

## AGENDA

### Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting

Wednesday, December 13, 2023, 6:30 p.m.

Catholic Education Centre - Chapel and Room 301

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

*Vision: Changing the world through Catholic education.*

SEAC Advent Mass 6:30 p.m.

Pages

#### A. Routine Matters

1. Call to Order and Attendance
2. Land Acknowledgment
3. Approval of Agenda
4. Approval of the Minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting, November 15, 2023
5. Previous Business

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#### B. Presentations and Staff Reports

1. Special Education Plan Feedback: S. Baiana
2. Entry into Dufferin-Peel CDSB: J. Toste

#### C. Budget

#### D. Reports from Trustees for Receipt

#### E. Information/Reports from Community Associations

#### F. Information and Correspondence

#### G. Communication

#### H. Questions Asked by Committee Members

#### I. Future Meetings

January 17, 2024

February 21, 2024

March 20, 2024

April 17, 2024

May 15, 2024

June 12, 2024

**J. Adjournment**

**MINUTES**

**Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting**

**Wednesday, November 15, 2023, 7:00 p.m.**

**CEC - Boardroom**

Attendees:	<p>Bruno Iannicca Dely Farrace Luz del Rosario Heather Bialowas Myra Del Rosario Liza Dowson</p> <p>Lisette Gaylie Janice Hatton Caroline Huxtable Christine Koczmara Pam Boniferro Andrea Isaac Laura Odo Laurie-Anne Clark</p>	<p>Trustee - Chair Brampton Caledon Community Living - Vice Chair - Representative Alternate Chair Down Syndrome Assoc. of Peel: Caring Network - Representative ABC Association for Bright Children - Representative Ontario Association for Families of Children with Communication Disorders - Representative Easter Seals Ontario - Representative Autism Ontario, Peel Chapter - Representative Epilepsy South Central Ontario - Representative Community Living Mississauga - Representative Dufferin-Peel Educational Resource Workers' Association - Alternative OECTA Elementary - Alternative Superintendent representative Member At Large, Central Committee for Catholic School Councils</p>
Regrets:	<p>Thomas Thomas Airene Cunanan Lisa Papaloni Herman Vilorio Gian Luca Ferrari Debbie Hammond</p> <p>Shanna Walsh Sue Steer</p>	<p>Alternate Trustee Autism Ontario, Peel Chapter - Alternative Learning Disabilities Association of Peel Region - Representative Alternate Trustee Member At Large, Central Committee for Catholic School Councils Dufferin-Peel Educational Resource Workers' Association - Representative Down Syndrome Assoc. of Peel: Caring Network - Alternative Superintendent, Family of Schools</p>
Staff:	<p>Sharon Chambers Joanne Dean Cristine Pergotski Laura Pincente Jacqueline Toste Katherine Magee Gina Renda Mathew Thomas Anna Gentile</p>	<p>Principal, Vice Principal Association, Elementary Chief, Speech/Language/Hearing/Vision Association of Professional Student Services Personnel Consultant, Secondary Transitions and Diverse Learners Consultant, Diverse Learning Needs Executive Assistant, Special Education and Learning Services - Recorder Principal, Vice Principal Association, Secondary Superintendent, Planning and Operations General Manager, Transportation</p>
Recorder:	Katherine Magee	Executive Assistant, Special Education and Learning Services

**A. Routine Matters**

1. Call to Order and Attendance  
Chair of SEAC, Bruno Iannicca, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.
2. Opening Prayer - L. Dowson
3. Land Acknowledgment - Superintendent Papaloni
4. Approval of Agenda

**THAT THE AGENDA BE APPROVED.**

**CARRIED**

5. Approval of the Minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting, October 18, 2023

**THAT THE MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING, OCTOBER 18, 2023, BE APPROVED.**

**CARRIED**

6. Previous Business

**B. Presentations and Staff Reports**

1. Transportation Presentation: Superintendent M. Thomas; A. Gentile  

Superintendent Papaloni introduced Superintendent Thomas, Planning and Operations Department and A. Gentile, General Manager, Transportation Department. Superintendent Thomas discussed STOPR, the main transportation service for DPCDSB. A. Gentile explained the statistics for special education students. There are approximately 1,200 special education students, many of which need special equipment. STOPR procedures are administered according to Ministry guidelines. Procedures are available on STOPR's website. Courtesy busing procedure states that courtesy students are not assigned to special education buses, due to the needs of the special education students. STOPR does, however, want to support the families of special education students. They understand the need to keep siblings together, where possible, either on special education buses or regular buses. This is accomplished with the help of the school administration and special education departments. They follow up with the schools, bus drivers and operators to ensure safety and other concerns are addressed.

