

AGENDA

Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting

Wednesday, April 12, 2023, 7:00 p.m.

CEC - Boardroom

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

Vision: Changing the world through Catholic education.

Pages

A. Routine Matters

1. Call to Order and Attendance
2. Opening Prayer 3
3. Land Acknowledgment
4. Approval of Agenda
5. Approval of Minutes, SEAC Meeting, March 22, 2023 4
6. Previous Business

B. Presentations and Staff Reports

1. Finance Presentation: J. Cherepacha, B. Hester, G. Arangio, C. Salemi, D. Santucci
2. Skills Competition: R. Commisso, L. Pincente, C. D'Souza
3. Special Education Plan: S. Baiana, R. Commisso

C. Budget

D. Reports from Trustees for Receipt

E. Information/Reports from Community Associations

F. Work Group

1. Parent Reaching Out Grant - Speech and Hearing: T. Cameron

G. Information and Correspondence 9

1. Letter from Near North DSB to the Minister of Education: Superintendent Papaloni
2. Letter from Bruce-Grey CDSB to the Minister of Education: Superintendent Papaloni

H. Communication

I. Questions Asked of, and by, Committee Members

J. Questions asked by Public

K. Future Meetings

Wednesday, May 17, 2023

Wednesday, June 14, 2023

L. Adjournment

Opening Prayer:

God of new life, during the season of
spring,

We Celebrate the Risen Lord, Your Son
Jesus,

And recognize the beauty of the earth,
Your creation.

May we always offer You our prayers of
thanksgiving for the season of spring.

Amen

MINUTES

Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting

**Wednesday, March 22, 2023, 7:00 p.m.
Board Room, Catholic Education Centre**

Attendees:	Luz del Rosario	Trustee - Alternate Chair
	Dely Farrace	Brampton Caledon Community Living - Vice Chair - Representative
	Herman Vilorio	Alternate Trustee
	Heather Bialowas	Down Syndrome Assoc. of Peel: Caring Network - Representative
	Myra Del Rosario	ABC Association for Bright Children - Representative
	Lisette Gaylie	Easter Seals Ontario - Representative
	Caroline Huxtable	Epilepsy South Central Ontario - Representative
	Christine Koczmaro	Community Living Mississauga - Representative
	Lisa Papaloni	Learning Disabilities Association of Peel Region - Representative
	Debbie Hammond	Dufferin-Peel Educational Resource Workers' Association - Representative
	Kevin Hickey	VOICE for Hearing Impaired Children - Representative
Regrets:	Bruno Iannicca	Trustee - Chair
	Thomas Thomas	Alternate Trustee
	Airene Cunanan	Autism Ontario, Peel Chapter - Alternative
	Liza Dowson	Ontario Association for Families of Children with Communication Disorders - Representative
	Janice Hatton	Autism Ontario, Peel Chapter - Representative
	Gian Luca Ferrari	Member At Large, Central Committee for Catholic School Councils
	Shanna Walsh	Down Syndrome Assoc. of Peel: Caring Network - Alternative
	Pam Boniferro	Dufferin-Peel Educational Resource Workers' Association - Alternative
	Andrea Isaac	OECTA Elementary - Alternative
Staff:	Lucy Papaloni	Superintendent, Special Education and Learning Services
	Sabrina Baiana	Coordinator, Diverse Learning Needs
	Rosanna Commisso	Coordinator, Diverse Learning Needs
	Marisa De Oliveira	OECTA Secondary - Representative
	Clementine D'Souza	Consultant, Secondary Transitions and Diverse Learners
	Pina Grosso	Chief of Social Work
	Cristine Pergotski	Association of Professional Student Services Personnel
	Laura Pincente	Consultant, Secondary Transitions and Diverse Learners
	Peter Cusumano	Principal, Vice Principal Association, Secondary
	Claudia Kline	Principal, Vice Principal Association, Secondary
	Sue Steer	Superintendent, Family of Schools
Recorder	Katherine Magee	Executive Assistant, Special Education and Learning Services

A. Routine Matters

1. Call to Order and Attendance

Alternate Chair of SEAC, Luz del Rosario, called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

2. Opening Prayer - H. Bialowas
3. Land Acknowledgment - S. Baiana
4. Approval of Agenda

THAT THE AGENDA BE APPROVED.

CARRIED

5. Approval of Minutes, SEAC Meeting, February 15, 2023

THAT THE MINUTES OF SEAC MEETING, FEBRUARY 15, 2023, BE APPROVED.

CARRIED

6. Previous Business

Superintendent Papaloni followed up with the question from last month's SEAC meeting regarding buses available in the Young Riders Program for students with differing abilities. She confirmed that two program locations are equipped with a wheelchair accessible vehicle. All buses, including these, can be accessed through online registration.

