



Special Education Advisory Committee

Minutes - November 8, 2023

A meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) was held virtually on Wednesday, November 8, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. with the following members in attendance:

Trustee: Samantha Estoesta, Joe Meissner

Association Members: Nancy Lau (Autism Ontario), Sara Penny & Shannon Taylor (Epilepsy South Central Ontario), Roberta Thompson & Jeff Senior (Waterloo Wellington Down Syndrome Society)

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)

Regrets: Lisa Bonnell (Ontario Parents of Visually Impaired Children), Jennifer Checkley (Easter Seals), 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), Ami McIntosh (Autism Ontario)

Call to Order

Shannon Taylor called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Welcome & Territorial Acknowledgement - Steve McCrae

Approval of Agenda

Moved by Roberta Thompson, seconded by Nancy Lau:
That the agenda of the November 8, 2023 meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee, be approved.

- Carried -

Approval of Minutes

Moved by Roberta Thompson, seconded by Carmen Sutherland:
That the minutes of the October 11, 2023 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

- Labour Update
 - Most groups are still at the central table and we are having local negotiations as well. We are hoping for resolutions soon with minimal disruption.
- Follow-up from the October meeting regarding parents/caregivers filling out the form [Documenting Patterns of Non-Attendance for Elementary Students](#) when a student will be away from school for a recurring absence eg. therapy, sports. J. Albrecht has reached out to the Business Services Manager regarding this concern and they will be reviewing and reevaluating the use of the form.
- Policies for Committee Consultation
 - The Policy Working Group provided six Board Policies for review. Feedback is due by November 30, 2023. Trustee S. Estoesta is part of the working group and encouraged members to contact her if they want to pass on further feedback after the meeting. L. Gil to send the

links to the input forms to provide feedback if members want to send information on their own.

- Members reviewed the policies as a group and provided feedback. L. Gil will complete the google forms with the information on behalf of SEAC members.
- [Board Policy 1016 - Use of Service Animals by Students](#)
 - Under Related References, add the links to the Policies and Procedures listed
- [Board Policy 2003 - Early Learning and Care](#)
 - Under Related References, add the links to the Policies and Procedures listed
- [Board Policy 2004 Character Education and Social-Emotional Skills Development](#)
 - Under Related References, add the links to the Policies and Procedures listed
 - Under Related References - add [Board Policy 1008 - Equity and Inclusion](#)
 - 1.2 - List inclusivity of all students as an identified attribute eg. students with a disability. Needs more inclusive language for various populations of students and their abilities.
 - 2.2 - after the line “safe, caring and inclusive”, it should indicate “inclusive for all, including students with disabilities”
 - 2.2.1 - Under Respect - Amend to indicate “Treating others, including diverse students and parents/caregivers”
 - 2.2.1 - Add more detail and examples to each character attribute
- [Board Policy 6000 - Safe Schools](#)
 - 1.3.2, 1.3.7, 1.3.8, 1.8 - reference to bullying should also include “or cyberbullying”. Provide examples of bullying or cyberbullying eg. physically, emotionally, social media.

- [Board Policy 6008 - Student Discipline](#)
 - Related References - Update title to Board Policy 6009 to “Student Bullying Prevention and Intervention”
 - 1.6 - after the line “safe, caring and inclusive”, it should indicate “inclusive for all, including students with disabilities”
 - 1.10 - reference to bullying should also include “or cyberbullying”
 - 2.1, 3.6, 7.1.1, 7.1.2 - replace reference to his or her to their
 - 9.2.1 - How do we define a weapon? Give more examples of a weapon.
 - 9.2.9 - Reference and link [Policy 6009 - Student Bullying Prevention and Intervention](#) in this section.
 - 9.2.9 - what is an unacceptable risk? Should be more defined.
- [Board Policy 6009 - Student Bullying Prevention and Intervention](#)
 - All policies should be clearer using the disability lens to ensure it is easier to read and understand
 - 2.1, 2.1.1, 2.1.4 - replace word pupil to student
 - 2.3 - Link website for [positive school climate](#)
 - 2.4.8 - add not calling names or labeling language eg. “r” word
 - 8.0 - Need to provide support for the student that is causing the bullying, eg. counselling. Both parties would need emotional and social support.

