



## Special Education Advisory Committee

Minutes - February 9, 2022

A meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) was held virtually on Wednesday, February 9, 2022 at 7:00 p.m. with the following members in attendance:

**Trustee:** Cindy Watson

**Association Members:** Jennifer Checkley (Easter Seals), Jane Martin (Ontario Federation of Cerebral Palsy), Christine MacDonald (Learning Disabilities Association of Wellington County), Sara Penny (Epilepsy South Central Ontario), Angela Sider (Parents For Children's Mental Health - Waterloo Region), Roberta Thompson (Waterloo Wellington Down Syndrome Society)

**Association Alternates:** Shannon Taylor (Epilepsy South Central Ontario)

**Non-Association Members:** Deb Jack (Family & Children's Services - Indigenous Services), 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)

**Guests:** Lori Artinger (WRDSB Teacher), Melanie Gravel (WRDSB Speech-Language Pathologist Lead), Kristen Montague-Dawson (Parents for Children's Mental Health)

**Regrets:** Dale Babiy (Autism Ontario), Michelle Hughes (FASD/ONE Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder/Ontario Network of Expertise), Selena Saini (WRDSB Student Representative), Jeff Senior (Waterloo Wellington Down Syndrome Society), Kathi Smith (Trustee), Kathy Waybrant (Ontario Federation of Cerebral Palsy)

### Call to Order

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

## **Welcome & Territorial Acknowledgement - Scott Miller**

### **Approval of Agenda**

Moved by Angela Sider, seconded by Sara Penny:

That the agenda of the February 9, 2022 meeting, Special Education Advisory Committee meeting, be approved.

- Carried -

### **Approval of Minutes**

Moved by Sara Penny, seconded by Jennifer Checkley:

That the minutes of the January 12, 2022 meeting, Special Education Advisory Committee, be approved.

- Carried -

### **Business Arising from the Minutes**

- None

### **Equity & Inclusion Advisory Group Updates - Carmen Sutherland**

- Has been a member of EIAG for 1.5 years and on a learning journey with everyone
- Current discussion items for this past year include the following:
  - Review of Ontario Federation of Student Athletic Association (OFSAA) Gender Equity Policy. Advocating for transgender, male/female sports, religious dress, and accessibility for disabilities under this policy.
  - Advising on the revisions to the Student Dress Code Policy
  - Input on Board Policy 4020 - Naming and Renaming of Board Facilities
  - Student Trustee Elections and Student Senate trying to be more equitable and changing to Student Roundtable format instead
  - Received funding for a Graduation Coach Program for Black Students
  - Inclusive and representative books and resources in school library review are taking place. EIAG members see the actions of the board as

necessary steps towards creating a learning environment in which everyone, regardless of who they are, sees themselves reflected in learning materials.

- Focusing on decentering specific traditional holiday celebrations
- Provide feedback on the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)
- Continued work with Indigenous groups, Ontario Human Rights Commission, anti-racism and anti-oppression

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

- Budget Update (2022/2023)
  - All contracts end on August 31, 2022. Next school year will be a bargaining year and often contract negotiations go well into the new school year.
  - Contracts provided additional funding - funding was used for mental health and special education support/staff
  - The government provides yearly funding through the General Student Needs (GNS) and Priorities and Partnership Funding (PPF)
- Revised PPM 81 (Draft)
  - The government will be revising Policy/Program Memorandum 81: Provision of health support services in school setting (PPM 81)
  - Some of the key objectives of the review are:
    - Strengthening evidence-based practices
    - Improving access to health, rehabilitation and other community-based clinical services for students with special needs in schools
    - Clarifying role and responsibilities to address gaps in service
  - Ongoing consultation to various groups and organizations. Directors of Education and Superintendents have met as well to provide feedback.
  - Work that was previously done by nurses and PSWs will now potentially default to School Board staff

