



## Special Education Advisory Committee

Minutes - January 10, 2024

A meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) was held virtually on Wednesday, January 10, 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 (Autism Ontario), Christine MacDonald (Learning Disabilities Association of Wellington County), Jane Martin (Ontario Federation of Cerebral Palsy), Sara Penny & Shannon Taylor (Epilepsy South Central Ontario), 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:** Donna MacCallum (KW Special Olympics), Jayden Miller-Boothe (Manager, School & Youth Program - Special Olympics Ontario)

**Regrets:** Lisa Bonnell (Ontario Parents of Visually Impaired Children), Michelle Hughes (FASD/ONE Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder/Ontario Network of Expertise), Ami McIntosh (Autism Ontario), Jeff Senior (Waterloo Wellington Down Syndrome Society), Kathy Waybrant (Ontario Federation of Cerebral Palsy)

### Call to Order

Shannon Taylor called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**Welcome & Territorial Acknowledgement - Stephen McCrae**

## **Approval of Agenda**

Moved by Sara Penny, seconded by Roberta Thompson:  
That the agenda of the January 10, 2024 meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee, be approved.

- Carried -

## **Approval of Minutes**

Moved by Roberta Thompson, seconded by Carmen Sutherland:  
That the minutes of the December 13, 2023 meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee, be approved.

- Carried -

## **Business Arising from the Minutes**

- None

## **Special Olympics Program Presentation (information)**

Guests: Donna MacCallum, KW Special Olympics & Jayden Miller-Boothe,  
Manager, School & Youth Program - Special Olympics Ontario

- The website provides details on upcoming activities and how to register an athlete or become a volunteer coach, <https://kw.specialolympicsontario.ca/>
- The fall/winter sports have started: pickleball, 10 pin bowling, 5 pin bowling, basketball, floor hockey, cross country, snowshoeing, nordic downhill and powerlifting
- There are still openings and they welcome additional athletes to floor hockey, 10 pin bowling, cross country, snowshoe, nordic and basketball
- They are open to meeting with the SEAC local associations accompanied by a Special Olympics athlete ambassador to talk about the Special Olympics experience and impact on health, social/emotional and mental health mindset
- Reminder that KW is hosting the Special Olympics Provincial Spring games taking place May 23-26, 2024. They are looking for volunteers to assist with a variety of tasks over the course of the games. Visit the website to fill in a

form, provide 2 references, have a Police Vulnerability check completed online, and sign off on the Code of Conduct and Liability waiver, [www1.specialolympicsontario.com](http://www1.specialolympicsontario.com)

- They would like to arrange another Open House in the Spring for students, parents, and teachers from WRDSB to acquaint everyone with the community based sporting activities. They would also like the opportunity to visit high schools and Special Education classrooms.
- Thank you for supporting the KW - Special Olympics Ontario Open House held in May 2023 wherein they met about fifty people, families, students and teachers
- Please share any other ideas SEAC members have to continue to build and bring awareness so that they can move forward engaging more athletes and parents with the KW - Special Olympics Ontario experience, contact D. MacCallum [dmaccallum02@gmail.com](mailto:dmaccallum02@gmail.com) and J. Miller-Boothe [jaydenm@specialolympicsontario.com](mailto:jaydenm@specialolympicsontario.com)
- Special Olympics Ontario
  - [Special Olympics Information Session Presentation](#)
  - [School Programs Booklet](#)
  - [What are Special Olympics School Programs Flyer](#)
  - [Kitchener & Waterloo Future Events](#)
  - Visit the Website to get additional information, resources and registration information on the events calendar - <https://www1.specialolympicsontario.com/schools/>
- J. Albrecht, D. MacCallum and J. Miller-Boothe will be meeting at the end of January to discuss how the WRDSB can get involved and support the Special Olympics in our schools