B. Presentations and Staff Reports

1. Social Work Presentation: P. Grosso

P. Grosso, Chief Social Worker, presented on March is Social Work Month. This year's theme is Breaking Barriers. A large portion of Social Work is in support of students with differing abilities. The department generally supports over 5000 students yearly, including direct student support, working with families and collaborating with community partners. P. Grosso discussed the many pathways to supporting students. She shared a video from Patricia Codner, School Mental Health Ontario explaining Mental Health.

D. Farrace mentioned that she could not see or hear the video and asked that we try to improve the technology.

L. Gaylie asked regarding initiatives to help students to have a voice. P. Grosso answered that there are posters, announcements, schoolwide and family initiatives. Superintendent Papaloni added that there are also Mental Health Lead initiatives throughout the schools, including Mental Health Champions, Posters, Bookmarks and Help Lines for ongoing support. L. Gaylie asked how to include students with differing abilities to help them feel that they are a part of the group. P. Grosso answered that we know and are committed to

help these students on an ongoing basis. We continually work with families to overcome these hurdles.

M. Del Rosario asked about accessibility to the Social Workers as well as relationship building with Social Workers for student support. P. Grosso answered that it would be through the school principal/administrator that students would connect with a Social Worker. If the student is already connected with the support services team, they would request help from the Social Worker through this team. To maintain these relationships, Social Workers are generally assigned to the same schools each year and changes would only happen if the Social Worker required the change. M. Del Rosario asked about immediate need protocol. P. Grosso answered that the school administrators are trained and will respond quickly to emerging crisis needs. There is a circle of care to maintain continuity of support.

C. Koczmaro thanked everyone for their effort in working with the available technology. She asked how many Social Workers the Board had. P. Grosso answered that there are approximately 40 Social Workers and 12 Mental Health Workers. C. Koczmaro asked how they are distributed amongst the schools? P. Grosso said that every school has a Social Worker and that Mental Health Workers are strategically placed at schools depending on needs. C. Koczmaro asked if there are 40 Social Workers, how can one be dedicated to each school? P. Grosso answered that yes, each school has a Social Worker, but they are not full time at each school. They are at different schools on different days. There is also flexibility, depending on urgent needs. C. Koczmaro asked how many students are identified as special needs. P. Grosso answered that she would not be able to provide a number, they do not track this data. She mentioned that a large portion are students with differing abilities. C. Koczmaro asked how many students are supported each month. P. Grosso answered that over the course of a year, approximately 5000 students are supported. At any given time, a Social Worker will have a caseload of approximately 80 - 100 students. C. Koczmaro asked what the video was about? P. Grosso said that we will forward the link to the committee. She explained that the video defined what Mental Health was, how to reach out for support and how to help students thrive.

C. Huxtable asked how families are made aware of this support for their children. P. Grosso said that the families can receive this information through the school principal/administrator. It is important for families to maintain relationships with the schools.

2. Transitions Planning Toolkit and Portfolio: L. Pincente, C. D'Souza

Superintendent Papaloni introduced L. Pincente, Consultant, Secondary Transitions and Diverse Learners, showed a video on Transition Planning Resources for students and families as they navigate the seven year program.

Lisa Papaloni asked how these programs are facilitated and supported in the schools? L. Pincente answered that every student in the Planning for Independence program receives a binder with this information. It is implemented in each classroom, as well as in Transitions meetings, depending on the year they are in. Lisa Papaloni asked if there is a specific Transitions teacher that coordinates this program. L. Pincente answered, yes, it is run through the Academic Resource Department Head and then distributed to the program teachers. It is overseen through surveys and site visits.

L. Gaylie asked if this was an initiative through the DSO? L. Pincente answered that it was established through collaboration with Peel School Board and Community agencies with Dufferin-Peel. L. Gaylie asked if students are doing this in conjunction with My Blueprint. L. Pincente said that it can be used in conjunction with it. L. Gaylie likes the idea of the binder because students can indicate their goals. She asked how the students with differing abilities are helped to arrive at their goals? L. Pincente answered that they review it yearly to match it with their activities. L. Gaylie hopes that this binder helps students think about life beyond schools and to help them achieve those goals. L. Pincente answered that this is the goal as this portfolio is being rolled out.

C. Koczmaro asked if this toolkit leads to standardized goals and expectations? L. Pincente answered that these toolkits are individualized to each student. C. Koczmaro said she is hoping for some standardization when PIP programs are not equal. L. Pincente mentioned that each individual needs a different program that is attainable to them. Each student sets individual goals to achieve success.

