

AGENDA

Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting

Wednesday, March 20, 2024, 7:00 p.m. - 8:30p.m

Boardroom, Catholic Education Centre

***Mission:** Disciples of Christ, nurturing mind, body, and soul to the fullness of life.*

***Vision:** Changing the world through Catholic education.*

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- 2. Social Work Presentation: P. Grosso

C. Budget

D. Reports from Trustees for Receipt

E. Information/Reports from Community Associations

- 1. Autism Ontario Presentation: T. Jewell
- 2. Down Syndrome Day: H. Bialowas

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I. Future Meetings

- April 17, 2024
- May 15, 2024
- June 12, 2024

J. Adjournment

OPENING PRAYER

Loving God, we wish to be keen and devoted servants.

By your grace, help us to nurture the lonely with our companionship, feed the hungry and clothe the poor with our relative richness; and seek out and include all those who yearn for acceptance.

We ask this through Jesus our brother.

+ Amen

Land Acknowledgement

We are here to pay respect and recognize that this is the traditional territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nations, and we are here because this land was occupied. In recognizing that this space occupies colonized First Nations territories, and out of respect for the rights of Indigenous people, it is our collective responsibility to recognize our colonial histories and present-day implications and honour, protect and sustain this land.



Student Artist: Thea-St. Bonaventure

MINUTES

Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting

**Wednesday, February 21, 2024, 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
Boardroom, Catholic Education Centre**

Attendees:	Bruno Iannicca	Trustee - Chair
	Dely Farrace	Brampton Caledon Community Living - Vice Chair - Representative
	Heather Bialowas	Down Syndrome Assoc. of Peel: Caring Network - Representative
	Liza Dowson	Ontario Association for Families of Children with Communication Disorders - Representative
	Janice Hatton	Autism Ontario, Peel Chapter - Representative
	Caroline Huxtable	Epilepsy South Central Ontario - Representative
	Christine Koczmar	Community Living Mississauga - Representative
	Lisa Papaloni	Learning Disabilities Association of Peel Region - Representative
	Debbie Hammond	Dufferin-Peel Educational Resource Workers' Association - Representative
	Andrea Isaac	OECTA Elementary - Alternative
	Laura Odo	Superintendent Representative
Regrets:	Luz del Rosario	Alternate Chair
	Thomas Thomas	Alternate Trustee
	Paula Dametto-Giovannozzi	Alternate Trustee
	Airene Cunanan	Autism Ontario, Peel Chapter - Alternative
	Myra Del Rosario	ABC Association for Bright Children - Representative
	Shanna Walsh	Down Syndrome Assoc. of Peel: Caring Network - Alternative
	Pam Boniferro	Dufferin-Peel Educational Resource Workers' Association - Alternative
	Sue Steer	Superintendent, Family of Schools
	Laurie-Anne Clark	Member at Large, Central Committee for Catholic School Councils
Staff:	Lucy Papaloni	Superintendent, Special Education and Learning Services
	Sharon Chambers	Principal, Vice Principal Association, Elementary
	Tanya Galway	Chief of Psychology
	Christiane Kyte	General Manager, Clinical Services and Spec Education
	Laura Pincente	Consultant, Secondary Transitions and Diverse Learners
	Jacqueline Toste	Consultant, Diverse Learning Needs
	Kristie Boily	Consultant, Special Education and Learning Service
	Peter Cusumano	Principal, Vice Principal Association, Secondary
	Mike Brunetto	CCCSC Alternative
	Ruba Jeorgy	DPERWA Alternative
Recorder:	Katherine Magee	Executive Assistant, Special Education and Learning Services - Recorder

A. Routine Matters

1. Call to Order and Attendance

Chair of SEAC, Bruno Iannicca, called the meeting to order at 7:00p.m.

2. Opening Prayer - Superintendent Papaloni
3. Land Acknowledgment - L. Pincente
4. Approval of Agenda

THAT THE AGENDA BE APPROVED.

CARRIED

5. Approval of the Minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting, January 17, 2024.

THAT THE MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING, JANUARY 17, 2024, BE APPROVED.

