



Special Education Advisory Committee

Minutes - February 14, 2024

A meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) was held virtually on Wednesday, February 14, 2024 at 7:00 p.m. with the following members in attendance:

Trustee: Samantha Estoesta, Joe Meissner

Association Members: Jennifer Checkley (Easter Seals), Nancy Lau & Ami McIntosh (Autism Ontario), Jane Martin (Ontario Federation of Cerebral Palsy), Shannon Taylor (Epilepsy South Central Ontario), Jeff Senior & Roberta Thompson (Waterloo Wellington Down Syndrome Society)

Non-Association Members: Carmen Sutherland (Waterloo Region Family Network), Huseyin Unver (YMCA of Three Rivers)

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

Guests: Lisa Weiler Haskins (Vice President of WRDSB Educational Assistants Association (EAA))

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), Sara Penny (Epilepsy South Central Ontario), Kathy Waybrant (Ontario Federation of Cerebral Palsy)

Call to Order

Roberta Thompson called the meeting to order at 7:11 p.m.

Welcome & Territorial Acknowledgement - Jodi Albrecht

- Welcomed guest Lisa Weiler Haskins, Vice President of WRDSB Educational Assistants Association (EAA) to the meeting. Has been the VP of the Association for the last four years. Attending in a capacity of personal learning for herself and the members that she supports.

Approval of Agenda

Moved by Nancy Lau, seconded by Carmen Sutherland:

That the agenda of the February 14, 2024 meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee, be approved.

- Carried -

Approval of Minutes

Moved by Roberta Thompson, seconded by Jennifer Checkley:

That the minutes of the January 10, 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

- Information
 - Labour Update
 - Negotiations for all groups are on-going. The Union for the Educational Assistants and Child & Youth Workers had a strike vote with 97% in agreement. This does not mean they are not in a strike position at this time; it was just the vote. It also doesn't mean there will be a strike; it is simply part of the process. This is at the Provincial level and we are still working locally on the negotiations. We are hopeful matters will get resolved and there will be no labour disruption.

- Discussion/Feedback
 - Policies for Committee Consultation
 - [Board Policy 3007 Membership in OPSBA](#)
 - No suggested changes
 - [Board Policy 4001 Opening of New Schools and Additions](#)
 - No suggested changes
 - [Board Policy 5003 Recognition of Retiring Employees](#)
 - 1.1 Update: “offer each retiring employee” to “offer each retiring staff” to be consistent throughout the document
 - [Board Policy 6001 Code of Conduct](#)
 - No suggested changes
 - The WRDSB has hired a new Mental Health Lead, Emily Gray, who previously worked at Camino. The prior Mental Health Lead was Gwentyth Le-Phuong, who is now the Psychology & Social Worker Lead. Emily will be invited to attend a SEAC meeting sometime this year.
 - Professional learning continues to happen within the system. The following PD are examples of the learning taking place:
 - Special Education Resource Teachers are participating in a four part series of sessions. They are committed to this work and are seen as leaders in their schools. They assist with the student support process and gather feedback.
 - The Alternative Continuum of Education (ACE) teachers and ACE Educational Assistants (EA) teams had a PD session together. This collaboration has been well received by the teachers and EAs and a good learning opportunity.
 - Professional Development has continued for the ACE teachers including a session with a format of a carousel with breakout sessions.

- The Geneva Centre for Autism has provided funding to the WRDSB to provide online virtual training and education to our staff. This would include classroom teachers (Gr. K-2), Special Education Resource Teachers (SERTs), administrators and central Special Education staff. The trained staff will be able to help support this learning in their schools once courses are completed. The courses include:
 1. Core Teaching Strategies for Autistic Students
 2. ADHD in the Classroom: Supporting Student Success
 3. Supporting Play Based Learning for Kids with ASD
- The recruitment letter for students to attend SEAC has been shared with secondary schools. To date we haven't received any volunteers. It has been suggested that if students are unable to attend our meetings, they could participate in other ways such as providing a video.
- Future agenda items will include presentations for the Structured Literacy Multi-Year Plan and de-streaming in secondary schools.

Chair Report - Shannon Taylor

- [Peterborough Victoria Northumberland and Clarington CDSB Letter](#) to Ministry Re: Supporting Students with Special Education Needs
 - Reviewed the letter and members agreed to send a letter in support of the letter sent by the PVNC Catholic Special Education Advisory Committee to the Ministry
 - S. Taylor will follow-up with J. Albrecht to prepare the letter for review by SEAC members
- Review Letter in Support of Hastings and Prince Edward DSB letter
 - Reviewed letter and all members agreed to send the letter on to the Ministry of Education and copy to all Chairs of the Ontario School Boards Special Education Advisory Committees

- Review SEAC Information Documents
 - S. Taylor will review documents and send them to members for further feedback
- Air Quality Committee
 - S. Taylor has attended two meetings with the Air Quality Committee. It's a large group of members with diverse perspectives. Members are encouraged to reach out to S. Taylor or Trustee J. Meissner if there are any concerns they would like to bring forward to the committee that they can share. Will advocate for students with special education needs.

Trustee Report - Samantha Estoesta & Joe Meissner

- During the February 12, 2024 Committee of the Whole meeting, J. Meissner brought forward a motion to write a letter to the Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education (MACSE) to inquire about multiple and long-standing vacancies and what is planned to fill these vacancies. The Motion was approved by Trustees and will be ratified at the next Board meeting.

Round Table Association Reports

1. Carmen Sutherland, Waterloo Region Family Network
 - Kaleidoscope Kids will be starting again on February 27 at Roger Street EarlyON. See attached [flyer](#). While this is a drop-in program, because it is at EarlyON, those attending will be required to register with KEyON in advance of attending or when they arrive.
 - Camp Fairs in partnership with KidsAbility were well attended and received in January and early February. The information and recordings can now be found on the KidsAbility [website](#).
2. Nancy Lau, Autism Ontario
 - [February Updates & Upcoming Events](#)

3. Jenn Checkley - Easter Seals

- Easter Seals Ontario Summer Camp registration is open until March 31, 2024 and there are still spots available. See [flyer](#) and visit the [website](#) for more information.

4. Roberta Thompson, Waterloo Wellington Down Syndrome Society

- Continuing planning for World Down Syndrome Day on March 21st, 2024. Will provide resources to be shared with schools when they are ready.

Date of Next Meeting

The next SEAC meeting date is March 6, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.

Adjournment

Moved by Ami McIntosh, seconded by Roberta Thompson:

That the Special Education Advisory Committee meeting be adjourned.

- Carried -

The meeting adjourned at 8:41 p.m.