focus moving forward
 - Moving towards an evidence based reading program
 - Looking at providing assistance to ACE students in reading programs
 - The Ministry has provided the funds to support this work
 - Implementing summer learning program and summer school for students with the Reach Ahead Program in Secondary
 - There will be a hybrid model for these summer school programs

Chair Report

- SEAC Handbook [Draft](#) Copy (Group Discussion) - deferred to May meeting
- Reviewed all letters received from other SEAC groups directed to the Ministry of Education and no further action to be taken
 - [Halton DSB Letter to Ministry](#) Re: Support of Bill 172
 - [Algoma DSB Letter to Ministry](#) Re: Support of Bill 172

- [Thunder Bay CDSB Letter to Ministry](#) Re: Support of Bill 172
- [Halton DSB Letter to Ministry](#) Re: Amending Immunization
- [Halton DSB Letter to Ministry](#) Re: PPM 81
- [Durham DSB Letter to Ministry](#) Re: PPM 81
- [Renfrew County CDSB Letter to Ministry](#) Re: Online Learning
- [Renfrew County CDSB Letter to Ministry](#) Re: Nursing Shortage
- [Durham DSB Letter to Ministry](#) Re: Special Incident Portion Funding
- [Durham DSB Letter to Ministry](#) Re: Definition of a Disability

Trustee Report - Cindy Watson & Kathi Smith

- Motion was passed at the April 11th, 2022 Board Meeting to send a letter to the Ministry regarding Suspension/Expulsion Reporting
- If you have issues that you are concerned about, send a letter to the Trustees as this is a good time to connect and provide feedback

Round Table Association Reports

1. Jane Martin - Ontario Federation of Cerebral Palsy
 - Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) Information Session presented by the Lawrence Heights ODSP Office on April 21st, 2022 at 3-4 p.m. Click [here](#) to register. If there are any questions please contact cindy@ofcp.ca.
 - OFCP Thanks Teaching Awareness through Puppetry - The OFCP would like to thank Teaching Awareness through Puppetry for putting on an amazing event for the members. The virtual workshop was filled with positive moments and important lessons concerning friendship, inclusion and treating others with respect.
 - Ontario Brian Institute - Youth Mental Health: Co-Creating Strategies for Success.
 - Young people impacted by brain disorders also often experience mental health issues. And with lived experiences of diagnostic odysseys, fragmented health coverage, and lack of access to care,

it's no wonder that, for many, gaps in the mental health system have proliferated.

- But what would happen if youth were given a chance to reimagine the system and challenge their space within it? This OBI Public Talk, the first in the *2022-23 Your Brain Health* series, will do just that: demonstrate how the positioning of young patients as stakeholder experts and co-creators of knowledge lays the groundwork of success strategies for peers and families alike. This event is taking place on April 28th from 6-7 p.m. Click [here](#) to register.

2. Carmen Sutherland, Waterloo Region Family Network

- WRFN has moved our office to Waterloo. We are now located within KidsAbility's Waterloo site at 500 Hallmark Drive. Our office was located for over eight years within KidsAbility's Kitchener site within The Family Centre on Hanson Ave. We will miss the many friendships and partnership we made within The Family Centre, and look forward to continuing to offer some evening programs at The Family Centre in the future. In our new Waterloo location, we look forward to renewing and creating new relationships as we continue to support families from across Waterloo Region.

3. Roberta Thompson, Waterloo Wellington Down Syndrome Society

- We will be holding our virtual AGM on April 19, @ 7:30 WWDSD members are invited to register to attend
- Roberta discussed a program 'Fierce N Fit Boxing', the program is highly attended, fantastic for building friendships and getting fit and fierce too. For more information about the program visit: <https://www.fiercenfitboxing.com/> (for all abilities-not run through WWDSS)

- Our virtual groups are up and running: Cooking, Speech/Music/Social Skills. Some of our groups are moving to 'in-person' such as the adult group 'The Office', and the 'Teen Hang Out'

Date of Next Meeting

The next SEAC meeting date is May 11, 2022 at 7:00 p.m.

Adjournment

Moved by Jennifer Checkley, seconded by Roberta Thompson:

That the Special Education Advisory Committee meeting be adjourned.

- Carried -

The meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.