CARRIED

6. Previous Business

Superintendent Papaloni followed-up regarding the request to ask the Ministry's Director of Special Education to attend a SEAC meeting, stating that they are not able to attend this year.

7. Review Role of Special Education Advisory Committee

Superintendent Papaloni reviewed the role of the Special Education Advisory Committee.

8. Review Role of Chair

Superintendent Papaloni reviewed the role of Chair for SEAC.

9. Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference were reviewed and approved.

10. Voting for Chair and Vice Chair

Nominations for Chair of the Special Education Advisory Committee were opened by Superintendent Papaloni. C. Koczmaro nominated Trustee Bruno Iannicca. There were no other nominations. Trustee Bruno Iannicca accepted.

Nominations for Vice-Chair of the Special Education Advisory Committee were opened by Trustee Bruno Iannicca. L. Dowson nominated D. Farrace. There were no other nominations. D. Farrace accepted.

B. Presentations and Staff Reports

1. Psychology Month: T. Galway

Superintendent Papaloni introduced T. Galway, Chief of Psychology. T. Galway presented on February's Psychology Month. She shared a video by the Canadian Psychological Association on school psychologists. T. Galway explained the role of school psychology staff in supporting students. She discussed the resources available to the schools and students through the board website and how to access these.

C. Koczmaro asked how many psychologists are with the board. T. Galway answered that there are approximately 20 psychology staff. This includes registered psychologists and psychological associates and unregistered staff who work under the supervision of registered staff. C. Koczmaro asked if the unregistered staff are in the process of registration. T. Galway answered that some are in the process of registration, while others are going to remain as unregistered staff and are under the supervision of registered staff. C. Koczmaro asked if there is a way to find the psychology page through the search engine. C. Kyte answered that if you type in psychology into the search bar you will get the psychology page on the website. L. Dowson asked if the psychological education assessment can only be completed by a psychologist. C. Kyte answered that if an unregistered associate does the assessment, it will be done under the supervision of a registered psychologist. L. Dowson asked what parents can do if their child is not at the stage of receiving an assessment yet. T. Galway answered that educator staff are continuously monitoring students. If there is a concern, they refer the student to a team of support personnel. The student is discussed, there is an informal assessment, and supports are put in place. Students do not have to wait for an assessment, interventions are put in place well before an assessment. L. Dowson asked if there is a wait for this. T. Galway answered that each school is different. If a parent has a concern, they should discuss it with the school administrator. M. Brunetto asked what can be done to ensure that the resources reach the parents. T. Galway answered that Psychology Month helps to bring the awareness to the community. The System Weekly goes to all schools each week, for staff to share with the community. All schools have access to psychology services. C. Koczmaro asked what the waitlist is currently. Superintendent Papaloni answered that there is no waitlist for the team meetings. All students are captured on a monthly basis. C. Kyte added that the Ministry of Education has identified the Provincial shortage of psychologists. They have provided extra funding and all of it has been put towards additional assessments. While they are waiting for assessments, they are not waiting for support. They receive supports and interventions all along. Assessment information is in the process of becoming centralized. C. Koczmaro asked when they will receive this information. Superintendent Papaloni responded that this should be available sometime next year once the system is upgraded for data collection. C. Koczmaro asked if there is anything in place at the school level to allow administrators to notify the psychology team if there is an issue with the waitlists. Superintendent Papaloni answered that they would have to speak to the psychology team to inform them. C. Koczmaro asked if an assessment is provided during transitions. C. Kyte answered that it is. C. Koczmaro asked if there are a lot of private assessments coming through. C. Kyte answered yes. L. Dowson asked if the data is collected regarding the number of private assessments. C. Kyte answered that this data is collected through the schools. L. Dowson asked if there is a Parent Outreach Event to help parents with the assessment process. L. Dowson mentioned that the Peel board held monthly events to support parents. Superintendent Papaloni mentioned that the

Peel board is a much larger school board and has approximately three times the staff which would facilitate those events. L. Dowson suggested parents from SEAC could participate in facilitating such an event. Lisa Papaloni also supported the idea of a parent support group. She would be happy to volunteer. C. Koczmar asked if the committee members could put this through. She would also be happy to help. Superintendent Papaloni said a Parent Reaching Out Grant Event might be a possibility for this topic.