Chair Report

- Follow-up Letter in Support of Thames Valley DSB Letter to Ministry Re: SIP
 - Received letter from Claudine Munroe, Director for Special Education with the Ministry of Education in response to the May 2023 letter that was sent from SEAC regarding the Special Incidence Portion (SIP) funding. L. Gil will send a copy of the [letter](#) to members for review.

Trustee Report - Samantha Estoesta & Joe Meissner

- The Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA) had a Regional Council meeting on November 4th, 2023. They discussed issues and matters affecting their school boards. The items for advocacy and initiatives were capital facilities including accessibility, transportation and special education.

Round Table Association Reports

1. Nancy Lau, Autism Ontario

- **Event: Webinar Mini Series: Mental Health Matters**

- Join us for a 3-part mini-series about mental health and well-being in childhood and adolescence. This mini-series is intended to support parents and caregivers in understanding their child's mental health and provide general strategies and information on what can be done at home to promote coping and improvements in well-being.
- Each part is divided by age; however, some strategies may be helpful for your child regardless of their chronological age.
- Date: Part 1: For Young Children – November 16, 2023, 12:00 pm–1:00 pm
- Part 2: For School Aged Children – November 23, 2023, 12:00 pm–1:00 pm
- Part 3: For Teens – November 30, 2023, 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm
- Link: <https://bit.ly/4762mEb> (all registration)

- **Event: Moderated Webinar: Autism, Sexuality and the Law with Dr. Isabelle Hénault**

- In this webinar, strategies and tools adapted to the autistic profile in terms of education and prevention of illegal and inappropriate sexual behaviour will be presented, in addition to concrete cases. The notion of consent will be addressed using appropriate educational tools.

- November 22, 2023, 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm
- Link: <https://bit.ly/3QbnKBI>

- **Workshop: Home for the Holidays**

- Join Bethany Brewin (Occupational Therapist, M.Sc. O.T.) and Danielle Nolan (Social Worker, MSW RSW) for a winter-themed workshop that aims to support caregivers in continuing to build skills across a variety of areas while having fun as a family and enjoying all the season has to offer. Bethany and Danielle will provide information on 5 different activities you can do at home during the holidays with minimal supplies or preparation. The activities will highlight 5 skill areas: fine motor skills, gross motor skills, sensory skills, calming/mindfulness skills, and socio-emotional skills.
- Date: December 20, 2023, 7:00 pm - 8:00 pm
- Link: <https://www.autismontario.com/civCRM/event/info?id=9018>
- This workshop is appropriate for children of all ages.

2. Carmen Sutherland, Waterloo Region Family Network

- Join WRFN and other service providers in the community for our Social & Recreation Information Fair to learn about all the wonderful programs available in our community for children and youth with exceptionalities on November 28, 2023 from 4-8 p.m. at the Kitchener Memorial Auditorium. See flyers for more information. Register by emailing info@wrfn.info
 - [Flyer for Service & Program Providers](#)
 - [Flyer for Families](#)

3. Roberta Thompson, Waterloo Wellington Down Syndrome Society

- The Down Syndrome Association of Ontario (DSAO) is a charitable, non-profit organization composed of local Down Syndrome Associations from across the province of Ontario. Together, we

coordinate the efforts to raise awareness, educate, and encourage the inclusion of people with Down Syndrome and their families across Ontario. Our areas of focus include Health Care, Education, and Social Services.

- Down Syndrome Association of Ontario worked with various school boards across the province to create the School Transitions Guide for Families of Students with Down Syndrome - see link for more information - <http://www.schooltransitions.ca/en/>
- Question asked in order to be on SEAC do you have to be part of a Provincial Association? Advised members to visit the Ministry of Education website which outlines the roles and responsibilities and who can become a member.
<https://www.ontario.ca/page/special-education-advisory-committees>
- Planning for [World Down Syndrome Day](#) on March 21st, 2024 continues

4. Shannon Taylor, Epilepsy South Central Ontario

- Continuing to try to get advocacy within the schools with campaigns

5. Huseyin Unver, YMCA of Three Rivers

- Provided a list of [School Settlement Workers](#)

Date of Next Meeting

The next SEAC meeting date is December 13, 2023 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 9:00 p.m.