- Who will provide the training for injection, medication dispensing, catheterization and suctioning that will now require staff to potentially do this?
- With the current procedure of students having a plan of care in schools it has provided better support for students
- The PPM is not finished yet and is in the preliminary stages with possible implementation to start September 2022
- All staff have a duty of care to support students in any medical situation
- [WRDSB Speech-Language Pathology Services Presentation](#) - Melanie Gravel, Speech-Language Pathologist Lead
  - We provide family support with foundational skills
  - There is an equity issue for marginalized families and an increase in case loads with students not having access to support outside of the board
  - The Right to Read Report will be coming out where we can further strengthen our work with the speech and language team to help implement this work and support
- Practices to Build On
  - Short term virtual learning program ends on Friday, February 11, 2022
  - Most students have returned to in person learning
  - Students are also opting out of remote learning and returning to school

### **Chair Report - Sara Penny**

- WRDSB Special Education Website Testimonials
  - Encouraged members to connect with their associations to provide testimonials regarding their involvement with SEAC so that they can be added to our WRDSB SEAC website. They can be anonymous to provide privacy.
- [District School Board of Niagara Letter to Ministry](#) Re: School Nursing Shortage
  - Reviewed letter - our board has not experienced the nursing shortage in our region as others have. Sara Penny to draft a letter in support.

- [Ottawa-Carleton DSB Letter to Ministry](#) Re: Recommendations for PPM 81
  - Reviewed letter - Members support the idea of being included in the consultation process. Sara Penny will connect with Melanie Gravel, WRDSB Speech-Language Pathologist Lead, to provide guidance in drafting a letter in support.

All below items deferred to March 9, 2022 meeting:

- WRDSB SEAC Information Handbook Review
- [PAAC on SEAC Funding Resource Guide](#)
- [Halton DSB Letter to Ministry](#) Re: Support of Bill 172
- [Algoma DSB Letter to Ministry](#) Re: Support of Bill 172
- [Halton DSB Letter to Ministry](#) Re: Amending Immunization

## **Trustee Report - Cindy Watson**

- Proposed Motion [Suspension & Expulsion Reports](#)
  - Quarterly and yearly information is provided by the Board
  - Conversations with parents showed there was a struggle with knowing the process
  - We can target support if we know the percentage of students with exceptionalities
  - Hoping we can send it to other SEACs and they would find this helpful
  - Members are supportive of this Motion and wanting to take this forward to the Board of Trustees
  - The reports currently indicate where the incident took place that the student was suspended for eg. classroom, behaviour class, playground

## **Round Table Association Reports**

1. Angela Sider, Parents For Children's Mental Health - Waterloo Region
  - Kristen Montague-Dawson will be the new alternate and a letter will be provided to request this update for PCMH on SEAC

2. Roberta Thompson, Waterloo Wellington Down Syndrome Society

- The WWDSS board members are excited to offer a series of sessions regarding Sexuality and Relationships presented by Alison Cascagnette, an employment instructor/LEG Up teacher at KW Habilitation. These sessions will be designed specifically for our teenagers and young adults, but older adults or pre-teens may also find the information relevant. A parent information session will be held February 17th, event registration is now open.
- World Down Syndrome Day plans are in action! This year our slogan is “See the person, see the ability”, it will be a community campaign where we will go into communities and provide advocacy pieces, ie, lawn signs, lighting up City Halls, information kits with books for community schools to share with their libraries and classes. Along with the awareness media campaign in March.
- Our programs remain virtual; Speech and Social Skills groups, Teen Hangouts, and Young Adult programming, We hope to see everyone in person in the spring.

3. Carmen Sutherland, Waterloo Region Family Network

- Artful Connection - Expressive Arts experiences to our community of caregivers. See [flyer](#) for more details.

4. Sara Penny, Epilepsy South Central Ontario

- Epilepsy Awareness Event on February 27th, 2022 from 1-5 p.m. at Crooked Cue. Tickets are \$20.00 and can be purchased at <https://trellis.org/awareness-2022>
- The 2022 Purple Gala is taking place on March 26, 2022 from 6:00 p.m. - 12:00 a.m. at the Credit Valley Country Club
- Will be running a Sunny Days Youth Camp in the KW Region this summer and will provide more information once it becomes available

## **Date of Next Meeting**

The next SEAC meeting date is March 9, 2022 at 7:00 p.m.

## **Adjournment**

Moved by Angela Sider, seconded by Jennifer Checkley:

That the Special Education Advisory Committee meeting be adjourned.

- Carried -

The meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.