2. Department Updates: L. Pincente

Superintendent Papaloni introduced L. Pincente, Special Education Coordinator, to speak on department updates. L. Pincente shared the poster for Together We're Better, a contest to promote inclusiveness for students with disabilities. Last year's winners were two students and a teacher from Dufferin-Peel CDSB. L. Pincente presented the Exceptional Children Award by the Ontario Council for Exceptional Children. She asked the committee to submit nominations, if interested. L. Pincente recapped the well-received Welcome to Dufferin-Peel Event that took place on January 24th. Lastly, she mentioned the PROGrant event held virtually on February 22nd called See Me for Me, which is open to the public. Trustee Bruno Iannicca encouraged everyone to attend.

C. Budget - Nil

D. Reports from Trustees for Receipt

Trustee Bruno Iannicca discussed the meeting on January 18th regarding anti-human trafficking, which had over 300 people in attendance. There will be another meeting later this year to continue the conversation. Trustee Bruno Iannicca mentioned that they are looking to move the percentage of school uniforms in Elementary from 75% to 60%. Also, he mentioned that the Elementary PA days for next year have been matched to the Peel board's for 6 out of the 7 days, and Secondary for 7 out of the 7 days. This will be beneficial because it will prevent buses from operating partially empty. This will save both school boards a significant amount of money. This year is the first year that they eliminated the day trip and day transportation for Secondary schools after exams, which saved \$128,000. They are still looking to the Ministry for Chromebook funding. During Covid, the government, both Provincially and Federally, provided significant funding for this. Unfortunately, at this point, some Chromebooks are reaching end-of-life and will need to be replaced. The Long-Term Disability expenses continue to present a financial challenge. They are starting to introduce new illuminated signs for schools that are more visible. The signs cost approximately \$20,000. At the last board meeting they finished the policy decision for the Elementary school uniforms. The uniforms will be simple, such as golf shirts and pants.

E. Information/Reports from Community Associations

L. Dowson mentioned that OAFCCD has started a monthly support group for moms. The parents can bring their children and they will be entertained while the parents can join the support group. The next meeting is on March 1st. Trustee Bruno Iannicca asked if it is just for moms. L. Dowson answered that while initially it was being held for both moms and dads, they found that the moms needed a safe space to discuss issues, and it was mostly moms who needed this support group. For now it will be just moms, but they may change this in the future. Trustee Bruno Iannicca asked if they needed this group to be advertised. L. Dowson answered that it would be helpful if it could be posted on the board website. C. Kyte mentioned that it can go on the public bulletin board. C. Huxtable asked if there is a capacity limit. L. Dowson answered that there is a cap at 15. There is also

a cost per child. Superintendent Papaloni asked that the details be drafted out and, once reviewed, can be submitted for posting to the DP community bulletin board.

F. Information and Correspondence

1. Follow-up Letter from DPCDSB SEAC to Ministry February 2024

Superintendent Papaloni asked the committee to review the letter to be sent to the Ministry.

M. Brunetto approved of the letter and asked how we could connect with guidance support and encourage students to enroll in Special Education careers. Superintendent Papaloni agreed that this letter is asking the Ministry for such support.

2. Letter from Peterborough Victoria Northumberland and Clarington CDSB SEAC Special Education Funding January 2024

Superintendent Papaloni presented the letter from the PVNCCDSB SEAC to the Ministry.

3. Letter from Hastings and Prince Edward DSB SEAC SIP Funding December 2023

Superintendent Papaloni presented the letter from the HPEDSB SEAC to the Ministry.

G. Communication - Nil

H. Questions Asked by Committee Members

D. Farrace asked for data collection on children that are staying home. Superintendent Papaloni will check if there is data on children being asked to stay home voluntarily due to lack of staffing. Trustee Bruno Iannicca mentioned that he is unaware of this. He asked D. Farrace to forward this information to Superintendent Papaloni. C. Koczmaro stated that she believes that many years ago students may have been asked to stay at home to forego suspension, she is unaware if this still happens today. Trustee Bruno Iannicca would like data on the age of the children. L. Dowson added that parents sometimes keep their children home because their children are difficult to control. The parents feel that they don't have a choice but to pick up their children. This exclusion is difficult for parents. She mentioned that ERWs are being attacked at schools and therefore this is discouraging workers from entering this field. Superintendent Papaloni answered that she will see if there is information on this.

