

# Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Durham Catholic District School Board

April 5, 2022 at 7:30 PM

**Virtual Meeting**

**Members Present:**

V. Adamo (Chair, VOICE for the Hearing Impaired), W. Heeney (Durham Down Syndrome Association), C. Nosseir (Grandview Children’s Centre), J. Sorhaitz (Learning Disabilities Ontario), A. Massis (Community Representative), A. Dressekie (Community Representative)

**Trustees Present:**

J. Oldman, J. McCafferty

**Staff Present:**

S. Lee-Fernandes (Superintendent of Education), S. Phoenix (Senior Manager, Social Work and Child Youth Counsellors/Chief Attendance Officer), H. Killoran (Student Services Consultant), M. Hammond, (Chief Financial Officer)

**SEAC Representatives:**

D. Assenza (CPCO Representative), T. Robertson (APSSP Representative), L. Jemmott (OECTA Representative)

**Regrets:**

S. Casola (Autism Ontario), M. Cope (CUPE Representative)

1. Opening
   1. Land Acknowledgements
   2. Memorials and Prayer
   3. Roll Call and Apologies
   4. Call to Order

Chair Adamo called the meeting to order at 7:32 p.m., offered the opening prayer, and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

* 1. Approval of the Agenda

Motion:

SS-2022-04-05-01

Approval of Agenda

"That the Special Education Advisory Committee approve the agenda of the Tuesday, April 5, 2022 meeting, as printed."

Motion moved by J. McCafferty and motion seconded by C. Nosseir.

CARRIED

* 1. Approval of the minutes of the previous meeting

**Motion:**

SS-2022-04-05-02

Approval of the Minutes

“That the Special Education Advisory Committee approve the Minutes of the March 8, 2022 meeting as submitted.”

Motion moved by J. Oldman and motion seconded by W. Heeney. CARRIED

* 1. Declarations of Interest

None

1. Items for Information/Decision
   1. Announcements

None

* 1. Presentations
     1. Special Education Budget - Marie Hammond, Chief Financial Officer.

Ms. Hammond provided an overview of the Special Education budget and the current financial status.

She presented highlights of the Grants for Student Needs (GSN) Covid-19 Learning Recovery Fund for the 2022-2023 school year which are to be used for the following:

* Requirements for remote learning options;
* Learning recovery action plan (5-point action plan for learning recovery);
* First-year of a fully de-streamed Grade 9; and
* Enhanced cleaning

Ms. Hammond gave a comprehensive breakdown of the 5 point action plan for the Covid-19 Learning Recovery fund pointing out that the Ministry will be:

* Reintroducing EQAO assessments for data gathering to access the impacts of Covid-19 on student learning;
* Strengthening numeracy and literacy skills;
* Focussing on student resilience and mental well-being;
* Comprehensive tutoring supports that will run between April 2022 and Dec 2022; and
* Investments to better prepare students for job and life skills (skilled trades/entrepreneurship).

The GSN will include the current Covid-19 funding for Special Education and Mental Health going forward, continued staffing supports through Supports for Student Fund (SSF) and Investment in System Priorities (ISP), and an increase in the special education amount (SEA) per-pupil amount. Additional funding will also be provided through the Priorities and Partnership Fund (PPF).

Ms. Hammond also provided a thorough breakdown of the budget process. The Finance Committee is seeking input from Parents/Guardians and the community. The committee was invited to provide input and engage in the consultation process which will be done through the ThoughtExchange platform from April 8th to April 22nd and the results will be shared with Finance Committee Meetings in April and May.

* 1. Discussion Items

None

* 1. Business arising from previous meeting

None

* 1. Staff Reports
     1. Coordinator's Report - Helen Killoran

The EA Allocation Process for 2022-23 school year has begun with Student Services Coordinators meeting with each individual school to review anticipated student needs.

The Ministry of Education has granted the DCDSB an extension to be part of the Project SEARCH pilot with September 2023 as the goal for implementing the program with our first cohort of students. The Board will be making pitches to potential local business host sites as well as purchasing a license from Project SEARCH in Cincinnati which will give the DCDSB access to the online portal containing the resources and curriculum for the program.

