



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

## **Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) Meeting**

June 04, 2024, from 7:30 PM to 9:00 PM

Catholic Education Centre, 650 Rossland Road West, Oshawa  
*North and South Board Rooms*

### **Members Present:**

*Valerie Adamo, Chair, VOICE for the Hearing Impaired (In-Person)*  
*Walter Heeney, Vice Chair, Durham Down Syndrome Association (In-Person)*  
*Julie Sorhaitz, Learning Disabilities Ontario (In-Person)*  
*Claudia Nosseir, Grandview Kids (In-Person)*  
*Alex Massis, Community Representative (Virtual)*  
*Shona Casola, Autism Ontario – Durham Region (Virtual)*  
*Candace Julien, Community Representative (Virtual)*

### **Trustees Present:**

*Robert De Souza (Virtual)*  
*Jim McCafferty, Trustee (Virtual)*

### **Staff Present:**

*Shelley Phoenix, Senior Manager, (In-Person)*  
*Francesca Mosier, Student Services Coordinator (In-Person)*  
*Paula Sorhaitz, Superintendent of Education (In-Person)*  
*Marie Hammond, Chief Financial Officer (In-Person)*  
*Scott Grieve, Superintendent of Education (In-Person)*

### **SEAC Representatives:**

*Patricia Bosley, CUPE Representative (Virtual)*  
*Narmilee Dhayanandhanh. APSSP Representative (Virtual)*  
*Lo Davis, OECTA Representative (In-Person)*  
*Jennifer Harvey, CPCO Representative (Virtual)*

### **Regrets:**

*Donna Callaghan, Alternate, Durham Down Syndrome Association*

## **Minutes**

### **1. Opening**

#### **1.1. Call to Order**

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

#### **1.2. Memorials and Prayers**

#### **1.3. Land Acknowledgements**

#### **1.4. Roll Call and Apologies**

#### **1.5. Approval of the Agenda**

Motion: SS-2024-06-04-01

Approval of the Agenda



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Motion moved by Julie Sorhaitz and seconded by Walter Heeney

“THAT the Special Education Advisory Committee approve the agenda of the Tuesday, June 4, 2024, meeting, as presented.” (CARRIED)

**1.6. Approval of the Minutes of May 7, 2024, SEAC Meeting**

Motion: SS-2024-06-04-02

Approval of Minutes

Motion moved by Claudia Nosseir and seconded by Robert De Souza

“THAT the Special Education Advisory Committee approve the Minutes of the Tuesday, May 7, 2024, meeting, as presented.” (CARRIED)

**1.7. Declarations of Interest**

None

**2. Items for Information/Decision**

**2.1. Announcements**

**2.2. Presentations**

**2.2.1. Marie Hammond, Chief Financial Officer – Budget Overview**

Marie Hammond, Chief Financial Officer, provided a Budget Overview from the Ministry announcement in April 2024:

**New Funding Model**

- GSN funding (operating) has been renamed to Core Education Funding (“Core Ed”).
- GSN funding (capital) has been renamed Building, Expanding and Renewing Schools (BERS).
- Priorities and Partnerships Funding (PPF) has been renamed Responsive Education Programs (REP).

**Theme – Streamline**

18 grants with 77 allocations have been revised into 6 funding pillars:

- Classroom Staffing
- Learning Resources
- Special Education
- School Facilities
- Student Transportation
- School Board Administration

**Special Education Fund (SEF)**

- Transfer of professional assessment funding into Core Ed Funding
- Components within SEF such as After School Skills Development, Autism Training, and Special Equipment Allocation (SEA) are no longer individually enveloped

**Special Equipment Allocation (SEA)**

New modernized approach to:

- Reduce administrative burden



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- Increase flexibility in how it is utilized by boards
- Better meet the changing needs of students

Comprised of:

- A formula component (base and per-pupil amounts) for any equipment type, technology-related or not, and training, maintenance, and repairs related to that equipment for students with special education needs
- A claims-based component for any single item (any equipment type technology related or not) costing \$5,000 or more before taxes for an individual student with special education needs

### **Special Incidence Portion (SIP)**

- SIP funding continues through a table amount (based on previous year funding) – the ministry continues to work towards a new approach
- Interim approach to alleviating administrative burden associated with the claims process

### **Elimination of Covid-19 Related Funding**

- The Safe and Clean Schools Supplement, introduced in 2023-24 is being eliminated
- This funding, which provided additional support for salaries and benefits costs of additional professionals and paraprofessionals, EAs, and custodians, was supplemental to existing amounts within the Grants for Student Needs
- Loss of funding of \$247K

### **Special Education Funding – 2024-2025**

- Core Education Funding for 24/25 - \$38.6M
- Special Education Needs Transition Navigators Funding - \$99,700
- Special Education Additional Qualifications (AQ) Funding - \$12,200
- Summer Learning Special Education Supports - \$124,500 (This Summer)

