



Special Education Advisory Committee

Minutes - March 9, 2022

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

Trustee: Cindy Watson

Association Members: Jennifer Checkley (Easter Seals), Michelle Hughes (FASD/ONE Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder/Ontario Network of Expertise), Christine MacDonald (Learning Disabilities Association of Wellington County), Roberta Thompson (Waterloo Wellington Down Syndrome Society)

Association Alternates: Jeff Senior (Waterloo Wellington Down Syndrome Society)

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)

Regrets: Dale Babiy (Autism Ontario), Deb Jack (Family & Children's Services - Indigenous Services), Jane Martin (Ontario Federation of Cerebral Palsy), Sara Penny (Epilepsy South Central Ontario), Selena Saini (WRDSB Student Representative), Angela Sider (Parents For Children's Mental Health - Waterloo Region), Kathi Smith (Trustee), Shannon Taylor (Epilepsy South Central Ontario), Kathy Waybrant (Ontario Federation of Cerebral Palsy)

Call to Order

Scott Miller called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Welcome & Territorial Acknowledgement - Scott Miller

Approval of Agenda

- Unable to approve the March 9, 2022 agenda due to not having quorum

Approval of Minutes

- Unable to approve the minutes of the February 9, 2022 meeting due to not having quorum. Will be deferred to the next meeting on April 13, 2022 for approval.

Business Arising from the Minutes

- None

Equity & Inclusion Advisory Group Updates - Carmen Sutherland

- Letter in support of the Waterloo Region District School Board actions
 - The EIAG would like to show support for the Board's equity initiatives in a more effective and stand against the negative feedback the Board is receiving as this has been harmful to staff and students
 - The EIAG, we would like to draft a letter to the board indicating that they see these actions of the WRDSB as necessary steps towards creating a learning environment and culture in which everyone, regardless of who they are, sees themselves reflected in learning and working environment
 - SEAC Members requested to see a draft copy of the letter to be shared with their organizations to receive feedback. L. Gil to share the draft letter once received from EIAG with SEAC members.

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

- We received information from the Ministry of Education on the lifting of COVID 19 safety measures as of March 21st. The senior team is working on what implications there will be when students return after the March Break.

- At this time there has been no direction for in-person meetings.
- PPM 81 Update
 - The review of Policy/Program Memorandum 81 continues with the Ministry of Education providing a survey to gather data about how students are accessing rehabilitation and health services in schools
 - The survey allowed the board staff to provide feedback on speech language services, occupational therapy, physiotherapy and nursing services
 - The information gathered will help further inform the revised PPM
 - Currently the WRDSB's waitlist for these services are 1-2 months
- Budget Preview 2022-2023
 - (Grants for Student Needs and Priorities and Partnerships Funding)
 - The Ministry of Education has provided a breakdown of the funding for next school year
 - Base budgets have increased and funds have been allocated for special education and mental health
 - Some of the temporary funding that was received for 21-22 will now be permanent for the budget next year allowing for continued support for students
 - We will request Matthew Gerard, Coordinating Superintendent, Business Services & Treasurer of the Board to attend a future meeting to discuss budget for next year
 - Suggested by SEAC that more funding should be allocated to support hiring of Educational Assistants and Child & Youth Workers with an increase of salary and benefits
- Ontario Human Rights Commission - [Right to Read Release](#)
 - The Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC) released its Right to Read inquiry report on human rights issues affecting students with reading disabilities

- The report is looking for change to Ontario's approach to early reading, in areas such as curriculum and instruction, screening, reading interventions, accommodations and professional assessments
- The Right to Read report includes [157 list of recommendations](#) to the Ministry of Education, school boards and faculties of education on how to address systemic issues that affect the right to learn to read
- The report highlights how learning to read is a basic and essential human right
- The report combines research, human rights expertise and lived experience of students, parents and educators to provide recommendations on curriculum and instruction, early screening, reading interventions, accommodation, professional assessments and systemic issues
- Implementing the OHRC's recommendations will ensure more equitable opportunities and outcomes for students in Ontario's public education system
- We will have special education and board staff attend a future meeting to discuss long range plans and how we will implement this work

Chair Report

All items deferred to April 13, 2022 meeting due to Chair absence.

- SEAC Handbook Draft Copy (Group Discussion) - [Draft](#)
- [Halton DSB Letter to Ministry](#) Re: Support of Bill 172
- [Algoma DSB Letter to Ministry](#) Re: Support of Bill 172
- [Thunder Bay CDSB Letter to Ministry](#) Re: Support of Bill 172
- [Halton DSB Letter to Ministry](#) Re: Amending Immunization
- [Halton DSB Letter to Ministry](#) Re: PPM 81
- [Durham DSB Letter to Ministry](#) Re: PPM 81
- [Renfrew County CDSB Letter to Ministry](#) Re: Online Learning
- [Durham DSB Letter to Ministry](#) Re: Special Incident Portion Funding
- [Durham DSB Letter to Ministry](#) Re: Definition of a Disability

Trustee Report - Cindy Watson

- None

Round Table Association Reports

1. Michelle Hughes, FASD/ONE Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder
 - FASD is working with the WRDSB on various projects
 - Has been actively looking for an alternate to join SEAC and might have someone able to take on that role in May 2022
2. Carmen Sutherland, Waterloo Region Family Network
 - Tickets on sale for the [Evening of Elegance](#) Annual Signature Fundraising Event on April 30, 2022 at 6 p.m. at St. George Banquet Hall
3. Roberta Thompson, Waterloo Wellington Down Syndrome Society
 - World Down Syndrome Day is on March 21st with many events taking place. Check out website for more details <https://www.wwdss.ca/>

Date of Next Meeting

The next SEAC meeting date is April 13, 2022 at 7:00 p.m.

Adjournment

- Unable to approve the adjournment of the meeting due to not having quorum.
The meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.