The March Sharing of Excellence Series included:

* How to Develop Self-Management Systems

On April 6, Life Beyond High School virtual event will be hosted for grade 9-12 students.

March PST Meeting included updates on the Ontario Autism Program (OAP), the presentations on the Right to Read Inquiry and the Science of Reading.

DCDSB celebrated World Autism Awareness Day on Monday, April 4, 2022 with the "Celebrate the Spectrum" theme. DCDSB supports 563 students with ASD across both elementary and secondary panels. The schools celebrated Autism Awareness by tweeting beautiful pictures of their front foyer displays and virtual classroom participation.

Durham Catholic Autism Resource Team (DCART) is supporting student referrals initiated from both elementary and secondary schools in the areas of:

* Alternative programming and curriculum modifications
* Communication
* Social language
* Challenging behaviour
* Sensory needs/environmental factors

The new service delivery model for comprehensive and consultative services provides additional supports for students who do not qualify for DCART. Consultative services are also being provided by our Consultant and Resource Teacher for Autism Services. The objective is to further develop capacity building in the school while supporting the Program Support Teacher (PST) in their roles as special education leaders.

The Geneva Centre Ministry Course funding for Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) was given to DCDSB on the Sonderley online platform. $33,000 was provided and all funds were spent.

A Numbered Memo in January offered courses to all educators who were interested. 53 educators registered for courses.

Promoting Emergence of Advanced Knowledge (PEAK) is an evidence-based assessment and corresponding curriculum that combines the traditional ABA verbal behaviour approach with the science of Derived Relational Responding. It also helps with teaching problem-solving skills and advanced language skills. All members of DCART and Early Intervention Classroom (EIC) Staff were trained in a 2-day certification course. PEAK is used to support student learning in all 3 EIC sites, under the direction of Kara Kenney, Board Certified Behaviour Analyst (BCBA) and supported by Melissa Hooper, Behaviour Support Specialist (BSS).

The ABA courses were offered virtually after school and on Professional Activity (PA) Days. They were well attended by educators. In addition to the 4 ABA certificate courses, course offerings also include:

* Sensory Integration
* Functional Behaviour Assessment
* Social Language
* Alternative Curriculum/IEPs
* Boom Cards
* Supporting Students on the Spectrum

The After School Social Skills Programs currently offer virtual learning for:

* Program for the Education and Enrichment of Relationship Skills (PEERS) for students in Grades 7-12
* Friendship Lab for both students and parents in Grades 3-6
* Secret Agent Society for students ages 8-12

All programs have been well attended all year. DCART staff was trained and certified in the new PEERS for Adults program which includes how to support caregivers, as well as supporting older students with navigating dating in appropriate ways.

Helen answered questions as they arose.

* + 1. Mental Health Leader's Report - Shelley Phoenix

In March, 53 staff members participated in the 3-part Supporting Minds at School, Mental Health Literacy series.

On March 30, two DCDSB Behaviour Support Specialists were invited to share their Movement Floor initiative at a School Mental Health Ontario provincial webinar, showcasing best practices in supporting the mental health of students with special education needs. Over the past couple of years, two BSSs on the Behaviour Resource Team have been working with schools, upon request, to create custom Movement Floors to fit a specific space in a school. The floors are created for students to help promote self-regulation through heavy work movements. They can help a student to “upregulate” or “down-regulate”, depending on what their body needs in that moment. The floors are typically in primary (Kindergarten to Gr. 3) hallways, but they have also developed one for an intermediate space.

On April 27 and 28, Student Services will be hosting a Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) virtual session for staff in a “gatekeeper” role.

Plans are in the works for Child and Youth Mental Health Week, which happens in the first week of May and overlaps with Catholic Education Week. The theme of Catholic Education Week is Rebuild, Restore, Renew Together. Student Services is working with the Faith department to integrate our planning of both in-person and virtual events. Activities will be provided for schools, along with the creation of a parent webpage with resources. On May 3, staff and students are invited to wear something green to acknowledge the importance of child and youth mental health and as a symbol of mental health awareness for all. On May 5th, a safeTALK session will be offered for all staff.

