



Special Education Advisory Committee

Minutes - October 12, 2022

A meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) was held virtually on Wednesday, October 12, 2022 at 7:00 p.m. with the following members in attendance:

Trustee: Cindy Watson

Association Members: Jennifer Checkley (Easter Seals), Christine MacDonald (Learning Disabilities Association of Wellington County), Sara Penny & Shannon Taylor (Epilepsy South Central Ontario), Jeff Senior (Waterloo Wellington Down Syndrome Society)

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)

Regrets: Dale Babiy (Autism Ontario), Deb Jack (Family & Children's Services - Indigenous Services), Michelle Hughes (FASD/ONE Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder/Ontario Network of Expertise), Erin Legary & Kristen McHardy (Parents For Children's Mental Health - Waterloo Region), Jane Martin & Kathy Waybrant (Ontario Federation of Cerebral Palsy), Kathi Smith (Trustee), Roberta Thompson (Waterloo Wellington Down Syndrome Society)

Guests: Josh Dickson (Special Education Itinerant Teacher), Jennifer Pinder (Consultant for Social-Emotional Learning K-8)

Call to Order

Sara Penny called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Welcome & Territorial Acknowledgement - Sara Penny

Approval of Agenda

- Unable to approve the October 12, 2022 Special Education Advisory Committee meeting agenda due to not having quorum

Approval of Minutes

- Unable to approve the minutes of the June 8, 2022 and September 14, 2022 Special Education Advisory Committee meeting due to not having quorum. Will be deferred to the next meeting on November 9, 2022 for approval.

Business Arising from the Minutes

- None

WRDSB Special Education & Student Well-Being Report – Jodi Albrecht

- September Start-Up
 - We are hoping to come back in person but understand that virtual meetings work better for a lot of people. Will look at a hybrid model for our meetings in the future.
 - Transportation for students continues to be an issue but STSWR is working towards getting things in place
 - We are experiencing staff shortage in all departments but especially with the paraprofessional staff which include Educational Assistants and Child & Youth Workers
 - Discussions were had with administration regarding the rotation of EAs when an EA staff member is away. The goal is to support our students with special needs with an EA when there is an absence. The supply EA will provide support in another class and an existing EA at the school with transition to support a student with higher needs instead. Administration will continue to assess each situation with the staff to continue to build the capacity of all staff to best serve the students. In the medically fragile class, there are nurses to help with those students. If the nurse is not at school then the student doesn't normally attend. There was concern over

mask wearing and the EAs are wearing masks in the medically fragile classrooms.

- IEP Update
 - IEPs are being delayed with the generation of the paperwork as we don't have access to the system due to the cyber incident. Educators are still doing all of the work to support students. They were meant to be sent to families next week but unfortunately schools still don't have access to the system. Teachers are still connecting with families to help support students with consultation going on with families.
 - Once we get access to the system the IEPs will be formalized
- Right to Read Response
 - We have 38 Reading Resource Teachers in schools across the system who support students in the classroom with the Empower program.
 - There is a Structured Literacy Committee that meets regularly which members include the Associate Director, Superintendents, System Administrators, Research Department, Indigenous, Equity & Human Rights Department, Curriculum and Special Education staff. There are 5 Co-Chairs and subcommittees who meet monthly to support this work.
- Volunteer for PD day
 - Carrie McCone, Paraprofessional Supervisor, BMS Lead is looking at professional development in January and February to support EAs and CYWs. We are looking for a student or a parent that would want to volunteer at the PD day session on January 20, 2023 for Elementary and February 3, 2023 for Secondary. If you are interested in helping out, please send Jodi Albrecht a message.
- Chair election - anyone interested in the role of chair?
 - Sara Penny has completed her 2 year term as the Chair for SEAC. Requested if anyone is interested in taking over this position. Will need to review the Terms of Reference to see if S. Penny can continue as Chair if no one else would like to volunteer.

Chair Report

- SEAC Handbook Review
 - The handbook was last updated in October 2015 and it's time for a review and update. The document can be found on the [website](#). Members were asked to review and provide feedback. We can reach out to the Communications Department to assist in updating the document and sharing with schools.
 - Recommended preparing a presentation for administrators to share with school councils and families. Transition meetings are a good opportunity to share information about SEAC.
 - A different version of how we can support families through each association so it's less formal. Recommendation to do 1 page document, bookmark, brochure, and a presentation.
 - There was a handout which was used previously for presentations which can be updated and also provided to schools. L. Gil to share the handout.
 - Direct schools to a contact to have a support person or mentor. Currently we have an email address that people can send messages to at seac@wrdsb.ca and should be added to our documents.
 - Updating the handbook will be a running agenda item for this year.
- Review SEAC Membership
 - Reach out to friends and families to see if they would like to be a part of SEAC who have a passion to support their organizations. We can also reach out to the organizations that have students that attend the WRDSB.
 - Will create a list and reach out to the members of SEAC in prior years and the organizations that are missing.

Trustee Report - Cindy Watson

- None

Round Table Association Reports

1. Jeff Senior, Waterloo Wellington Down Syndrome Society
 - October is Down Syndrome Awareness Month
 - Calendar Fundraiser - Now I Know 2023 is underway, visit the website for more information <https://www.wwdss.ca/>

2. Carmen Sutherland, Waterloo Region Family Network (WRFN)
 - WRFN would like to thank Scott Miller and Jodi Albrecht along with two education consultants for participating in the IEP workshop on Sept 28. The workshop was well received by parents who appreciated the overview followed by an opportunity to chat with board staff following the presentation. The workshop was offered in partnership with WRFN, WRDSB and WCDSB and was hosted at the WRDSB Education Centre.
 - WRFN is hosting a Family Activity Day on **November 20** at Doon Heritage Village in celebration of World Children's Day. Families will have an opportunity to tour the village and the museum between 2 and 4 pm. This will be a great opportunity for families to connect with one another.
 - WRFN and KidsAbility are bringing back Kaleidoscope Kids – a weekly drop-in program for families and children. This is another great opportunity for families to connect with and support each other. The program will be held at KidsAbility in Waterloo. We hope to start this program up again sometime in October.

3. Christine MacDonald, Learning Disabilities Association of Wellington County
 - October is Learning Disabilities Awareness Month
 - [LD Awareness 2022 A](#)
 - [LD Awareness 2022 B](#)
 - [LD Awareness 2022 Press Release](#)
 - [8th Annual LDAWC Family Conference](#)
 - [Partnering with Schools for Student Success Announcement](#)

Date of Next Meeting

The next SEAC meeting date is November 9, 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.