



Special Education Advisory Committee

Minutes - December 8, 2021

A meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) was held virtually on Wednesday, December 8, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. with the following members in attendance:

Trustees: Kathi Smith, Cindy Watson

Association Members: Jennifer Checkley (Easter Seals), Michelle Hughes (FASD/ONE Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder/Ontario Network of Expertise), Jane Martin (Ontario Federation of Cerebral Palsy), Sara Penny (Epilepsy South Central Ontario), Roberta Thompson (Waterloo Wellington Down Syndrome Society)

Association Alternates: Jeff Senior (Waterloo Wellington Down Syndrome Society), Shannon Taylor (Epilepsy South Central Ontario), Kathy Waybrant (Ontario Federation of Cerebral Palsy)

Non-Association Members: Deb Jack (Family & Children's Services - Indigenous Services), Selena Saini (WRDSB Student Representative), 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)

Guest: Mary Casagrande (Waterloo Wellington Down Syndrome Society)

Regrets: Dale Babiy (Autism Ontario), Christine MacDonald (Learning Disabilities Association of Wellington County), Angela Sider (Parents For Children's Mental Health - Waterloo Region), Sharon Weishar (Parents For Children's Mental Health - Waterloo Region)

Call to Order

Sara Penny called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Welcome - Sara Penny

Received a letter from member Kathy Moreland, FASD/ONE Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, indicating she will be resigning from SEAC. Thank you to Kathy for all her many contributions over the years and being such a valued member of the WRDSB SEAC.

Territorial Acknowledgement - Roberta Thompson

Approval of Agenda

Moved by Michelle Hughes, seconded by Carmen Sutherland:
That the agenda of the December 8, 2021 meeting, Special Education Advisory Committee meeting, be approved.

- Carried -

Approval of Minutes

Moved by Roberta Thompson, seconded by Shannon Taylor:
That the minutes of the November 10, 2021 meeting, Special Education Advisory Committee, be approved.

- Carried -

Business Arising from the Minutes

- None

SEAC Association Presentation - Mary Casagrande

- **Waterloo Wellington Down Syndrome Society**
 - [WWDSS Background Presentation](#)
 - Every year the calendar fundraiser has themes that showcase misconceptions of people with down syndrome

- The advocacy work is in trying to make people aware of all the wonderful things that people with down syndrome can do and their many strengths
- Most of the questions received from families are about communication with how best to deal with schools and families.

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

- [Special Incidence Portion Funding Changes for 2021-2022](#)
 - The Ministry has changed this year’s funding as they did last year wherein the school board will not be required to go through an application process. They have reviewed school boards across the province and have provided our board with \$125,000 for this year which is used for Paraprofessional Staffing
- WRDSB Special Education Guide Overview
 - Review of sections of the Special Education Guide on the staff internal website which includes the following:
 - Student Support Process, Distance Learning Supports, General Information, Support 4 Students, Transition Resources, Speech and Language Services, Psychological Services, Special Education Department Staff List, Calendar
 - Recording of professional development sessions are available online allowing staff to access at anytime
 - In the future we are planning to migrate some of this information to the external website, were it will be accessible to the community
- WRDSB IEP Resource Feedback
 - [Collaborating with Students and Families Consultation for IEP Development](#) - L. Gil to send out to members for review and request feedback

- Staffing and Funding Update
 - We have received covid relief funding for staffing that has been provided by the ministry in the amount of \$500,000. Half of the amount was provided at the beginning of the year and we will now receive the remaining funds. The money will be used for staffing resource teachers.
 - We also received \$600,000 for mental health support which half was also held back but we will be receiving the remaining funds. Some of this money will be used for staffing social workers, psychological staff, speech and language pathologists.
 - Currently we have 5000 students in remote learning in both elementary and secondary schools. We will be able to support these students as well with the additional funding we have received.
 - With Barbara Ward being seconded to work for School Mental Health Ontario, we have hired a temporary new Mental Health Lead, Gwenyth Le-Phuong. She was a Social Worker and previously Equity Officer with our board. We hope to have her attend one of our meetings in the new year.

Chair Report - Sara Penny

- [WRDSB Special Education Website Review](#) and [Feedback](#)
 - Reviewed and discussed updates to the website information from the feedback received
 - The idea of testimonials from SEAC members to add to the website was well received. Suggested in the new year to request this information from members to be added to the website.
 - Proposed to review other School Board SEAC websites from the Province at a future meeting for ideas on updating the WRDSB website.
- WRDSB SEAC Information Handbook Review
 - L. Gil to send out a copy of the current [handbook](#) and in January we will review feedback received

- Review draft WRDSB letter in support of [Trillium Lakelands DSB Letter](#) Re: Bill 172
 - [Letter to Minister of Education](#) approved by all members and will be sent out
- SEAC Elections - January 2022 - deferred to next meeting

Trustee Report - Cindy Watson

- [Proposed Motion](#) regarding suspension and expulsion reports
 - L. Gil will send the draft motion and will be reviewed at the January meeting. Hoping to take it to the Board in February once SEAC members have had a chance to provide feedback.

Round Table Association Reports

1. Jennifer Checkley - Easter Seals
 - Next year is Easter Seals Ontario Centennial as the society was founded in 1922.
 - Easter Seals Ontario is currently gathering testimonials from donors, volunteers, sponsors, former camp counsellors, past ambassadors, client families and any other types of supporter to help us capture the impact Easter Seals has had on many people's lives. The testimonials will be used within various promotional content to help celebrate and communicate our century-long legacy of making a meaningful difference for kids with physical disabilities and their families.
 - We want to know how you became involved with Easter Seals, whether you continue to be involved, and how your involvement impacted you and/or your family.
 - Below is the link for the testimonial survey. Please complete the survey and share with anyone else that you think has been impacted by Easter Seals Ontario.
 - Link to testimonial form: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/J9JBPHY>

2. Michelle Hughes, FASD/ONE Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder/Ontario Network of Expertise

- FASD Workers have been very busy with school fully resumed and the support of school teams making referrals for supports
- Continuing our work on single point of access for referral and diagnosis in Waterloo Region to launch spring 2022
- Increase in FASD Fundamentals training requests across the region for various sectors

3. Deb Jack - (Family & Children's Services - Indigenous Services)

- [Strength-Based Strategies for Challenges at School: Tools for Educators Who Support Indigenous Children and Youth](#) free training for educators being run by Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH)

Date of Next Meeting

The next SEAC meeting date is January 12, 2022 at 7:00 p.m.

Adjournment

Moved by Michelle Hughes, seconded by Kathi Smith:

That the Special Education Advisory Committee meeting be adjourned.

- Carried -

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.