L. Dowson asked if this was the first year for the allowance of courtesy busing for eligible and non-eligible riders. A. Gentile answered that this is an ongoing yearly process, where siblings are allowed to ride together, where possible, either on a special education or regular bus. L. Dowson asked how this process happens, since some parents are declined. Superintendent Thomas answered that this year they are being more responsive to the families who need this service and are also considering non-eligible students. L. Dowson said that it is a hardship for a family when they cannot have all their children on the same bus. A. Gentile

asked if L. Dowson was declined this year? L. Dowson answered that it was last year. A. Gentile asked her to put in the request again this year, because this year they are trying to assist families in a greater capacity.

H. Bialowas asked how many students are allowed on a special education bus when there are some students who may require extra space around them. A. Gentile answered that maximum 12 students are allowed on a small special education bus, but this may be less depending on each situation. They rely on the school to develop the seating plan, with follow ups with the driver to ensure the seating plan works.

L. Gaylie asked what is meant by ineligible students. A. Gentile answered that these are the students who do not meet the criteria to ride on the bus. L. Gaylie asked if it was due to budget constraints. A. Gentile answered that the spots have to be saved for eligible students, but can be considered if there is room. L. Gaylie asked if excursions are handled by STOPR. A. Gentile answered no, they are not. L. Gaylie asked if STOPR is responsible for hiring bus companies. A. Gentile answered yes, they have contracts with four operators. L. Gaylie asked if STOPR hires buses that can accommodate both special education students and regular students. A. Gentile answered that this is already in place. Wheelchair buses are being investigated. L. Gaylie asked if STOPR has input into buses used by secondary schools. Superintendent Thomas answered that those are busettes and are outside the scope of STOPR. L. Gaylie mentioned that special education students should try to be accommodated on regular buses, to allow for better inclusion, even when wheelchair bound. A. Gentile answered that there are buses with accommodation for special education students. Superintendent Thomas added that it is a worthwhile goal. There are a number of logistic issues. We rely on funding and have to be efficient to be able to provide these services.

C. Koczmar asked if both the Peel and Dufferin-Peel school students are on the same buses. A. Gentile said that they have in the past, but currently they do not. This allows for shorter commutes and more space on the buses. C. Koczmar asked how many students are declined courtesy seating. A. Gentile answered that none have been declined this year. C. Koczmar asked what the process is to receive courtesy busing. A. Gentile answered that eligible student requests for courtesy sibling busing come from schools and are accommodated whenever possible. This year, ineligible siblings are also considered. Each case is investigated by the transportation department to ensure student safety and possibility for courtesy seating. Trustee Bruno Iannicca added that the process needs to be made clear at the school level. Superintendent Thomas answered that the baseline is that sibling courtesy ridership is not allowed on special education buses. But, from there, they will examine each case separately to see if they can be accommodated. They have to be careful not to create harmful situations. The process is the same, the parent puts in the request to the school, the school reviews it, the information goes to STOPR and STOPR works with the school to determine if there is space on the bus. C. Koczmar asked if this process is in place in schools currently. Superintendent Thomas answered that this process is in place in schools, all administrators are aware of the process. C. Koczmar asked what happens if the request goes to an association. Superintendent Papaloni answered that if it goes to an association, they should contact the special education department so that we can forward to the schools. But the process is that it should generally go to the schools. C. Koczmar asked if the family has a choice of whether the siblings ride on a special education bus or regular bus. Superintendent Papaloni answered that the school gives them the option, if it's available.

L. Gaylie asked if the 11 ineligible students are all in Dufferin-Peel. A. Gentile answered yes, just Dufferin-Peel. L. Gaylie asked for a copy of this presentation. A. Gentile will provide a copy to Katherine.

L. Dowson mentioned that parents do not know that courtesy busing is now available for ineligible students. They should be informed. Also, inclusion is important to the special education children because the child does not understand why they are not allowed to ride with their sibling. Superintendent Thomas answered that transportation is a part of the whole school experience and inclusion is a very valid point. Anna Gentile deserves credit for her supportiveness in this. As well, Trustee Luz del Rosario and Bruno Iannicca have to be commended for their advocacy to the Ministry to help get additional funding. L. Dowson thanked the trustees for bringing this issue to the transportation department. She asked if this will be communicated to the principals so that parents are informed. Superintendent Papaloni answered that it will be conveyed at our next Family of Schools Consultants meeting, who will in turn bring it to their Family of Schools Superintendent meeting where the message will be relayed to the principals. Trustee Bruno Iannicca added that the committees should take this back to their communities to also help inform parents.

L. Gaylie asked who arranges busing for school excursions. Superintendent Papaloni answered that it is through the principal of the school, and factors such as scheduling and cost have to be considered. L. Gaylie asked if they use other buses outside of STOPR. A. Gentile answered yes they can use other alternate operators, there is a list of approved buses.

