



Special Education Advisory Committee

Minutes - December 11, 2024

A meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) was held virtually on Wednesday, December 11, 2024 at 7:00 p.m. with the following members in attendance:

Trustees: Samantha Estoesta, Joe Meissner

Association Members: Nancy Lau (Autism Ontario), Jane Martin (Ontario Federation of Cerebral Palsy), Ami McIntosh (Autism Ontario), Jeff Senior & Roberta Thompson (Waterloo Wellington Down Syndrome Society)

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

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

Guest: Lisa Weiler-Haskins (VP Educational Assistants Association), Trena Summers (Special Education Resource Teacher)

Regrets: Lilly Adam (YMCA of Three Rivers), Lisa Bonnell (Ontario Parents of Visually Impaired Children), Jennifer Checkley (Easter Seals), Michelle Hughes (FASD/ONE Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder/Ontario Network of Expertise), Christine MacDonald (Learning Disabilities Association of Wellington County), Shannon Taylor (Epilepsy South Central Ontario), Kathy Waybrant (Ontario Federation of Cerebral Palsy)

Call to Order

Roberta called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

Welcome & Territorial Acknowledgement - Stephen McCrae

Approval of Agenda

Moved by Jane Martin, Seconded by Nancy Lau:

That the agenda of the December 11, 2024 meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee, be approved.

- Carried -

Approval of Minutes

Moved by Roberta Thompson, Seconded by Jane Martin:

That the minutes of the November 13, 2024 meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee, be approved.

- Carried -

Business Arising from the Minutes

- None

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

- System Updates
 - J. Albrecht provided an update that the WRDSB has recently appointed Scott Miller as the Interim Director of Education.
 - Last meeting information was shared about a transition meeting from the [Regional Assessment Resource Centre](#) (RARC) through Queen's University. The centre assists students with disabilities across the province that are transitioning to post secondary studies. The event happened November 26, 2024, and for your reference there is a recording available of the [Transition Info Night](#) that took place.
 - Lunch and Learn sessions through the WRDSB have continued. December's session was: [Handling after-school meltdowns](#). Next month's sessions are as follows: January 8; Understanding a Psychological Assessment, January 22; Fostering and Nurturing a Growth Mindset, January 29; Teen Mental Health. Future sessions will be posted on the Board website as News items, or on the X feed. Past

sessions are posted on the WRDSB website under Special Education/[Psychological Services](#) and on [YouTube](#).

- The Assistive Tech team did a [presentation](#) last spring to SEAC on the SEA Assistive Technology Team and how the WRDSB can come together across departments to support our schools and students. Currently they have been working in partnership with the French department to incorporate assistive technology for students with special education needs. Please find the upcoming RelATe parent technology sessions information for: [January](#), and [February](#).
- Jancie Heise-Clarkson (SEA Special Education Consultant) and Stephanie Ringwood (French Consultant) presented at the Modern Language Council on supporting multilingual learners and students with special needs in French programs. The focus is on ensuring students in both Core French and French Immersion who have special education needs have access to the necessary accommodations to support their learning and achievement alongside their peers. It specifically focused on showcasing the positive impact of technology with students with learning disabilities. We offer our thanks in recognition of the team's good work in the service of our students at the WRDSB.
- Last month the Math Consultants [presented](#) to SEAC, and they are currently partnering with our ACE team to work on new PD sessions. They are partnering to develop math kits and resources to support ACE classroom educators.
 - Feedback: Interested in seeing the math kits available
- Emily Gray (Mental Health Lead) [presented](#) to SEAC about mental health last spring on including a collaborative approach across the system and enhancing inclusive community partnerships. The team will continue to work with our consultants to provide direction and support through various strategies and services to our schools.

- There are more professional learning opportunities for staff at the WRDSB such as: UDL, IEP development, and sessions focusing on mental health.
- For the upcoming March PD day teachers and EA support staff will deepen their knowledge of ACE student learning profiles and the ACE program framework with the scope on alternative programming. They will also have a session on the Universal Supports Planning guide, the roles and responsibilities, identifying the guiding principles of their ACE classrooms, and how to work effectively as a team.
- Discussion
 - [Service Animals Presentation](#) - Presented by Jodi Albrecht (Superintendent, Student Achievement & Well-Being)
 - Highly trained and certified dogs to provide support for students in achieving their learning goals and daily living goals.
 - PPM 163, School Board policies on service animals.
 - Working dogs comply with a student's Accommodation Plan.
 - Feedback:
 - It is important students understand they are not pets and are working while at school.
 - There is a need to communicate the rules to everyone.
 - Samantha Estoesta (Trustee) provided that the CNIB provides a [Guide Dog Etiquette 101](#) resource to the community on Guide Dogs. Their program is strongly supported across the country.

Chair Report for discussion/feedback - Roberta Thompson: Stand In

- Association Reports: To be forwarded to future meetings where Associations can bring forward issues within an individual Association in relation to special education, for discussion amongst the SEAC group.

Trustee Report - Samantha Estoesta & Joe Meissner

- [Trustees Report](#)

Round Table Association Reports

- Carmen Sutherland, Waterloo Region Family Network
 - IEP workshop Jan 22, 2025 from 6:30-8 pm at the Family Centre.
Identifying your child's IEP. More information on our [website](#).
- Nancy Lau, Autism Ontario
 - [December Updates](#)
 - Webinar: Healthy Coping for Caregivers Using Acceptance & Commitment Therapy Strategies with Katy Albert
 - Tip sheet created for neuro-affirming learning environments
 - Tip Sheets have English and French resources for accessibility
- Jane Martin, Ontario Federation for Cerebral Palsy
 - Collecting clothing to earn money for the association.
- Roberta Thompson, Waterloo Wellington Down Syndrome Society
 - Prepping for winter programs listed on our [website](#).
 - [World Down Syndrome Day](#) is on March 21, 2025
 - We just had our Christmas Party which was a lot of fun.
- Jenn Checkley, Easter Seals Ontario
 - Easter Seals 2025 summer camp dates are out please follow the link <https://www.eastersealscamps.org/camp-schedule/>
 - Registration begins in January

Date of Next Meeting

The next SEAC meeting date is January 8, 2025 at 7:00 p.m.

Adjournment

Moved by Jane Martin, Seconded by Carmen Sutherland:

That the Special Education Advisory Committee meeting be adjourned.

- Carried -

The meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.