



## Special Education Advisory Committee

Minutes - March 6, 2024

A meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) was held virtually on Wednesday, March 6, 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), Shannon Taylor (Epilepsy South Central Ontario)

**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)

**Guest:** 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), Jane Martin & Kathy Waybrant (Ontario Federation of Cerebral Palsy), Sara Penny (Epilepsy South Central Ontario), Jeff Senior & Roberta Thompson (Waterloo Wellington Down Syndrome Society)

### Call to Order

Shannon Taylor called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

## **Welcome & Territorial Acknowledgement - Stephen McCrae**

### **Approval of Agenda**

Moved by Carmen Sutherland, seconded by Jennifer Checkley:

That the agenda of the March 6, 2024 meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee, be approved.

- Carried -

### **Approval of Minutes**

Moved by Nancy Lau, seconded by Jennifer Checkley:

That the minutes of the February 14, 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
    - All groups are continuing to engage in local negotiations
  - PD Update
    - [Alternative Continuum of Education \(ACE\) PD Presentation](#)
    - Acknowledged the hard work and effort of the ACE team in providing the PD to staff. Staff were pleased with the sessions and we will be looking at the possibilities for PD for next year.
    - Met with the EA union representatives, Lisa Weiler Haskins and Colleen Dietrich Sisson along with other WRDSB staff to review the EA allocation process. Also shared the PD provided to ACE EAs and discussed next steps as to how we can best support our EAs next year.

- Conference Update
  - Dismantling Ableism in Education Symposium is taking place on May 30, 2024 at Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo. Save the date and a formal invitation will be sent to SEAC members in April. The Symposium Committee is in the process of confirming the presenters and volunteers. There will be orientation and training provided for presenters.
  - The Waterloo Region Family Network is currently working on a logo for the Symposium
  - An update will be provided at our next meeting
- Staffing Update
  - The WRDSB is in a deficit and therefore having to look at changes in spending in order to balance the budget for next year.
  - The WRDSB is waiting for the funding allocation for next year where we receive Grants for Student Needs (GSN) and temporary funding through grants to finalize staffing decisions. Last year we received the funding late which resulted in some staff having to return to schools late in the school year.
- Solar Eclipse
  - A [message](#) was shared on the board website regarding the April 8 - Eclipse - Supporting Student Learning and Safety. The eclipse will begin at 2:03 p.m. for the Waterloo Region and will end at 4:30 p.m. The WRDSB has decided to keep the schools open as planned.
  - This is a once in a lifetime educational experience and we have central team staff who are developing some great lessons about the solar eclipse which will be shared with schools.

- We will have safety precautions to share with administrators and eclipse viewing glasses will be provided to some groups of students.
- Discussion/Feedback - none

#### **Chair Report - Shannon Taylor**

- Review WRDSB SEAC Letter in Support of [Peterborough Victoria Northumberland and Clarington CDSB Letter](#)
  - Members reviewed the draft [letter](#) and agreed with the contents. L. Gil will send the letter on to the Ministry of Education and a copy will be sent to all Chairs of the Ontario School Boards Special Education Advisory Committees.
- Suggestion to review our current membership on SEAC and reach out to associations that are missing. How can we get more associations to join as a member of SEAC? The Waterloo Catholic District School Board has representation from the Waterloo Regional Police and would be a good addition to the WRDSB SEAC. Reach out to S. Taylor if you have any ideas.

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

- S. Estoesta - A [message](#) was posted on the WRDSB website regarding the 2022-2023 Safe, Caring and Inclusive School Survey Summary Report. Encouraged members to review the important information.
- J. Meissner - On March 4, 2024, Trustees had the opportunity to visit the Alternative and Continuing Education sites. It was an excellent opportunity to learn about the many programs being provided to students. This also included student voice from the students in the program. It was uplifting to hear their experiences and hearing their success stories. Acknowledged Karen Moore, System Administrator and Deb Derman, Vice-Principal for organizing this event.

## Round Table Association Reports

1. Carmen Sutherland, Waterloo Region Family Network
  - Kaleidoscope Kids on Tuesdays at 9:30-10:30 a.m. at EarlyOn, 161 Roger Street, Waterloo. See [flyer](#) for more details.
  - Spectrum on the Spectrum - A Social Group for queer and trans people in the autistic community! See [flyer](#) for more details.
  - Evening of Elegance Annual Signature Fundraising Event on April 19, 2024. See [flyer](#) for more information & to purchase [tickets](#).
2. Nancy Lau, Autism Ontario
  - [March Updates & Upcoming Events](#)
3. Jenn Checkley - Easter Seals
  - For promotion of **Red Shirt Day**, we need more testimonials about student experiences at school both positive and challenging. Please complete this form and share your experiences: [Share Your Insights on Disability Accessibility and Inclusion in Ontario Schools](#)
  - Red Shirt Day of Action for Accessibility and Action is coming up on May 29. [Link](#) to order Red Shirt Day merchandise (early bird discount available until March 18)
4. Shannon Taylor, Epilepsy South Central Ontario
  - moJJa Socks is teaming up with Epilepsy South Central Ontario to raise funds through the sale of the purple ribbon socks for Sunny Days Camp. Visit the [website](#) for more details.

## Date of Next Meeting

The next SEAC meeting date is April 10, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.

## Adjournment

Moved by Jennifer Checkley, seconded by Carmen Sutherland:

That the Special Education Advisory Committee meeting be adjourned.

- Carried -

The meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.