



Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) Meeting

Oct 3, 2023, 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)
Alex Massis, Community Representative (Virtual)
Shona Casola, Autism Ontario (Virtual)
Candace Julien, Community Representative (Virtual)
Julie Sorhaitz, Learning Disabilities Ontario (In-Person)

Trustees Present:

Jim McCafferty (Virtually)
Richard Damianopoulos (Virtual)

Staff Present:

Shelley Phoenix (In-Person), Senior Manager, Social Work and Child Youth Counsellors/Chief Attendance Officer
Paula Sorhaitz, Superintendent of Education (In-Person)
Christine Congrady, Student Services Coordinator (In-Person)

SEAC Representatives:

Narmilee Dhayanandhan, APSSP Representative (Virtual)
Jennifer Harvey, CPCO Representative (Virtual)
Maureen Cope, CUPE Representative (Virtually)
Lo Davis, OECTA Representative (In-Person)

Regrets:

Robert De Souza, Trustee
Claudia Nosseir, Grandview Kids

Agenda

1. Opening

The Chair, Valerie Adamo, called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. offered the opening prayer and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1.1. Land Acknowledgements

1.2. Memorials and Prayers

1.3. Roll Call and Apologies

1.4. Call to Order

1.5. Approval of the Agenda

Motion: SS-2023-10-03-01

Approval of the Agenda

Motion moved by Jim McCafferty and seconded by Richard Damianopoulos

“THAT the Special Education Advisory Committee approve the agenda of the Tuesday, October 3, 2023, meeting, as printed.” (CARRIED)

1.6. Approval of the Minutes of September 12, 2023, SEAC Meeting

Motion: SS-2023-10-03-02

Approval of Minutes

Motion moved by Walter Heeney and seconded by Julie Sorhaitz

“THAT the Special Education Advisory Committee approve the Minutes of the Tuesday, September 12, 2023, meeting, as printed.” (CARRIED)

1.7. Declarations of Interest

None

2. Items for Information/Decision

2.1. Announcements

2.2. Presentations

2.2.1. Inspire 2026 – Student Action Plan

Paula Sorhaitz, Superintendent of Education, shared details regarding the Inspire 2026 – Student Action Plan:

- The Board’s Mission and Vision
- The Board’s Values
- Three Main Pillars: Listening, Learning and Living in Faith
 - Support Faith & Well-Being
 - Advance Human Rights & Equity
 - Improve Student Learning
- Monitoring Framework of the Pillars (Implementation, Impact, and Insights)
- Reviewed how the pillars are the strategic process that will inform what the Board does and how they do it, and the conditions that support student learning and achievement.
- Discussed Literacy Numeracy Pathways as a way to improve student learning.

Superintendent Sorhaitz also discussed Bill 98 – Better Schools and Student Outcomes. The Board received the regulation on provincial priorities for education in July 2023. The priorities previously created by the Board aligned well with the three priorities from the Ministry:

- Achievement of Learning Outcomes in Core Academic Skills
- Preparation of Students for Future Success
- Student Engagement & Well-Being

School boards are required to adopt these provincial priorities into their trustee-approved multi-year

plans.

Superintendent Sorhaitz continued by reviewing the Student Achievement Plan from the Ministry which outlines the purpose, priorities and the indicators connected to the goals. Superintendent Sorhaitz answered questions about the indicators, including EQAO, and if data was available to support reporting. Board working with Ministry for clarification on aspects of the indicators in the Student Achievement Plan.

2.3. Discussion Items

2.4. Business arising from previous meeting

2.4.1. Goal Setting Ideas

The following requests were brought forward related to Goal Setting Ideas:

- To receive information on literacy and numeracy from the Ministry such as recommendations of materials, Right to Read and Structured Literacy.
 - It was proposed that SEAC add Ministry Updates as an ongoing agenda item.
- To receive timely information regarding funding from the Ministry to support planning.
 - It was proposed that SEAC add a reminder on the annual calendar in May that information should be forthcoming from the Ministry and for Finance to speak to the Committee.

2.4.2. SEAC Annual Calendar Ideas

The following requests were brought forward related to the SEAC Annual Calendar:

- A presentation on Summer Rays/summer opportunities
- For Yma Frisson from Durham Down Syndrome Association to make a presentation to the Committee in March
- A presentation from Julie Sorhaitz was accepted by the Committee for an Introduction on Learning Disabilities and Self-Advocacy for high school students.
 - Member to propose a date for the calendar.
- For elections to be added in January
 - It was noted that the current Chair is available to speak with interested members about the positions.
- For flexibility on the LEAD update in the calendar
 - Valerie Adamo commented that volunteers are available if LEAD needs participants.

2.4.3. PO610 Code of Conduct Feedback

No additional feedback.

2.4.4. Letter re: Educational Assistants

The committee discussed sending a letter to the Ministry regarding Educational Assistants (EAs). Superintendent Sorhaitz provided a brief overview of past and present allocations and funding. A review of year-over-year funding, EA allocations, students who require support and open positions was requested.

