



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

Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
Durham Catholic District School Board
April 11, 2023 at 7:30 PM
Virtual and at CEC – North & South Board Rooms

Members Present:

V. Adamo (VOICE for the Hearing Impaired); W. Heeney (Durham Down Syndrome Association); J. Sorhaitz (Learning Disabilities Ontario); C. Nosseir (Grandview Kids) virtually; A. Massis (Community Representative)

Trustees Present:

J. McCafferty, virtually

Staff Present:

P. Sorhaitz (Superintendent of Education); M. Hammond (Chief Financial Officer); H. Killoran (Student Services Consultant), Y. Fisher-Brown (Senior Manager, Mental Health Initiatives/ Mental Health Leader; C. Siqueira, Numeracy Support Teacher; E. McCall (Communications)

SEAC Representatives:

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

Regrets:

Robert De Souza (Trustee); M. Cope (CUPE Representative), S. Casola (Autism Ontario), C. Julien (Community Representative)

1. Opening

Chair Adamo called the meeting to order at 7:34 p.m., offered the opening prayer and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

- 1.1. Memorials and Prayer
- 1.2. Land Acknowledgements
- 1.3. Roll Call and Apologies
- 1.4. Call to Order
- 1.5. Approval of the Agenda

Motion:

SS-2023-04-11-01
Approval of Agenda

Motion moved by A. Massis and motion seconded by J. Sorhaitz.

"That the Special Education Advisory Committee approve the agenda of the Tuesday, April 11, 2023 meeting, as printed."

CARRIED

1.6. Approval of the minutes of March 7, 2023 SEAC Meeting

Motion:

SS-2023-04-11-02

Approval of Minutes

Motion moved by J. Sorhaitz and motion seconded by J. McCafferty.

"That the Special Education Advisory Committee approve the Minutes of the Tuesday, March 7, 2023 meeting, as printed."

CARRIED

1.7. Declarations of Interest

None

2. Items for Information/Decision

2.1. Announcement

None

2.2. Presentations

2.2.1. Special Education Budget Update - Marie Hammond

Marie Hammond, Chief Financial Officer, provided an overview of the Board and the Special Education's current financial positions.

Ms. Hammond informed that the Board had not received the 23-24 budget details from the Ministry of Education and, therefore, would not be able to share much information on the special education budget for next year.

Ms. Hammond provided highlights of the Stakeholder budget consultations. Four separate ThoughtExchanges were made available to all stakeholders on the budget and strategic priorities. Ms. Hammond also shared a brief overview of some of the key thoughts.

2.2.2. Numeracy Support Teacher - Concetta Siqueira

Concetta Siqueira, the new Numeracy Support Teacher, shared that June 2022 EQAO data results were used to identify schools of focus. She will be working with administrators, PSTs and teachers to enhance numeracy skills for students in grades 6-8 with individual education plans at 3 schools.

Concetta provided a breakdown of the Numeracy Support Teacher role and shared that she will be implementing numeracy strategies and collaborating with and supporting the staff and students at these schools.

2.2.3. Autism Update - Helen Killoran

Helen Killoran, Autism Consultant, provided an in-depth description of her role with the Board.

Helen supports educators that have students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD); she leads the Durham Catholic Autism Resource Team (DCART), a multidisciplinary team that supports elementary and secondary students, educators, and families on a referral basis. She is involved with the coordination services of the Early Intervention Classrooms (EIC), at three school sites. The EIC is a communication-based program that supports language/communication, school-readiness skills, self-regulation, play, and social-emotional development for students in kindergarten. The small classroom placement has a maximum of 6 students per site.

Helen also supports the After School Social Skills Program, a program for students on the spectrum that require additional support and skill building around social skills.

Helen also shared a detailed breakdown of many services, supports, and professional development provided for staff.

Helen informed that April is Autism Awareness Month and that the DCDSB schools celebrated Autism Awareness on Thursday, March 30th, by promoting their front foyers with displays and participating in activities centered around inclusion and acceptance. Helen shared some pictures of the beautiful displays with the committee.

2.3. Business arising from previous meeting

2.3.1. Draft letter - Requesting the option to extend the time students with differing abilities have to remain or continue in Secondary School beyond year 7 and beyond age 21

Deferred

2.3.2. Draft letter - SIP funding

Motion:

SS-2023-04-11-03

Approval of letter as drafted.

“That the Special Education Advisory Committee approve the letter to the Minister of Education requesting that the Minister

evaluate the true costs associated with SIP claims to support students and increase funding accordingly.”