D. Farrace asked if staff are trained on how they should follow through with this toolkit. L. Pincente said that the teachers have received Professional Development and they have resources to help them expand their knowledge. D. Farrace feels this will be a great tool, especially for students with more severe needs, to help them go further. She feels it will be better than My Blueprint.

C. Huxtable mentioned that she has received one of these binders and is looking forward to working with it and the activities included. She asked about the long term goals, if they can be worked on in a combination and not just separately? L. Pincente answered that these are the questions answered in the transition meetings, and yes, they can be combined and overlapped. All viable options are explored.

C. Budget - Nil

D. Reports from Trustees for Receipt

Trustee Herman Vioria discussed a report he received from STOPR regarding service delivery. They are continuing to monitor the performance of all bus operators to ensure safe, effective service is provided. STOPR advised that their new online school bus rider safety sessions have been delivered to 30 elementary schools.

At the Faith and Program Committee meeting, trustees received reports from Library Support Services, Student Mental Health and Well-Being, Student Trustee Elections and revised policy for student trustees. He congratulated the two new student trustees. The majority of the trustees also voted to recommend an additional Indigenous Student Trustee position.

Trustee Luz del Rosario reported on the Ontario Skills Competition that she attended. She was impressed with the coding that the students with differing abilities were participating in. R. Comisso mentioned that it will be part of their presentation for next month's SEAC meeting.

E. Information/Reports from Community Associations

1. Easter Seal Month; L. Gaylie

L. Gaylie, Easter Seals Ontario, highlighted March is Easter Seals Month, to raise awareness and funds to support children and youth with accessibility issues. The funds raised help

these children and young adults to get access to accessibility equipment and to attend summer camps.

Lisa Papaloni asked what percentage of funds raised goes to Easter Seals? L. Gaylie said that all of the proceeds go directly towards these endeavours.

F. Work Group - Nil

G. Information and Correspondence - Nil

H. Communication - Nil

I. Questions Asked of, and by, Committee Members

C. Koczmaro commented regarding P. Grosso's Social Worker presentation, saying that principals are gatekeepers and she believes this is an important part of how parents can find out about the supports. Also, she would like to know if waitlist information will be provided? Superintendent Papaloni answered that with the Ministry funding we are reducing psychology waitlists, but our Social Workers and Child and Youth Workers do not have waitlists. C. Koczmaro stated that waitlists used to be reported on in the past and asked why this is not reported on? Superintendent Papaloni answered that in the past, waitlist reporting was completed manually. It is very labour intensive. Given the current climate, our resources are being put towards serving the children. Our priority is not on data collection at this time. C. Koczmaro asked if the CCAS look at waitlists? Superintendent Papaloni said she is unable to comment towards what their waitlists look like. They would have to provide that information directly. M. Del Rosario commented that ErinOak Kids provides rehabilitation services. The LIN is no longer providing that. D. Farrace also concurred that the LIN is no longer doing that, just home and community care, such as PSW services. D. Farrace asked M. Del Rosario what ErinOak is doing and what their waitlists are? M. Del Rosario said that ErinOak has moved to a consultative model. They no longer provide hands-on intervention, weekly therapy and other therapies. This has caused a fallout that is being seen in hospitals.

J. Questions asked by Public - Nil

K. Future Meetings

Superintendent Papaloni thanked everyone for their patience and attendance. We will do our best to see if we can address technology issues for our upcoming meeting.

Wednesday, April 12, 2023

Wednesday, May 17, 2023

Wednesday, June 14, 2023

L. Adjournment

Moved by L. Gaylie

THAT THE MEETING BE ADJOURNED AT 8:31 P.M.

CARRIED

February 14, 2023

Hon. Stephen Lecce, Minister of Education
Ministry of Education
15th Floor, 438 University Ave.
Toronto, Ontario M5G 2K8

Dear Minister Lecce:

Re: Special Incidence Portion Claim Funding

The Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) of the Near North District School Board would like to send this letter of support for the concerns expressed by the Durham District School Board regarding funding of the Special Incidence Portion (SIP)

Like other school boards in Ontario would like to remind you that in the spring of 2018 the previous government announced an increase to the SIP claim funding of \$11,016.00, bringing that funding amount up to \$38,016.00 per student from the previous funding amount of \$27,000.00. On August 24, 2018, after school board budgets were prepared and approved, the Ministry announced that the previously-announced increase would be clawed back. Currently the funding received from the Ministry is \$28,803.00, bringing the net increase to \$1,803.00 per student.

SEACs across the province were dismayed by the Ministry of Education decision to claw back that increase, given that the true costs of supporting a student with a SIP claim are significantly higher than the allocated amount. For example, the average cost, including salary and benefits, for an Educational Assistant at the Near North District School Board is \$52,397. A student who requires 2 plus Educational Assistants to support their learning needs would be at a cost of \$104,794 plus.