The current Staff Wellness initiatives focus on body, mind and spirit and include:

* Taize Prayer Service on March 25
* Indigenous Wellness Walk on April 6
* Virtual Fitness session in mid-April

All of these sessions are led by various DCDSB staff members and are open to all staff.

* + 1. Superintendent's Report - Susie Lee-Fernandes

Superintendent Lee-Fernandes shared that with the continued supply coverage challenges, the Special Education Review Meeting 2 was cancelled and the Meeting 3 will also be cancelled, however, the Student Services Executive Team will continue to collect data on various aspects of the Special Education and move to a full review during the 2022-2023 school year.

Superintendent Lee-Fernandes shared that at the February 28th Board Meeting, the Board approved the formation of a planning committee to oversee the development of the Multi-Year Strategic Plan (MYSP) for 2023-2026. The Committee will be led by the Chair of the Board and the Director of Education and comprised of trustees and designated student, staff and community partner representatives. The Multi-Year Strategic Planning Committee will provide oversight and input into the planning process, ensure opportunities for student, staff and community engagement, provide feedback at key intervals and review the final draft plan to be recommended to the Board for approval.

Superintendent Lee-Fernandes answered questions from the Committee.

**Motion:**

SS-2022-04-05-03

Approval of the April 5, 2022 verbal Coordinator, Mental Health Leader and Superintendent Reports

“THAT the Special Education Advisory Committee accept the verbal Coordinator, Mental Health Leader and Superintendent Reports of the April 5, 2022 meeting.”

Motion moved by J. Oldman and motion seconded by W. Heeney. CARRIED

* 1. Association Reports

Grandview Kids - C. Nosseir

Ontario Autism Program (OAP) – Entry to School program now in operation!

This program is offered to children entering Kindergarten or Gr. 1 for the first time, with a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder, and are registered with the Ontario Autism Program. The Entry to School program will provide up to six months of school readiness skill building with a multi-disciplinary team of experts in child development. Thereafter, students will receive up to six months of transition support by a Transition Co-ordinator, who will work with the child, their family and their school team to ensure a successful placement in school. More details are available on GrandviewKids.ca.

Other Information:

* No updated information related to consultations on PPM 81 is available at this time.
* Grandview Kids has named Children First Consortium as the preferred proponent to build the NEW Grandview Kids in Ajax. The project is expected to reach financial close in the month of April, followed by a virtual groundbreaking ceremony. Members of the community are encouraged to follow Grandview Kids on social media to learn how they can witness this historic event.

Website: [GrandviewKids.ca](https://grandviewkids.ca)

LDADR - Learning Disabilities Association of Durham Region - J. Sorhaitz

Events:

April 2022

• Thursday, April 7th

Integra – Walk A Mile in My Shoes webinar

This experiential and interactive workshop is designed to give participants an understanding of what it might feel like to have a LD. Participants will gain knowledge about current thinking in the field LDs, and a practical understanding of how they may affect mental health and everyday life at home and at school.

• Thursday, April 7th – May 19th

CADDAC – Interactive ADHD Parenting Course

This five-part interactive course has been designed for parents starting the ADHD journey with their child and for those striving to understand their child’s impairments and needs. It will cover the things you need to know about ADHD: what it really is; how it impacts learning, behaviour, and emotional regulation; treatment options, and how to implement home and school strategies. This course is geared to parents of children between 4 and 12 years of age and will be approximately 12 hours in total, divided into 5 sessions. There is a cost associated with this course.

• Thursday, April 21st

Integra – Anxiety and Learning Disorders webinar

In this workshop, we will discuss the role of anxiety in our lives, how it is expressed, and the relationship between anxiety and Learning Disabilities (LDs). Strategies for how to understand and support children and youth with anxiety will be discussed.