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

2.4. Staff Reports

2.4.1. Student Services Report - Helen Killoran, Yulan Fisher-Brown, Paula Sorhaitz

Helen Killoran provided the following Coordinator's report:

- New PST Mentoring continued in March
- New Elementary PSTs visited the Early Intervention Classrooms (EICs) to see the EIC program in action
- New Secondary PSTs visited their mentor PST to shadow them and to learn about how the Program Support Department runs at the mentor's school
- Sharing of Excellence Series in April: ABA Principles: Generalization

On March 21, the DCDSB celebrated World Down Syndrome Day. The Communications department and Student Services staff were able to join in the fun at St. John Bosco CS.

The Assistive Technology Team delivered 100 additional Chromebooks to each school for student use within the Program Support departments.

On March 29th, Student Services staff provided a parent/guardian session as part of the Navigating Kindergarten Series entitled: Supporting Transitions for Students with Special Needs. A recording of this video is available on the kindergarten tab of our external website.

DCDSB is pleased to participate in LDADR's Power to Achieve Scholarship. Information was sent to all secondary PSTs, Student Success Teachers and Guidance Teachers. We appreciate the generosity of the LDADR.

Project SEARCH Update:

- On-line application closed April 3, 2023
- 18 applicants in total
- Skills Assessment and Interview Day will be held at the Pope Francis Centre on April 26, 2023
- Steering Committee Meetings between all partners (DCDSB, Abilities Centre and Regional Municipality of Durham) are happening monthly to prepare for September 2023 start.

Yulan Fisher-Brown provided the following Mental Health report:

The new Mental Health Strategy will be presented at next board meeting. The strategy is built through the collection of provincial data, as well as data from our staff, students and parents, guardians and caregivers. Four Strategic priorities will inform our work:

1. Amplify the promotive and protective influence of schools by creating culturally responsive, mentally healthy schools and classrooms.
2. Identify and address emerging and escalating student mental health problems.
3. Mobilize focused support for those disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 and/ or those with more serious mental health and addiction concerns.
4. Build and sustain strong safety nets through family and system collaboration.

Upcoming

Parent, Guardian, Caregiver Mental Health Series:

- **Tuesday, April 18:** Youth Engagement- Youth and Substance Use Presented by Pinewood Centre of Lakeridge Health
- **Tuesday, April 25:** Life Promotion/Suicide Prevention- Prepare, Prevent Respond Presented by DCDSB Student Services Staff
- **Tuesday, May 2:** Understanding Mood and Anxiety Difficulties Presented by Ontario Shores
- **Tuesday, May 9:** Game-bling: When Gaming meets Gambling, Presented by the YMCA's Youth Gambling Awareness Program
- **Tuesday, May 16:** The Intersection of Equity and Mental Health Presented by the Black Health Alliance
- Catholic Education and Mental Health Week: May 1-5
- Educators will be given the lesson plans by OCSTA as well as mental health practices and activities to run in their classes.
- Administrators will be given materials for their morning announcements.
- Information for families can be found on the board website

- Sharing of Excellence: Kindergarten Educator Well-being- April 18th
- Navigating Kindergarten Parent Series session: Tips and Strategies to Support Communication Skills and Well-Being- April 19th

Superintendent Paula Sorhaitz, in planning for 2023-24 school year, shared that the Program Support Teacher expression of interest has begun.

The Special Incident Portion (SIP) claims were completed and approved by the Ministry.

Goal Setting 2023-24

Departmental feedback was received, collated and shared with the department last week. The Student Services Executive Team will develop high-level improvement goals, which will flow from parent/guardian/caregiver, Principal/Vice Principal survey from the Special Education Review process and from departmental feedback. The Managers will collaborate with their departments to develop more specific goals for mental health and psychological services departments.

Motion:

SS-2023-04-11-04

Approval of the April 11, 2023, 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 11, 2023 meeting.”

Motion moved by W. Heeney and motion seconded by J. McCafferty.

CARRIED

2.5. Discussion Items

None

2.6. Association Reports

Julie Sorhaitz, Learning Disabilities Ontario

Julie provided the Power to Achieve Award Contest details (attached with minutes).

2.7. Correspondence

None

3. Other Business

3.1. Board Communications

None

3.2. Motion to Adjourn

Motion:

SS-2023-04-11-05

Motion to Adjourn

“THAT the Special Education Advisory Committee meeting of April 11, 2023, adjourn.”

Motion moved by J. Sorhaitz and seconded by A. Massis.

CARRIED

3.2.1. The next meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee will be held on Tuesday, May 9, 2023 @ 7:30 pm

3.3. Closing Prayer

Closing prayer was offered by Vice Chair Heeneey

The meeting adjourned at 8:47 p.m.

Valerie Adamo
Chair, Special Education Advisory Committee

Paula Sorhaitz
Superintendent of Education

Recording Secretary: Delfina Pinto