



## Special Education Advisory Committee

Minutes - May 10, 2023

A meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) was held virtually on Wednesday, May 10, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. with the following members in attendance:

**Trustee:** Carla Johnson

**Association Members:** Jennifer Checkley (Easter Seals), Christine MacDonald (Learning Disabilities Association of Wellington County), Jane Martin (Ontario Federation of Cerebral Palsy), 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), Stephen McCrae (System Administrator)

**Guest:** Esther Wainaina (WRDSB Human Rights Officer)

**Regrets:** Lisa Bonnell (Ontario Parents of Visually Impaired Children), Michelle Hughes (FASD/ONE Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder/Ontario Network of Expertise), Kathy Waybrant (Ontario Federation of Cerebral Palsy)

### Call to Order

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

### Welcome & Territorial Acknowledgement - Jodi Albrecht

- Acknowledged the passing of Trustee Fred Meissner. We are sending our condolences to his family on behalf of SEAC. He was a valued member of the committee and his knowledge and presence will be missed at our meetings. To honour Trustee Fred Meissner and his exceptional contributions, flags across the WRDSB will be flown at half-mast until his funeral has taken place.

- Trustee Marie Snyder has resigned from her position effective May 8th, 2023. We appreciate her time and commitment to SEAC this year and wish her well
- Welcome to Trustee Carla Johnson who will be the new member of SEAC on behalf of the Trustees

### **Approval of Agenda**

Moved by Shannon Taylor, seconded by Roberta Thompson:

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

- Carried -

### **Approval of Minutes**

Moved by Jennifer Checkley, seconded by Roberta Thompson:

That the minutes of the April 12, 2023 meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee, be approved.

- Carried -

### **Business Arising from the Minutes**

- None

### **Accessibility Multi-Year Plan - Esther Wainaina, Human Rights Officer**

- [Accessibility Plan Stakeholder Presentation](#)
- [AODA Booklet 2021-2026](#)
- Currently the Accessibility for Ontario Disability Act Planning Committee is meeting with various WRDSB committees to present and receive feedback. L. Gil to share the Stakeholder Feedback form on the 2021-2026 WRDSB Accessibility Plan for SEAC members to provide feedback.
- Members indicated that it's difficult to find information on the website for accessibility and requires better access to get the information. Currently this information is under the Communications Department but it's the intention to move it to the Human Rights Department webpage.

- The Human Rights Department is collaborating with the Special Education Consultants and the Special Education Leadership Team to gather resources together to assist staff.
- We would like accessibility to be more visible and to be part of the strategic plan documents and Board Improvement Plan.
- There needs to be simpler language to provide better accessibility for all families as some would not know how to navigate on the board website. Easier access to information will allow families to better advocate for their children.

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

- Labour Update - nothing new to report
- Reminder of the [Special Olympics Open House](#) on May 26, 2023. Please share this information with all your associations and contacts.
- School Year Calendar Update
  - The School Year Calendar Planning Committee met as a group to update the elementary and secondary calendars for 2023-2024. The calendars have been approved by the Board and the Ministry. They will be shared and posted on the website shortly.
- Internet Content Working Group looking for a volunteer - S. Taylor has volunteered to assist with this committee. L. Gil has provided her contact information to the working group for a meeting to be scheduled in June 2023.

### **Chair Report**

- WRDSB SEAC Draft Letter to Ministry Re: Letters in Support for SIP
  - Members reviewed and approved the letter to the Ministry. L. Gil to send the letter to the Ministry and a copy to all Ontario Special Education Advisory Committees.
- [Kawartha Pine Ridge DSB Letter to Ministry Re: SIP Claim Funding](#) - reviewed and no further action required
- [Rainy River DSB Letter to Ministry Re: SIP Claim Funding](#) - reviewed and no further action required

- [OPSBA Submission for Fourth Improvement Review of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act \(AODA\)](#) - reviewed and no further action required
- Website updates
  - The SEAC Working Group to update materials and the website has been meeting and creating a powerpoint and a glossary of acronyms which will be ready to be reviewed by members in June.

### **Trustee Report - Carla Johnson**

- Trustee C. Johnson shared her personal and professional background. She is looking forward to being part of this committee.
- Members reflected on the role of a Trustee in this committee and acknowledged they appreciate when they can listen, ask questions and engage in the conversations.

### **Round Table Association Reports**

1. Jennifer Checkley, Easter Seals
  - Reminder of National AccessAbility Week May 28-June 3
    - Red Shirt Day on May 31, 2023 - follow the link <https://maddistributions.com/easter-seals-ontario/> to order t-shirts
2. Roberta Thompson, Waterloo Wellington Down Syndrome Society
  - During the Annual General Meeting a new chair was elected and R. Thompson will be the Vice Chair
  - Charity Golf Tournament on June 13, 2023 at Rebel Creek Golf Club. Visit the [website](#) for more details.
  - They are having discussion about transitions and advocacy within the government because funding has shifted since the pandemic
  - The National AccessAbility Week Red Shift Day on May 31st has been shared with the association

### 3. Shannon Taylor - 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)

- We were excited to host a mix and mingle fundraising event at St. George Hall on April 14. It was a successful fundraiser and enjoyable night for all. Guests enjoyed food and wine pairings while listening to the music of the Tre Gatte Trio. We honoured two outstanding volunteers with the Matthew MacGregor Award for Volunteerism.
- Chantal Huinink was our guest speaker. Chantal is a motivational speaker, author, social justice advocate and Regional Councillor. She reminded us how improvements in accessibility often result in improvement of services for all. We were honoured to have Chantal speak at our event.
- Join us for National Accessibility Awareness Week May 28 through June 3, 2023. Come celebrate National AccessAbility Week (NAAW) with our free webinar series called "Life Made Accessible - Working Without Barriers". Learn from people who have lived experience of disability and hear from experts in the field on building a more inclusive community and workplace. Learn about hiring people with disabilities, accommodations, and how to be an accessible business. For more information or to register, please visit [www.kitchener.ca/NAAW](http://www.kitchener.ca/NAAW)

### 5. Huseyin Unver, YMCA of Three Rivers

- Youth Programs available for ages 13-21. Please see the following link for more information <https://www.ymcathreerivers.ca/youth-programs>.

**Date of Next Meeting**

The next SEAC meeting date is June 14, 2023 at 7:00 p.m.

**Adjournment**

Moved by Shannon Taylor, seconded by Jennifer Checkley:

That the Special Education Advisory Committee meeting be adjourned.

- Carried -

The meeting adjourned at 8:46 p.m.