Motion: SS-2023-10-03-03

Approval of Business arising from previous minutes

Motion moved by Julie Sorhaitz and seconded by Walter Heeney

“THAT the Special Education Advisory Committee approve the business arising from the previous meeting.” (CARRIED)

2.5. Staff Reports

2.5.1. Student Services Report – Shelley Phoenix, Christine Congrady, Paula Sorhaitz

Christine Congrady reported the following in the Coordinator Report:

- IEP Online (IOL) training was offered to new PSTs on Sept. 19. This session reviewed how to navigate IOL and best practices when creating IEPs.
- eRaid (electronic record keeping module in IOL) training was offered to new PSTs and Ps/VPs on Sept. 26. This training reviewed how to navigate eRaid and the importance of security and confidentiality of information.
- 2 Lexia training sessions were offered on Sept. 21 and Sept 26 for Core 5 and Power Up. All 500 licenses have been assigned to schools for use with students.
- **New Program Support Teacher Mentoring Program**
 - Began September 21, 2023
 - 13 new Program Support Teachers (elementary and secondary)
 - Weschler Fundamentals training
 - Discussion of September responsibilities of PSTs
- **Project SEARCH Update**
 - Interns have been on-boarded and welcomed into Municipality of Durham Region
 - First internships begin this month at either Durham Region Headquarters or Hillsdale Terrace or Hillsdale Estates
 - Business Advisory Council partners are focusing on internships at this time. Not unusual to hold off on forming a council. Abilities Centre has established network of champions and employers
- **Community Resources Symposium and Fair**
 - 50 different organizations, agencies and community programs have been invited to participate.
 - Flyer will be shared with all staff.

Shelley Phoenix provided the following Mental Health Report:

- **Prepare, Prevent, Respond: Suicide Intervention and Life Promotion Workshop**
 - Offered to educators on September 20 (28 educators were in attendance)
 - Workshop will be offered to Educational Assistants on October 6th PA Day
- **Mental Health Modules for All Grade 7 & 8 Students**
 - Ministry of Education has mandated modules, beginning in January 2024
 - Professional development offered to all intermediate educators responsible for the teaching of these modules on September 25, 26 and 28.
 - Shelley Phoenix provided an overview of module themes and curriculum expectations for Grade 7 and Grade 8.
- **Upcoming events:**
 - Teacher information session - Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban: A Cognitive Behavioral Therapy Novel Study for Intermediate Students (Partnership with Sunnybrook)- October 5th
 - Violent Threat Risk Assessment Training- October 11th and 12th
 - Sharing of Excellence- Creating a Mentally Healthy Classroom- October 16th

- Durham Youth Drug Awareness Committee Student Conference- October 17th
- Applied Suicide Intervention Skill Training (ASIST)- October 26th and 27th

Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Sorhaitz updated the committee on the following:

- The Ministry has provided funding to Dyslexia Canada to develop, in partnership with International Dyslexia Association – Ontario, evidence-based systematic and explicit instruction resources and learning supports that are now ready for use and can be accessed at <https://ONlit.org>.
- Resources to be shared with all teachers of DCDSB, and primary division educators to begin professional development at the October 6 PA Day
- **Program Support Teacher Meeting October 10, 2023**
- The agenda will focus on working with math manipulatives, AODA compliance training, EA scheduling to maximize student support and MACSE Consultation Form.
- **Safe and Caring Schools Week**
- Resources provided to all staff included links focusing on how to support students with special education needs from School Mental Health Ontario.
- **MACSE Consultation Form**
- The form is used to gather input on issues related to special education programs and services.
- Superintendent Sorhaitz collected feedback from the SEAC Committee (attached).

Motion: SS-2023-10-03-04

Approval of the October 3, 2023, verbal Coordinator, Mental Health Leader, and Superintendent Reports

Motion moved by Ricahrd Damianopoulos and seconded by Alex Massis

“THAT the Special Education Advisory Committee accept the verbal Coordinator, Mental Health Leader and Superintendent Reports of the October 3, 2023, meeting.” (CARRIED)

2.6. Association Reports

Learning Disabilities Association – Durham Region

Upcoming Meetings or Conferences:

October is Learning Disabilities Awareness month. As it was last year, the slogan is: “Don’t Dis My Abilities! Help Stop the Stigma and Realize the Abilities!” Our AGM will be Thursday, October 26th at 7pm.

New Programs or Services:

We are looking for volunteers to support our efforts to bring support and awareness to the community. Please reach out if you are interested to info@ldadr.on.ca.

Other Information:

Watch for our Family Literacy Day event in January 2024.

2.7. Correspondence

None

3. Other Business

3.1. Board Communications

3.2. Motion to Adjourn

Motion: SS-2023-10-03-05

Motion to Adjourn

[Motion moved by](#) Richard Damianopoulos and seconded by Walter Heeney

“THAT the Special Education Advisory Committee meeting of October 3, 2023, adjourn.”
(CARRIED)

3.2.1. The next meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee will be held on Tuesday, November 7, 2023, at 7:30 p.m.

3.3. Closing Prayer

Closing prayer was offered by Superintendent Sorhaitz. The meeting was adjourned at 8:58 p.m.

Valerie Adamo
Chair, Special Education Advisory Committee

Paula Sorhaitz
Superintendent of Education, Resource

Recording Secretary: Paige Wiggans

MINISTER'S ADVISORY COUNCIL ON SPECIAL EDUCATION (MACSE)

**COMMUNICATION: COLLABORATING WITH THE COMMUNITY
November 2023**

The purpose of this form is to obtain targeted feedback to support discussion at the next MACSE meeting. Please use this form to gather input on issues related to special education programs and services.

INSTRUCTIONS:

- Please submit the completed form electronically to your MACSE representative by **October 20, 2023**.

SUBMITTED BY: Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC), Durham Catholic District School Board
EXCEPTIONALITY/SECTOR: Special Education

SUCCESSFUL PRACTICES	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Summer Programming, including Summer Rays• Assistive Technology• Project SEARCH• Bridging learning gaps• Reduction of stigma for special education needs
CHALLENGES /ISSUES	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase demand on the system: Increase of needs coming into the system and increase in challenges to support them.• Reaching secondary students: having difficulty getting high school students to engage with programs.
POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS / FUTURE DIRECTIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Packaging of programs for secondary students: transitional programs in addition to head start.• Focus on the programs that are successful in the recipients' eyes. Look at programs that encourage self-efficacy.
OTHER COMMENTS	