



Special Education Advisory Committee

Minutes - May 8, 2024

A meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) was held virtually on Wednesday, May 8, 2024 at 7:00 p.m. with the following members in attendance:

Trustee: Samantha Estoesta

Association Members: Jennifer Checkley (Easter Seals), Nancy Lau (Autism Ontario), Jane Martin (Ontario Federation of Cerebral Palsy), Sara Penny & Shannon Taylor (Epilepsy South Central Ontario), Jeff Senior & Roberta Thompson (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)

Guest: Linzy Abraham, Speech-Language Pathologist, Melanie Gravel, Speech-Language Pathologist Lead, Lisa Weiler Haskins (Vice President of WRDSB Educational Assistants Association (EAA))

Regrets: Lilly Adam (YMCA of Three Rivers), Jodi Albrecht (Superintendent, Student Achievement & Well-Being), 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), Ami McIntosh (Autism Ontario), Joe Meissner (Trustee), Kathy Waybrant (Ontario Federation of Cerebral Palsy)

Call to Order

Stephen McCrae called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

Welcome & Territorial Acknowledgement - Stephen McCrae

Approval of Agenda

Moved by Carmen Sutherland, seconded by Roberta Thompson:
That the agenda of the May 8, 2024 meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee, be approved.

- Carried -

Approval of Minutes

Moved by Roberta Thompson, seconded by Nancy Lau:
That the minutes of the April 10, 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
 - Structured Literacy: Supporting Emerging Communicators - Guests: Melanie Gravel, Lead Speech-Language Pathologist & Linzy Abraham, Speech-Language Pathologist
 - [Literacy Development in Students with Complex Communication Needs Presentation](#)
 - Feedback from members included creating a book list for teachers to provide to families/caregivers and having teachers reach out to the local libraries. Visit [Read the Rainbow](#), a reading program to support literacy at home.

- Dismantling Ableism in Education Symposium Update
 - SEAC Table Volunteers & questions from last meeting
 - Q: Will there be a student and sibling voice opportunity at the sessions to support advocacy?
A: This year we will not have the opportunity to but we will include this suggestion for future planning.
 - Q: Will the presenter sessions be recorded or live streamed?
A: The keynote speaker will be live-streamed but the individual breakout sessions will not be.
 - Q: Will presentations be shared after the event?
A: We have requested that the presentations be shared and we are hopeful they will be.
 - Q: Will there be an open booth area for the community partners to share their information in a main common area?
A: Community partners are welcome to come and attend. Registration is done online if you would like a booth.
 - Q: Can SEAC attend and have their own booth?
A: SEAC will have its own booth and Jane Martin & Jeff Senior have volunteered to assist. All are welcome to attend and are encouraged to register.
- Discussion/Feedback
 - Wheelchair Accessibility Transportation - Fail to Fill Bus Drivers
 - Concern brought forward about the fail to fill bus situation for accessibility transportation of students. J. Albrecht has spoken to Student Transportation Services of Waterloo Region and they will be connecting with Voyago. Currently schools have been

navigating those concerns on their own on a case by case basis.

- Recommended that families/caregivers be notified by the school or transportation services when there will be a delay in transportation to allow for other arrangements to be made for the student. Better transparency and planning can assist families/caregivers when they are in these types of situations.
- Transportation Services and schools need to be mindful of students being sent home early or late due to scheduling and care that the student would require
- Policies for Committee Consultation
 - Members were encouraged to review the draft policies and provide feedback on the form links provided
 - On behalf of the Policy Working Group, Trustee S. Estoesta, thanked members for taking the time to review the policies and provide valuable feedback
 - [Board Policy 1010 Accessibility](#) - [Feedback Form Link](#)
 - Discussion over ensuring Educational Assistant support is provided for students that require it to allow all students to be able to attend a trip
 - Cost of trips need to be considered
 - Our most vulnerable students benefit from going on trips in the community
 - Encourage hyperlinks to procedures
 - Transparency of the capital funding to see the priorities and planning of spending to upgrade schools and board facilities. Is this something that the Communications Department Team can bring back to share the funding for facility upgrades. Is there a list of upgrades being done that we can review?

- Informing schools of the ability to reserve portable lifts to allow students to join their class on stage for events
- We need to look at how we can support and provide opportunities for after school extracurricular activity events for our most vulnerable students so that they feel included
- [Board Policy 6004 Outdoor and Off Campus Education](#) - [Feedback Form Link](#)
- [Board Policy 1010 Accessibility](#) - [Feedback Form Link](#)
- [Board Policy 1003 School Councils](#) - [Feedback Form Link](#)
- [Board Policy 2006 Consultation](#) - [Feedback Form Link](#)
- [Board Policy 3006 Student Trustees](#) - [Feedback Form Link](#)
- [Board Policy 3010 Political Candidate Visits During Elections](#) - [Feedback Form Link](#)
- [Board Policy 6005 Alternatives in Education](#) - [Feedback Form Link](#)
- [Board Policy 6007 School Nutrition](#) - [Feedback Form Link](#)
- We are looking to start a working group on a review of special education programming. R. Thompson has volunteered and if anyone else is interested, please contact J. Albrecht.

Chair Report - Shannon Taylor

- [Rainy River DSB SEAC Letter](#) to Ministry of Education
 - Members reviewed the letter and agreed to send a letter in support
- Review Draft Letter in Support of the [Dufferin-Peel CDSB](#)
 - Members reviewed the [draft letter](#) and provided approval of the letter being sent to the Ministry of Education

Trustee Report - Samantha Estoesta & Joe Meissner

- SEAC Letters
 - Reviewed having both the Chair of SEAC and the Chair of the Board sign SEAC letters in order to show support from the Committee and

the Board. Once letters have been approved by SEAC, they will be added to Board Reports and reviewed at a Board meeting before being sent to the Ministry of Education.

- Board Improvement and Equity Plan can be viewed on the [website](#)
- Currently working through writing a letter regarding some of the Minister's Advisory Council Special Education (MACSE) vacancies to advocate that they be filled

Round Table Association Reports

1. Carmen Sutherland, Waterloo Region Family Network
 - [Changes to School Navigation Support](#)
 - [Housemate Mixer Information](#)
2. Nancy Lau, Autism Ontario
 - [May 2024 Updates & Upcoming Events](#)
3. Jenn Checkley - Easter Seals
 - Red Shirt Day of Action for Accessibility and Action is coming up on May 29. Resources are available at <https://redshirtday.org/resources/>
4. Roberta Thompson, Waterloo Wellington Down Syndrome Society
 - [May 2024 Updates & Upcoming Events](#)

Date of Next Meeting

The next SEAC meeting date is June 19, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.

Adjournment

Moved by Roberta Thompson, seconded by Sara Penny:

That the Special Education Advisory Committee meeting be adjourned.

- Carried -

The meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m.