



## Special Education Advisory Committee

Minutes - September 11, 2024

A meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) was held virtually on Wednesday, September 11, 2024 at 7:00 p.m. with the following members in attendance:

**Trustees:** Samantha Estoesta, Joe Meissner

**Association Members:** Nancy Lau (Autism Ontario), Jane Martin (Ontario Federation of Cerebral Palsy), Roberta Thompson (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)

**Guest:** Danielle MacDonald (WRDSB Parent)

**Regrets:** Lilly Adam (YMCA of Three Rivers), 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), Ami McIntosh (Autism Ontario), Jeff Senior (Waterloo Wellington Down Syndrome Society), Shannon Taylor (Epilepsy South Central Ontario), Kathy Waybrant (Ontario Federation of Cerebral Palsy)

### Call to Order

Roberta Thompson called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**Welcome & Territorial Acknowledgement - Jodi Albrecht**

### **Approval of Agenda**

Moved by Nancy Lau, seconded by Jane Martin:

That the agenda of the September 11, 2024 meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee, be approved.

- Carried -

### **Approval of Minutes**

Moved by Carmen Sutherland, seconded by Nancy Lau:

That the minutes of the June 19, 2024 meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee, be approved.

- Carried -

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

- None

### **Round Table Association Reports**

- Introduce Yourself
  - Members provided introductions of themselves and their associations
  - J. Albrecht shared that L. Gil, Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent, has accepted a new position supporting the Associate Director. J. Albrecht thanked her for her time on SEAC and her work supporting the Special Education Department. They are in the processing of filling this vacancy.
- Summer 2024 Organization Update
  - Carmen Sutherland, Waterloo Region Family Network
    - [September Updates](#)
  - Roberta Thompson, Waterloo Wellington Down Syndrome Society
    - [September Updates](#)
  - Nancy Lau, Autism Ontario
    - [September Updates](#)

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

- Information
  - Ministry of Education Updates
    - The Ministry of Education reviewed the Special Equipment Allowance (SEA) funding allocation. The changes include how the money may be spent. Historically the money that came in for SEA would only be used for equipment for students and any funds remaining at the end of the year would be rolled over into the new school year, again to be spent on equipment. Going forward, school boards can now use the money rolled over to support students with special education needs more broadly. The Board will continue to work throughout the year to work through the spending changes.
  - System Updates
    - Over the summer months many staff in the Special Education Department worked updating resources for professional development for teachers which will support professional learning throughout the year
    - The Speech & Language Pathologists and Psychologists conducted assessments of students over the summer months. They made themselves easily accessible to meet with the students and families at sites that worked best for them. We acknowledge and appreciate the support of school staff to have their schools available for use for these assessments, including the custodial staff.
    - Social workers provided support to students throughout the summer
    - A key component of the work of school staff and central staff at the start of the school year is in supporting student transitions. This is in alignment with PPM 140, Incorporating Methods of

Applied Behaviour Analysis into Programs for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and PPM 156, Supporting Transitions for Students with Special Education Needs. The transition work supports students changing schools, changing grades, and leaving programs in order to set up students for success. The support provided is differentiated, based on student need.

- School start up with transportation has gone relatively well. We continue to navigate any transportation issues with students with special education needs. The Program Leads assist throughout the year to ensure that everything is running smoothly and will continue to work with Student Transportation Services.
- Ableism Symposium
  - We applied for the grant again this year but unfortunately will not be receiving any funding. Staff are looking at how we can continue to support this important work in the absence of the funding as the team is committed to this work. A presentation will come to SEAC this year to provide feedback on the Advancing Ableism Symposium and what we learned from our students.
- School Start-up
  - Staff started back to work on September 3rd which was the first PA Day of the school year. This allowed staff to complete the mandatory training provided by the Board.
  - Students were welcomed back on September 4th for the first day of school
  - Many central staff including itinerant teaching and paraprofessional staff, consultants, social workers, system administrators and Senior Team members provided support at

schools on the first day of school. Lots of great feedback from staff that assisted.

- Discussion/Feedback
  - Chair & Vice Chair 2024-2025
    - Jodi Albrecht called for nominations for the role of SEAC Chair and Vice-Chair
    - Motion to have Shannon Taylor as Chair of SEAC for 2024-2025 moved by Nancy Lau, seconded by Carmen Sutherland
      - Carried -
    - Motion to have Roberta Thompspon as Vice Chair of SEAC for 2024-2025 moved by Nancy Lau, seconded by Jane Martin
      - Carried -
  - Learning for this year
    - Future proposed topics :
      - Advancing Anti-Ableism Symposium Feedback Report
      - Math Achievement Action Plan updates
      - Transition supports for students with special education needs throughout the school years and afterwards
      - Structured Literacy Multi-Year Plan updates
      - Indoor Air Quality Policy update
      - Outreach to other community associations to increase membership on SEAC

#### **Chair Report for discussion/feedback - Roberta Thompson**

- SEAC website - deferred to next meeting
- Virtual Meetings
  - Based on the feedback we received from the survey, members wished to continue to have meetings take place virtually. Will revisit this in the spring if members would like to meet in person for a meeting.

**Trustee Report - Samantha Estoesta & Joe Meissner**

- The first committee of the whole meeting will take place on September 16th, 2024

**Date of Next Meeting**

The next SEAC meeting date is October 9, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.

**Adjournment**

Moved by Nancy Lau, seconded by Carmen Sutherland:

That the Special Education Advisory Committee meeting be adjourned.

- Carried -

The meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.