D. Farrace asked if there are discussions for transportation for the students once they leave school. Superintendent Thomas answered that he does not have information on other public transportation that they can transition to after they leave school.

L. Dowson asked if there are cameras on all special education buses. A. Gentile answered that only 10% of buses are required to have cameras. The cameras are portable and are moved around. L. Dowson asked if the driver can intervene if there is a problem. A. Gentile answered that if it is a medical emergency, they can assist.

2. Upcoming Event - Gifted Information: J. Toste

Superintendent Papaloni introduced J. Toste, Special Education Consultant. J. Toste highlighted the upcoming Gifted Information Session on November 27th. J. Toste also thanked M. Del Rosario for offering to support the event.

3. Upcoming Event - Welcome to Dufferin-Peel CDSB for Students with Differing Abilities: J. Toste

J. Toste explained the upcoming Welcome to Dufferin-Peel for Students with Differing Abilities event. It provides an opportunity to welcome newly registered families of children with special needs into our community.

4. Upcoming PROGrant Event - Inclusion: J. Toste

J. Toste discussed the upcoming PROGrant event Inclusion. There will be a guest speaker, author of See Me for Me. This book will be handed out to all families attending.

**C. Budget – Nil**

**D. Reports from Trustees for Receipt**

Trustee Luz del Rozario discussed the opportunities with Community and Planning partnerships, renting out spaces available in our school board with outside communities. She also reviewed the enrolment report received from Dufferin-Peel. There was a decrease in enrolment of 1,178 elementary students and an increase of 58 secondary students. There is a total of 71,457 students at September 2023. Trustee Luz del Rozario explained the new Chipmunk application pilot. It is designed to allow parents to track their children's buses. It is in early stages, but parent feedback has been very positive.

Trustee Bruno Iannicca mentioned that the Anti-Sex Trafficking presentation will be postponed to the new year.

L. Gaylie asked if there was progress on PPM 81. Superintendent Papaloni answered that it has been on pause, with no further progress from the Ministry.

**E. Information/Reports from Community Associations - Nil**

**F. Information and Correspondence**

1. Email to Trustee Bruno Iannicca from the Ministry

Trustee Bruno Iannicca presented the email received from the Ministry regarding the SEAC letter sent earlier about the lack of Educational Resource Workers. The email did not address the need to encourage more candidates to enter the field of Care Workers. The committee voted to re-write the letter. D. Farrace agreed to compose the letter. Trustee Bruno Iannicca asked if the committee wanted to invite the Ministry Director of Special Education to a SEAC meeting. The committee decided to plan the questions for her and bring that back to a future meeting first, then follow up and invite her to a future meeting.

**G. Communication - Nil**

**H. Questions Asked by Committee Members**

L. Dowson asked about the Right to Read report. The report states an assessment should be done by grade four, but the assessments do not usually happen until grade four. Is this due to wait lists? Superintendent Papaloni answered that this is a factor, but also the type of assessment should be looked at. We are currently looking at a Reading Assessment vendor to help with tools for the assessments. Assessments should be ongoing to evaluate the difficulties. The child should first acclimatize to the classroom before an assessment, to give them the best chance to show what they are capable of. L. Dowson asked what parents should expect. If they are struggling from Kindergarten and continue to struggle into grade two, should they start assessments in grade two? Superintendent Papaloni answered that you would have to look at what assessments have been done, what interventions have been put in place. If there is continued progress they should continue with interventions. If there is no progress even with many interventions, that is when it becomes a concern. L. Dowson asked what the waitlist was currently. Superintendent Papaloni answered that it depends on the school and the different factors in each school. L. Dowson asked if there is data on how many families get private assessments. Superintendent answered no, not that she was aware of. She mentioned that the Special Education department is looking into an electronic information gathering system. This will provide better information on assessments and waitlists.

L. Gaylie announced that she will be stepping down from Easter Seals after 12 years. Easter Seals will be looking for a replacement. Next month will be her last month with SEAC.

C. Koczmar asked if anyone is interested in a webinar on Inclusion, from two students working with school boards. Information will be sent to Katherine to send to the committee.

D. Farrace asked if L. Gaylie's son will be playing at the Christmas mass. Superintendent Papaloni answered that we would be happy to invite him.

**I. Future Meetings**

December 13, 2023

January 17, 2024

February 21, 2024

March 20, 2024

April 17, 2024

May 15, 2024

June 12, 2024

**CARRIED**

**J. Adjournment**

**Moved by** L. Gaylie

**THAT THE MEETING BE ADJOURNED AT 8:50 P.M.**

**CARRIED**