I. Future Meetings

March 20, 2024

April 17, 2024

May 15, 2024

June 12, 2024

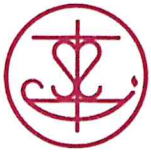
CARRIED

J. Adjournment

Moved by C. Koczmaro

THAT THE MEETING BE ADJOURNED AT 8:42P.M.

CARRIED



**DURHAM CATHOLIC
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD**
Learning and Living in Faith

March 7, 2024

The Honourable Stephen Lecce
Ministry of Education
5th Floor
438 University Ave.
Toronto, ON M7A 2A5

Dear Minister Stephen Lecce:

Please accept this letter as indication of the Special Education Advisory Council's (SEAC) of the Durham Catholic District School Board (DCDSB) support for resolutions made by the Towns of Ajax and Whitby that request that "the Government of Ontario provide core funding for organizations providing programs, care, and services for adults with ASD, including Autism Home Base, as part of the 2024 Provincial Budget".

As a SEAC, we are deeply concerned about the crisis many families experience as their children diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) transition to adulthood. Below we have highlighted some key struggles we are aware of for individuals with ASD after they transition out of the DCDSB.

Ontario Autism Program (OAP) funding supports many of our students on the spectrum with skill-building programs, respite, therapy, recreational and clinical interventions. This funding ends at 18 years old, leaving many of our families with high financial costs to continue and maintain services. Although Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) and Passport funding assist with some resources, the program offerings are limited, and parents are asked to select and co-ordinate services for their children. Without adequate knowledge and training this is challenging for some parents to navigate.

Limited qualified support workers impact the opportunities for people with ASD to access programs outside the home and school, which puts the parents in a position to keep their children at home. Many of the skills that are built at school and in clinical settings are lost when they are no longer generalized or utilized, as a result of home-based placement, which often results in low task demands and highly preferred/self-directed activities. A solution to this would be Community Integration through Co-operative Education (CICE) programs offered at select post-secondary institutions, however intake is very limited.

Social skills and tolerance/exposure to various environments is an important factor for people with ASD. Without maintaining routines that expose people to other stimuli outside of the home, people on the spectrum can become rigid and lose the ability to engage with others outside of their home circle. DCDSB staff hear these concerns from families after transition periods (i.e. in September, after Christmas break and following a return from longer holidays) as many students spend increased time at home during these breaks and have difficulty transitioning back into a demand-based routine. These needs do not cease when a person reaches the age of 21; routines and programs remain essential to the well-being of individuals with ASD.



**DURHAM CATHOLIC
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD**
Learning and Living in Faith

Continued community involvement for adults with ASD is crucial to enable the formation of pro-social behaviours and make adults with ASD more likely to obtain meaningful work within the labour market. Individuals with ASD who are transitioning into adulthood do not have the same employment opportunities, especially those who are high functioning. Employment rates for adults with autism over the age of 15 is 14.3% compared to 73.6%. Preparing ASD adults for employment would be significantly improved if program supports were in place. The path autistic adolescents take, and the resources available like parent interaction, social supports, and government programs will impact their quality of life, employability, and their contribution to society as a whole.

Having further programming available and increased availability of residential programs may decrease the need for respite funding, supporting adults with ASD in the development of skills with peers in group home environments. Unfortunately, enrolment opportunities in these programs are also very limited.

In summary, the DCDSB SEAC is asking you, Minister Lecce, to consider the request of the Towns of Ajax and Whitby, and to stand in solidarity with adults with ASD and their families by increasing funding to support essential programs for them. An increase in funding will enable adults with ASD to live more fulsome lives and participate in more meaningful ways in Canadian society. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Valerie Adamo

Mrs. Valerie Adamo, Chair
Special Education Advisory Committee
Durham Catholic District School Board