In the 2021-2022 school year alone, the NNDSB allocated \$707,634 more than was given in Special Education Grants to Special Education services. Some of the revenue the NNDSB has used to fund this gap is the Local Priorities Funding, which, as you are aware, is not guaranteed annual funding from the Province.

Furthermore, when you take into account the claw-back of the SIP funding increase in 2018, combined with the reallocation of the Special Education Per Pupil Amount, this resulted in a net **decrease** in funding and a further increase in the NNDSB's Special Education deficit. In 2017, the Auditor General highlighted that the Ministry of Education's "[f]unding formula uses out-of-date benchmarks and is due for a comprehensive external review."

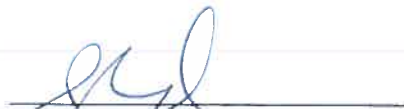
Specifically, we urge the Minister to consider:

- A minimum 5% increase in the Special Education funding that will better align with the true costs associated with SIP claims to support our students and increase funding accordingly.
- That the Special Education funding model be reviewed annually and changed to accurately reflect the increasing and more complex needs of students with special needs.
- An improved process that will eliminate the need for such intensive applications or provide support for Boards to complete the SIP applications. It takes countless staff hours per SIP application, which impacts the time our trained Special Education teachers and leads are away from their other important work supporting high-needs students.

Sincerely,



Albina Lavictoire,
Chair, Special Education Advisory Committee,
Near North District School Board



Erika Lougheed,
Chair, Board of Trustees,
Near North District School Board

cc: Chairs of all Ontario Special Education Advisory Committees



Bruce-Grey Catholic District School Board

799 16th Avenue, Hanover, Ontario N4N 3A1

519-364-5820

www.bgcdsb.org

1-877-471-8121

March 22, 2023

Hon. Stephen Lecce, Minister of Education

Ministry of Education

15th Floor, 438 University Ave.

Toronto, Ontario M5G 2K8

Dear Minister Lecce:

Re: Special Incidence Portion Claim Funding

I am writing to you on behalf of the members of Bruce-Grey Catholic District School Board's (BGCDsb) Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC), regarding funding of the Special Incidence Portion (SIP).

We would like to remind you that, in the spring of 2018, the previous government announced an increase to the SIP claim funding of \$11,016.00, bringing that funding amount up to \$38,016.00 per student from the previous funding amount of \$27,000.00. On August 24, 2018, after school board budgets were prepared and approved, the Ministry announced that the previously-announced increase would be clawed back. Currently the funding received from the Ministry is \$28,803.00, bringing the net increase to \$1,803.00 per student.

SEACs across the province were dismayed by the Ministry of Education's decision to claw back that increase, given that the true costs of supporting a student with a SIP claim are significantly higher than the allocated amount. For example, the average cost, including salary and benefits, for an Educational Assistant is \$50,189. A student who requires 2 plus Educational Assistants to support their learning needs would be at a cost of \$100,378 plus. The Ministry of Education's SIP amount covers approximately 28.7 percent of the true cost to support a student with significant learning needs. The BGCDsb covers the remaining 71.3 percent of the cost from other Special Education and operational grants.

In 2017, the Auditor General highlighted that the Ministry of Education's "funding formula uses out-of-date benchmarks and is due for a comprehensive external review." An additional concern for our board is the half/full day allocation of the amount. Given that it already does not come close to covering the cost for students who require these intense supports, we believe a more fair approach is to prorate the amount for a student who is not accessing these supports for a full/half day. Lastly, due to the vast geographical area of our board, large transportation costs are often incurred to transport students with a SIP claim to and from school since regular bussing is not often an option.

Let Your Light Shine

Our SEAC is extremely concerned about the direction funding for special education is taking. Inadequate funding of Special Education puts our most vulnerable children at risk by cutting the services that they need to be successful. Our entire system is strained when school boards are required to take revenues from other areas to meet its statutory commitment to children accessing Special Education services. We urge the Minister to evaluate the true costs associated with SIP claims to support our students and increase funding accordingly. We further request, once again, that the Special Education funding model be reviewed and changed to accurately reflect the increasing and more complex needs of students with special needs.

On behalf of the Bruce-Grey Catholic District School Board's Special Education Advisory Committee, I thank you for your time and attention to this matter,

Linda Strader

Linda Strader, Trustee
Bruce-Grey Catholic District School Board

cc: Chairs of Ontario Special Education Advisory Committees
Rick Byers - MPP Bruce Grey Owen Sound
Lisa Thompson - MPP Huron Bruce