Note: Bill 124 has not been included in estimates package for Core Education Funding for 24/25 so these numbers will increase with received estimates in the Fall

### **Budget Pressures**

- Core Education Funding – not reflecting inflation/market cost increases
- Benefit Costs/Enhanced Canada Pension Plan (CPP) costs – not fully funded
- Supply Costs/Sick Leave Program – centrally bargained but underfunded
- Recently negotiated collective agreements and Bill 124 remedy (insufficient employee benefit benchmarks)

Senior Administration continues to apply for additional funding when available, investigates potential revenue opportunities outside Core Ed, continues to look for efficiencies/cost-saving opportunities, and aligns the budget with Strategic Priorities.

### **2.2.2. Scott Grieve, Superintendent of Facilities – Accessibility Plan 2023-2028**

Scott Grieve, Superintendent of Facilities, and Chair of the Accessibility Committee, presented the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan for 2023-2028:

#### **[Current Plan: Multi-Year Accessibility Plan](#)**

- Reviewed the current plan on the Board website including the Terms of Reference (Committee's objectives, review and monitoring process), policies and procedures, and



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communications.

## **Draft Plan: Multi-Year Accessibility Plan**

- Overview of the document that the Accessibility Committee is currently reviewing
- Contents include Guiding Principles, Goals by AODA Standard, Communications and Feedback Form, and related Policies and Procedures
  - Goals by AODA Standard:
    - Customer Service
    - Information and Communication
    - Employment and Training
    - Procurement
    - Design of Public Spaces
    - Transportation

## **2.3. Discussion Items**

### **2.3.1. Review SEAC Annual Calendar (Presentations / Dates) – Under Superintendent's Report**

Members proposed a presentation topic or selected a month for a presentation from their organization:

- October 2024 – Julie Sorhaitz, Learning Disabilities presentation
- November 2024 – Revised Estimates presentation
- March 2025 – Walter Heeney, Down Syndrome presentation
- AODA efforts in the Board presentation
- Gifted Programming and Learning Disabilities presentation

## **2.4. Business arising from the Minutes**

### **2.4.1. Approval of the Special Education Plan 2023-2024**

Teresa Ezquerro asked the Committee at the May 7, 2024, meeting to review the plan and provide any feedback prior to the June meeting.

Motion: SS-2024-06-04-03

Approval of the Special Education Plan 2023-2024

Motion moved by Julie Sorhaitz and seconded by Claudia Nosseir

“THAT the Special Education Advisory Committee approve the Special Education Plan 2023-2024.” (CARRIED)

### **2.4.2. Membership Composition – Response from Ministry re: Participation House Update**

The Committee held a vote at the May 7, 2024, meeting to have Participation House join SEAC as a Member should the Education Act Ontario Regulation 464/97 for Special Education Advisory Committees allow it. Following a review of the Act, the Committee put forward a motion to amend the Terms of Reference to include Participation House as one of twelve Local Associations.

Motion: SS-2024-06-04-04

Approval to Amend the Terms of Reference

Motion moved by Walter Heeney and seconded by Robert De Souza



“THAT the Special Education Advisory Committee amend the Terms of Reference to include Participation House as a Local Association.” (CARRIED)

### **2.4.3. Information on the number of students accessing specialized programs - Under Superintendent’s Report**

## **2.5. Staff Reports**

### **2.5.1. Student Services Report – Francesca Mosier, Shelley Phoenix, and Paula Sorhaitz**

#### **Francesca Mosier presented the Coordinator’s Report:**

- The Ministry has provided summer funding to support students with special education needs. A call for proposals was posted and 10 applications were submitted. All 10 programs will run throughout the summer. The programs will be supported by a variety of staff including teachers, EAs, DECEs, CYCs, SLPs, etc. The programs will focus on numeracy & literacy intervention including Lexia, robotics, UFLI, cooking, etc.
- AT Camp will run again this year in first week of July for students in Grade 3-5 who have assistive technology. There will be 20 students attending.
- On June 5, Student Services and Academic Services are providing another training session with teachers focused on Lexia and Universal screeners. Approximately 46 teachers have signed up to attend. The remaining 130 Lexia licenses will be assigned accordingly and will be available for use until August 2025.
- DCART will run a PEERS Summer Camp from July 2-5. Students who have completed the PEERS program were invited to attend. The program will focus on social skills and functional skills.
- The After School Social Skills BBQ is at Windreach Farm on June 17. Families have been invited to attend the free event which includes wagon rides, a petting zoo and a BBQ celebration.
- A new Early Intervention Classroom (EIC) site will open at St. John Bosco C.S. in September 2024. This will be the Board’s fourth EIC site.
- 3 applications were submitted for consideration to the Provincial Demonstrations Schools Committee. All 3 students have been offered and accepted their offer and will be attending Sagonaska in September.

