



Special Education Advisory Committee

Minutes - April 12, 2023

A meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) was held virtually on Wednesday, April 12, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. with the following members in attendance:

Trustee: Fred Meissner & Marie Snyder

Association Members: Jennifer Checkley (Easter Seals), Jane Martin (Ontario Federation of Cerebral Palsy), Sara Penny & Shannon Taylor (Epilepsy South Central Ontario), Roberta Thompson (Waterloo Wellington Down Syndrome Society)

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

Guest: Donna MacCallum (KW Special Olympics), Ellen Nicol (WRDSB Parent)

Regrets: Lisa Bonnell (Ontario Parents of Visually Impaired Children), Michelle Hughes (FASD/ONE Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder/Ontario Network of Expertise), Christine MacDonald (Learning Disabilities Association of Wellington County), Jeff Senior (Waterloo Wellington Down Syndrome Society), Carmen Sutherland (Waterloo Region Family Network), Huseyin Unver (YMCA of Three Rivers), Kathy Waybrant (Ontario Federation of Cerebral Palsy)

Call to Order

S. Penny called the meeting to order at 7:08 p.m.

Welcome & Territorial Acknowledgement - Jodi Albrecht

Approval of Agenda

Moved by Roberta Thompson, seconded by Fred Meissner:

That the agenda of the April 12, 2023 meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee, be approved.

- Carried -

Approval of Minutes

Moved by Marie Snyder, seconded by Jennifer Checkley:

That the minutes of the March 8, 2023 meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee, be approved.

- Carried -

Business Arising from the Minutes

- None

KW Special Olympics Presentation - Donna MacCallum

- D. MacCallum is the Community Transition Coordinator with the KW Special Olympics. She would like to provide opportunities and increase awareness of sporting activities available for individuals with intellectual disabilities in the community.
- They are currently recruiting individuals between the ages of 13-17 years old
- The Waterloo Catholic School Board and Waterloo Region District School Board students participate in a separate Special Olympics which can provide a seamless transition into the KW Special Olympics
- They provide an inclusive, healthy, safe and trusting environment for the athletes to excel in recreational and competitive sports. They build a community of friends, socialize and network. It allows the athletes to increase confidence, self awareness, perseverance and resilience through engagement with their peers and coaches.
- They build technical skills, balance, motor control, flexibility and stamina
- They are inclusive and make accommodations as needed to ensure success
- All volunteer coaches have taken Safe Sport Coaching courses, have a Police Vulnerable Sector Check and many have taken additional courses (Rowan Law-concussion protocol, Ethical Decisions, Level 1 and 11 Coaching Certification)

- There are spring/summer and fall/winter programs that run 16-25 weeks, 1 evening a week for 2-2.5 hours depending on the sport and participants
- Examples of the sports include bocce, softball, golf, track & field, swimming, weightlifting, basketball, pickleball, 10 pin and 5 pin bowling, snowshoeing, and nordic winter sports
- Individuals can compete in qualifiers to reach Provincial games. The Provincial games are a segue to Nationals and then World Special Olympics Competitions.
- Looking at promoting KW Special Olympics by:
 - Organizing parent information night at local high schools
 - Organizing students to attend and watch sporting activities
 - Open house before end of the school year which includes inviting families/adolescents to meet and mingle with volunteer coaches and current athletes
 - Bring an Ambassador athlete to a school and have them talk to a class about how KW Special Olympics operates
 - Continue to build the bridge between Special Olympics School Programs and the KW Special Olympics to easily transition
- The average age of the athletes is 40 which is why they want to reach younger groups of individuals that might not be aware of the programs that are offered. The youngest athlete is 14 and the oldest is 82 years old.
- Members would like further information on what accommodations they provide to the athletes that they can share with schools to help them with their own sporting activities
- The secondary schools have Subject Association and Special Education meetings which can share this information. The WRDSB Communications Department can also distribute flyers and material to schools on their websites.

- Transition to high school meetings are also a good opportunity to share information with schools
- The individual athlete is required to register on the portal which includes a participation fee. They try to offset the cost with funds from fundraising events. There is the Passport Funding Program which provides funding to adults with a developmental disability to pay for community participation services and supports, activities of daily living and person-directed planning. There are also Special Services at Home for children which could assist with fees.
- More information can be found at the website: kw.specialolympicsontario.ca

WRDSB Special Education & Student Well-Being Report - Jodi Albrecht

- Labour Update - nothing new to report
- Retention of Special Education Teachers and Educational Assistants
 - All teachers are covered under the collective agreement and are able to apply to job postings throughout the school year. If a teacher secures a different position, they will be replaced by another teacher or a Long Term Occasional Teacher (LTO). In addition to this, a teacher might apply for a leave of absence and would be replaced by an LTO.
 - Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario (ETFO) members who are Special Education Consultants can't interview another ETFO member. The same would be true for Ontario Secondary Schools Teachers Federation (OSSTF) members. Interviews take place with two administrators.
 - The additional qualification course, Special Education Part I is the requirement for special education teachers in order to teach in a Congregated class
 - Educational Assistants (EAs) also have a separate collective agreement. During the school year EAs may go on a leave or apply for a Child and Youth Worker position. They would then be replaced by an EA in a term position.

- The school works to make the transition of a new staff member as smooth as possible for students. Special Education Consultants and Itinerants assist with transitions to support the school.
- Communication and collaboration are key to helping support students through transitions
- Consultants continue to build relationships and support a network of teachers to share ideas and support each other

Chair Report

- [Avon Maitland DSB Letter to Ministry Re: SIP](#)
- [Greater Essex County DSB Letter to Ministry Re: SIP](#)
 - Reviewed letters and members agreed to draft a letter in support. S. Penny will prepare a letter for review by members.
- Website updates
 - The working group has been meeting and updating SEAC information that is more student centered. It will be shared with members for review and feedback.

Trustee Report - Fred Meissner & Marie Snyder

- None

Round Table Association Reports

1. Jennifer Checkley, Easter Seals
 - National AccessAbility Week May 28-June 3
 - Red Shirt Day on May 31, 2023 - follow the link <https://maddistributions.com/easter-seals-ontario/> to order t-shirts
2. Roberta Thompson, Waterloo Wellington Down Syndrome Society
 - Will be the Co-Chair of WWDSS and the next AGM meeting will be about future planning
 - WWDSS Up Side Down Charity Golf Tournament at Rebel Creek Golf Club on June 13th, 2023. See [website](#) for more details.
 - Cooking classes are underway

- The Down Syndrome Association of Ontario has created an informative transition guide, here is the link <http://www.schooltransitions.ca/en/>

3. Shannon Taylor - Epilepsy South Central Ontario

- Planning to run a summer camp again this year for youth in KW area. Currently low registration. In KW our biggest struggle is connecting with our youth who have epilepsy and their families.

Date of Next Meeting

The next SEAC meeting date is May 10, 2023 at 7:00 p.m.

Adjournment

Moved by Roberta Thompson, seconded by Jennifer Checkley:

That the Special Education Advisory Committee meeting be adjourned.

- Carried -

The meeting adjourned at 8:38 p.m.