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

- Information
  - Labour Update
    - All groups are continuing to engage in local negotiations. There has been no disruption for students during the negotiation process.
  - EQAO
    - 2022-2023 EQAO Report to Board [Presentation](#)
    - All students write the EQAO testing including students with an IEP. Some students may be exempt from participating in the testing. Teachers and administrators review these requests on a case by case basis.
    - Continued work and evaluation is being done as to how best to support students through the EQAO process
    - Students can participate in other assessments to see where they are at such as PISA. PISA is the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment. PISA measures 15-year-olds' ability to use their reading, mathematics and science knowledge and skills to meet real-life challenges. Visit the website for more information: <https://www.oecd.org/pisa/>
- Discussion/Feedback
  - SEAC letter for Parent IEP guide
    - During our December meeting we discussed an IEP Family Guide which would be in the form of a pamphlet that would go home with all students at the beginning of the school year along with the SEAC information pamphlet. This would also be posted on the website.
    - We are continuing to gather information from other groups and once we have an updated document, we will bring this information back to SEAC for further review and feedback

## **Chair Report - Shannon Taylor**

- Bringing website information back to February
  - R. Thompson, S. Taylor, S. Penny and J. Checkley will continue to work on the SEAC information documents and will bring this back to our February meeting for further review
  - Discussion regarding a powerpoint slide presentation that could be sent to administrators to share with the school parent council
  - Acknowledged that we want to make the information on the documents to be in simple terms as what they can expect from SEAC and how SEAC can support families/caregivers
  - These documents can also help support teachers to have information they can provide to families
  - Once all complete, the Communications Department will assist with updating the documents on the website
- [Hastings and Prince Edward DSB Letter to Ministry of Education](#)
  - Reviewed the letter and members agreed to send a letter in support of the letter sent by the Hastings and Prince Edward DSB to the Ministry
  - S. Taylor will follow-up with J. Albrecht to prepare the letter for review by SEAC

## **Trustee Report - Samantha Estoesta & Joe Meissner**

- J. Meissner - during our December meeting, we discussed that there are a number of Minister's Advisory Council Special Education (MACSE) vacancies. On the website it indicates that there are 5 vacancies. At the next board meeting J. Meissner & S. Estoesta will discuss the Board supporting a letter to be sent inquiring why the vacancies haven't been filled, what they are doing to get these positions filled and if the information is up to date on the website.

- S. Estoesta - Currently working with the Policy Review Committee using Lexicon on the best way to list a person's identity as well as consistent use of the term of families/caregivers when updating policies. Will provide an update once they have further information.

## Round Table Association Reports

1. Carmen Sutherland, Waterloo Region Family Network
  - Spectrum on the Spectrum - A Social Group for queer and trans people in the autistic community. Drop-in group sessions on the 4th Thursday of every month. See [flyer](#) for more information.
  - Virtual Camp Fair 2024 - Discover summer camp opportunities for children and youth with special needs. See [flyer](#) for more information.
2. Nancy Lau, Autism Ontario
  - [January Updates & Upcoming Events](#)
3. Jenn Checkley - Easter Seals
  - Easter Seals Ontario Summer Camp registration will be open on January 15, 2024 to March 31, 2024. See [flyer](#) and visit the [website](#) for more information.
4. Roberta Thompson, Waterloo Wellington Down Syndrome Society
  - Registration for a specialized camp for our members with Down syndrome begins January 19th
  - We are getting ready for World Down Syndrome Day - we will have digital resources for teachers in elementary school (google slides). More details to come.
  - Leg Up - Abuse awareness program starts January 25 - March 31st. Partnership with KW Rehabilitation (Ages 13+)
  - Mothers Connection - group started this week, supporting Moms with young children with Down Syndrome, childcare provided. (Go to [WWDSS.ca](#) or email [info@wwdss.ca](mailto:info@wwdss.ca) for more information).
  - Speech and Social Skills classes begin the week of January 13th. Age ranges from 1 to Young Adults.

- For more information about programs, visit: [www.wwdss.ca](http://www.wwdss.ca)
- Idea Exchange, Clemens Mill is opening a Multi Sensory Room, January 27th - Family Literacy Day. It's a bookable space (free), open to the public.

### **Date of Next Meeting**

The next SEAC meeting date is February 14, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.

### **Adjournment**

Moved by Roberta Thompson, seconded by Sara Penny:

That the Special Education Advisory Committee meeting be adjourned.

- Carried -

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.