May 2022

• ONBIDA – Teacher Training “Introduction to Structured Literacy Instruction” \*\*Registration starts in May (see ONBIDA’s website for more details). This training will include self-study with the online course “The Reading Teacher’s Top 10 Tools” by Dr. Deb Glaser which is aligned with the IDA Knowledge and Practice Standards.

• Thursday, May 5th

Integra – Executive Functioning and Emotion Regulation webinar

This workshop provides participants with an understanding of the nature of executive functioning (higher-order thinking skills including planning, organization, and flexibility) for children with LDs in this area. Practical strategies to support the development of executive functioning skills and self-regulation will be shared.

• Thursday, May 19th

Integra – The Social Impact of Learning Disabilities webinar

In this workshop, we will discuss why children with LDs are at risk of experiencing social challenges with their peers. Participants will explore what skills are needed in order to be socially competent in everyday life. Strategies on how to understand and support social competence will be shared.

Open Date

* LDAO Online Workshops and Course

A variety of self-paced workshops on a variety of topics relating to Learning disabilities.

* ONBIDA Project Read Online Webinar Courses “Framing Your Thoughts” here

The Framing Your Thoughts® program is centered on a sequential and systematic method of instruction designed to help students write and arrange accurate and creative sentences and paragraphs. This sequential and multisensory program is part of the Project Read® curriculum, a research-based language arts program. ONBIDA is pleased to offer these programs at a special discount for Canadian educators.

* CADDAC past webinars CADDAC Webinars

Free access to a variety of past webinars on a wide range of topics relating to ADHD

Resources

* LDAO LD@Home <https://www.ldathome.ca>
* LDAO LD@School <https://www.ldatschool.ca>

○ YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCHEA_To2NoyMMKitLII-JQw/videos>

NEW “What is an LD? An Introduction to Learning Disabilities”

* Ontario Branch of International Dyslexia Association (ONBIDA) YouTube channel

○ <https://www.youtube.com/user/DyslexiaAssociation>

A variety of videos from ONBIDA’s webinars NEW “Race, Class and Reading: Disrupting the Pedagogy of Low Expectations”

* International Dyslexia Association (IDA) YouTube channel

<https://www.youtube.com/c/InternationalDyslexiaAssociation>

A variety of videos from IDA’s various webinars and conferences NEW “The Dual Needs for

Decodable and Informational Texts for Beginning Readers”

Bytesized PD - DDSB YouTube channel <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCEh8CGhc-2zSY-mC61dMT3g/videos>

Short videos on many aspects of education technology, including assistive technology how-to videos

* Centre for ADHD Awareness Canada (CADDAC) YouTube channel <https://www.youtube.com/c/adhdvid/videos>

This youtube channel features video and audio that deals with an often misunderstood disorder: ADHD. The channel is a presentation of CADDAC (Centre For ADHD Awareness, Canada).

* 1. Correspondence

The Memorandum from the Ministry of Education addressed to the Directors of Education and Superintendents of Special Education, highlights key funding changes to the Special Education Grant (SEG) for the 2022-23 school year, provides technical details regarding the Differentiated Special Education Needs Amount (DSENA) Table amounts for the 2022-23, 2021-22 and 2020-21 school years and provides an update on the approval process for Education Programs in Education and Community Partnership Program (ECPP) for the 2022-23 school year.

No further action was required as Marie Hammond, Chief Financial Officer covered the details of the memorandum in her report.

1. Other Business
   1. Board Communications

None

* 1. Motion to Adjourn

**Motion:**

SS-2022-04-05-04

Motion to Adjourn

“THAT the Special Education Advisory Committee meeting of April 5, 2022 adjourn.”

CARRIED

* + 1. The next meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee will be held on Tuesday, May 3, 2022 @ 7:30 pm
  1. Closing Prayer

Closing prayer was offered by Chair Adamo

The meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Valerie Adamo

Chair, Special Education Advisory Committee

Susie Lee-Fernandes

Superintendent of Education

Recording Secretary: Delfina Pinto