#### **Shelley Phoenix presented the Mental Health Report:**

- **Secondary Student MH Leadership Summit (B Well)**
  - Held on May 9th with approximately 5 students from all 8 secondary schools
  - Students collaborated and focused on identifying their group’s core values which included: Respect, United Community, Faith, Education and Empowerment
  - From these values they created their mission statement, a slogan and named the group:
    - Empowering a united community built on faith and respect, fostering mental health education and ending stigma.
    - You are not alone; we stand together.
    - **B Well**
  - Pinewood Centre of Lakeridge Health joined the group for a discussion on substance use, offering some education and began the discussion around addressing substance use at their schools.
  - Students ended the day by planning how they would collect data from their schools



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around what students want in terms of mental health promotion.

- Coming together in September to review data and plan for the year
- **Summer 2024**
  - Student Services will be supporting the HeadStart program:
    - Child and Youth Counsellors will be delivering well-being lessons each day
    - Having Youthspeak's youth led interactive presentations at each of the schools' programs
  - CYC led Social Skills Group for elementary students: Using the Second Step resource, the group will explore various social skills and practice with the group through play
  - Piloting Individual Cognitive Behavioural Therapy for students with ASD
  - The Social Work Access Line will direct parents and students to community resources during the summer months and resume operation in September

## **Paula Sorhaitz presented the Superintendent's Report:**

### **PST Learning**

- Carousels:
  - Gifted programming
  - Elopement
  - Sensory Movement Breaks
  - Special Transportation Requests
  - Transitions – elementary and secondary

Upcoming: Universal reading screeners –PST training at the August PA Day

### **End of Year Planning**

- EA allocation letters have been sent to schools
- Central PST assignments in process of being announced
- Planning continues for summer transition programming and summer special education programs

### **Special Education Advisory Committee 2024-2025 Dates**

- September 10, 2024
- October 1, 2024
- November 5, 2024
- December 3, 2024
- January 7, 2025
- February 11, 2025
- March 4, 2025
- April 8, 2025
- May 6, 2025
- June 3, 2025

### **Specialized Programs (Approximate Enrolment)**

- Early Intervention Classes – 18 students
- PEERS program – 60 students
- Friendship Lab – 70 students
- Secret Agent Society – 10 students



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- PEERS camp – 10 students
- Assistive Technology camp – 20 students

Motion: SS-2024-06-04-05

Approval of the June 4, 2024, verbal Coordinator, Mental Health Leader, and Superintendent Reports

Motion moved by Walter Heeney and seconded by Alex Massis

“THAT the Special Education Advisory Committee accept the verbal Coordinator, Mental Health Leader and Superintendent Reports of the June 4, 2024, meeting.” (CARRIED)

## **2.6. Association Reports**

### **Shona Casola, Autism Ontario – Durham Region**

- [Upcoming Events in Central East \(Durham\)](#)
- [Awards and Funding](#)
  - The David Conforti – Reach for the Stars Award
  - Building Brighter Futures Fund (BBFF)

### **Julie Sorhaitz, Learning Disabilities Ontario**

- Power to Achieve Scholarship Update – Recipient Selected
- [The Roy Cooper Memorial Scholarship Award](#)

### **Valerie Adamo, VOICE for the Hearing Impaired**

In the process of finalizing camp which will take place the weekend of September 13. Information should be on the website by Friday

## **2.7. Correspondence**

### **2.7.1. Letter to SEACs - Best Practices re Monthly SEAC Meetings**

The Committee received a letter from the Provincial Parent Associations Advisory Committee (PAaC) regarding the role of provincial parent associations as local associations on SEACs, and the importance of best practices for meetings, such as meeting times, manner of meeting etc.

The Committee was asked what should be incorporated into our meetings. A suggestion was made to record our meetings. It was shared that livestreaming and recordings are for board meetings only, not committee meetings, as per the motion that was passed on April 25, 2022.

## **3. Other Business**

### **3.1. Board Communications**

### **3.2. Motion to Adjourn**

- **3.2.1.** The next meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee will be held on September 10, 2024.

Motion: SS-2024-06-04-06

Motion to Adjourn

Motion moved by Walter Heeney and seconded by Robert De Souza

“THAT the Special Education Advisory Committee meeting of June 4, 2024, adjourn.” (CARRIED)



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**3.3. Closing Prayer**

Closing prayer was offered by Chair Adamo. The meeting was adjourned at 8:59pm.

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Valerie Adamo  
Chair, Special Education Advisory Committee

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Paula Sorhaitz  
Superintendent of Education, Resource

Recording Secretary: Paige Wiggans