



## Special Education Advisory Committee

Minutes - January 12, 2022

A meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) was held virtually on Wednesday, January 12, 2022 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), Angela Sider (Parents For Children's Mental Health - Waterloo Region), 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:** 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:** jeewan chanicka (WRDSB Director of Education), Melanie Gravel (WRDSB Speech-Language Pathologist Lead), Karen Huber (FASD Waterloo Region - Sunbeam)

**Regrets:** Dale Babiy (Autism Ontario), Deb Jack (Family & Children's Services - Indigenous Services), Christine MacDonald (Learning Disabilities Association of Wellington County), Selena Saini (WRDSB Student Representative)

### Call to Order

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

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

### **Guest: Director of Education - jeewan chanicka**

- Provided personal reflections about the importance of the special education program
- There is ongoing work to engage with educators and students, especially those who have been the most marginalized in our system
- Challenges with the structure that we need to think of a different way of supporting children with special/identified needs
- We need to understand what can be learned from a child with special needs and acknowledge the gift that a child is giving with the challenges they face
- Thanked members of SEAC for their significant role and commitment to this work
- Challenged the group to think of ways of how we can rethink special education structurally so the students can reach their full potential
- Acknowledge staff who have rallied for students these last couple of weeks who continue to be on our minds and in planning as to how we can do better

### **Approval of Agenda**

Moved by Michelle Hughes, seconded by Carmen Sutherland:

That the agenda of the January 12, 2022 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 December 8, 2021 meeting, Special Education Advisory Committee, be approved.

- Carried -

## **Business Arising from the Minutes**

- None

## **SEAC Association Presentation - Michelle Hughes & Karen Huber**

- **FASD Waterloo Region (Sunbeam) - Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Ontario Network of Expertise**
  - [FASD Fundamentals Presentation](#)

## **Discussion Item**

- [Suspension & Expulsion Reports](#)
  - Reviewed proposed Motion and SEAC Members were supportive
  - SEAC felt that being able to collect this data is important to have and a positive step
  - SEAC believes this information would allow for identification to happen that would help with analysis and can provide different outcomes for students
  - Recognized this will be difficult for administrators to do this work with the current demand on school administrators
  - Recognize there may be barriers to understanding the data
  - The Board is migrating to a new student information system for 2022-2023 is this information that will be available?
  - Scott Miller will follow up with Trustee Watson

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

- Return to School Update
  - Students with special education needs in the ACE classrooms had the opportunity to attend school in person during the week of January 10-14
  - Staff worked collaboratively to get things organized for ACE students to return to school
  - N95 masks were provided to the ACE program staff

- All students will be able to return to in person learning on January 17th
- Feedback from families is mixed some are happy the students are returning and others have concerns
- We continue to focus on helping support student's well being through a trauma informed approach
- Funding was released for the second half of the school year and additional staff has been added (social workers, psychologist and speech-language pathologists)
- Contact tracing expectations for COVID 19 has changed and we are still formalizing the new expectations for staff and students
- Staffing is a concern to make sure that we have staff to support students
- School and classroom closures are a possibility depending on circumstances
- Communications Department will continue to provide any updates through website and emails for families
- Positive feedback received that the Board has had good practices as to how we have communicated to schools

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

All items deferred to February 9, 2022 meeting.

- WRDSB Special Education Website Testimonials
- WRDSB [SEAC Information Handbook](#) Review
- [Halton DSB Letter to Ministry](#) Re: Support of Bill 172
- [Halton DSB Letter to Ministry](#) Re: Amending Immunization
- [District School Board of Niagara Letter to Ministry](#) Re: School Nursing Shortage
- [Ottawa-Carleton DSB Letter to Ministry](#) Re: Recommendations for PPM 81

### **Trustee Report**

- None

## Round Table Association Reports

### 1. Jennifer Checkley, Easter Seals

- Summer Camp Applications open on Tuesday, January 18th at 9:00 a.m.

See link for more information:

<https://www.eastersealscamps.org/programs/summer-2022-camp-information>

### 2. Jane Martin, Ontario Federation of Cerebral Palsy

- [OFCP Funding Programs 2022](#)

- [Assistive Devices Funding Program opening January 31, 2022](#) -

Funding to access life-changing assistive devices and equipment up to \$2000

- [Life Emergency Action Fund opening January 17, 2022](#) - One time

assistance up to \$500 to help members access financial assistance to enrich, enhance or augment an activity the member currently participates in or is interested in. OFCP will try and accommodate each request as it pertains to the COVID-19 emergency situation

- [COVID 19 Vaccine Support Fund opening January 17, 2022](#) - One

time assistance up to \$200 to help members cover additional expenses with receiving the vaccine

### 3. Angela Sider, Parents For Children's Mental Health - Waterloo Region

- Sharon Weishar, alternate member from Parents For Children's Mental Health - Waterloo Region, has resigned from SEAC. Will be providing new association member updates when people are in place.

### 4. Roberta Thompson, Waterloo Wellington Down Syndrome Society

- The association is currently working on getting things ready for World Down Syndrome Day on March 21, 2022 which is a global awareness day

### 5. Carmen Sutherland, Waterloo Region Family Network

- Waterloo Region Family Network and KidsAbility Present the [Virtual Camp Fair](#)

- Monday, January 24, at 7 p.m. will be the Virtual Camp Fair for Waterloo Region Day Camps for children ages 4-12. [Register using this link](#)
- Monday, February 28 at 7 p.m. will be the Virtual Camp Fair for Teens and Adults, where there will be discussion of Day Camps, Day Programs and Getaways. [Register using this link](#)
- You will receive the Zoom link on the day of the event. Contact [sue.furey@wrfn.info](mailto:sue.furey@wrfn.info) for more details.

### **Date of Next Meeting**

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

### **Adjournment**

Moved by Michelle Hughes, seconded by Angela Sider:

That the Special Education Advisory Committee meeting be adjourned.

- Carried -

The meeting adjourned at 9:07 p.m.