



Special Education Advisory Committee

Minutes - June 14, 2023

A meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) was held virtually on Wednesday, June 14, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. with the following members in attendance:

Association Members: Jennifer Checkley (Easter Seals), Christine MacDonald (Learning Disabilities Association of Wellington County), Sara Penny & Shannon Taylor (Epilepsy South Central Ontario), Jeff Senior & Roberta Thompson (Waterloo Wellington Down Syndrome Society), Huseyin Unver (YMCA of Three Rivers)

Non-Association Members: Carmen Sutherland (Waterloo Region Family Network)

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

Guest: Deb Johnson (WRDSB Parent)

Regrets: Lisa Bonnell (Ontario Parents of Visually Impaired Children), Michelle Hughes (FASD/ONE Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder/Ontario Network of Expertise), Carla Johnson (Trustee), Jane Martin & Kathy Waybrant (Ontario Federation of Cerebral Palsy), Stephen McCrae (System Administrator)

Call to Order

S. Penny called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

Welcome & Territorial Acknowledgement - Jodi Albrecht

Approval of Agenda

Moved by Roberta Thompson, seconded by Jennifer Checkley:

That the agenda of the June 14, 2023 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 May 10, 2023 meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee, be approved.

- Carried -

Business Arising from the Minutes

- Jennifer Checkley, Easter Seals, acknowledged and appreciated the WRDSB Communications Department and SEAC Association members sharing the information about National AccessAbility Week which took place May 28-June 3

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

- Labour Update - nothing new to report
- Vote for SEAC Chair 2023-2024
 - Sara Penny is resigning as Chair of SEAC and will continue as an Association member. We thank her for her continued work on the committee for the past number of years.
 - We will vote on a new Chair for SEAC at our next meeting in September
- Year end updates
 - When reflecting on the year, we acknowledge the challenges we had with transportation due to the cyber attack and driver shortage. We are grateful for all the staff and STSWR for getting our special education students to school. We are in much better shape now and hope to have a smooth start in September.
 - Congregated classes had some issues at the beginning of the year with fail to fills and EA shortages
 - The board has done a great deal of growing and learning with respect to remote learning and special education needs. Remote Learning Programs will be available to students for the 2023-2024 school year.
 - Continued work is being done with the Accessibility Plan. Esther Wainaina, Human Rights Officer, enjoyed presenting to SEAC and is grateful for the feedback received.

- The Board is seeing budget pressures as we move into the new school year. We are pleased with what we are able to maintain. All congregated programs remain open, no reduction to Educational Assistants, Speech & Language Pathologists, Resource Teachers, Child & Youth Workers and Social Workers. We have student support funding through grants that will help to keep this staff in place to allow them to continue to support our students.
- We have grant funding to allow continued work for Right to Read
- Lynette Eulette, our Psychology Lead, will be retiring this summer. We are in the process of interviewing. The role is shifting to a Psychology & Social Worker Lead. Depending on the clinical background the position will also have clinical oversight as well.
- Unfortunately the Special Olympics was cancelled on June 12th, 2023 due to the weather
- The 2023-2024 school year calendar has been approved and information can be found on the [website](#). The first day of school is Wednesday, September 6th, 2023. Mandatory training for staff will be on the PD Day for elementary and secondary on Tuesday, September 5, 2023.
- Thank you to all the members on SEAC for their work on the committee this past year
- Special Education Plan Update
 - Will be working on updating the Special Education Plan with our Communications Department during the summer.
- Next year's meetings
 - In September we can discuss if members want to continue to have the meetings take place virtually. We want to be supportive of what works best for everyone.

Chair Report

- WRDSB updates
 - The working group will be meeting next week to get all documents ready to be shared with members and the Communications Department to be updated on the website
- Letters
 - SIP letter has been updated and ready to be sent to the Ministry and all Ontario SEACs
 - We would like to have Student Ambassadors be part of our committee to allow for student voice. We are in the process of preparing a letter for teachers to send to their students who would want to be part of SEAC. The commitment could be for 2 months, a semester or how long they are able to participate.

Trustee Report

- A Special Budget meeting is taking place at the same time as SEAC and therefore no Trustees were able to attend

Round Table Association Reports

1. Jennifer Checkley, Easter Seals
 - Easter Seals has a few spaces left in individual camps this summer. There are also 3 sessions of Voyageur camp for ages 26-36 which is great news for young adults.
 - Responses to National Accessibility Week and Red Shirt Day were varied across the province (thanks WRDSB for promoting it well!). Easter Seals will be sending a follow-up survey to participating school boards.
 - Easter Seals is continuing to advocate to the Ministry re: there has been no representative for physical disabilities on MACSE for three years now.
2. Roberta Thompson, Waterloo Wellington Down Syndrome Society
 - 10th annual golf tournament - successful event , 100 people attended
 - Preparing for Any Which Way You Can Fundraiser, starts in September

3. Sara Penny - Epilepsy South Central Ontario

- Epilepsy South Central Ontario's Sunny Days Camp is a weekly day camp for children living with epilepsy and their siblings aged 5-14 years. When other camps say no to children with epilepsy or seizure disorders, Epilepsy South Central Ontario says absolutely! Our children's day camp now runs in two locations – Mississauga and Kitchener. Visit the [website](#) for more details.

4. Carmen Sutherland, Waterloo Region Family Network (WRFN)

- There is a [Housing Forum](#) event taking place on June 20th from 1-6 p.m. at the DoubleTree on Fairway Road. They have added a few additional spots if people are still interested. To learn more and register go to link: <https://wrfn.info/CommunityNewsAndUpdates/Housing-Forum.htm>

Date of Next Meeting

The next SEAC meeting date is September 13, 2023 at 7:00 p.m.

Adjournment

Moved by Roberta Thompspon, seconded by Carmen Sutherland:

That the Special Education Advisory Committee meeting be adjourned.

- Carried -

The meeting adjourned at 7:46 p.m.