



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

Memorandum

To: Board of Trustees
From: Tracy Barill, Director of Education
Date: February 27, 2023
Subject: **Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting – February 14, 2023**
Origin: Susie Lee-Fernandes, Superintendent of Education

Please find attached a copy of the Minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting held on February 14, 2023.

TB/SLF/dp

Attachment: Minutes of February 14, 2023



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

Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
Durham Catholic District School Board
February 14, 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), S. Casola (Autism Ontario), J. Sorhaitz (Learning Disabilities Ontario), A. Massis (Community Representative)

Trustees Present:

J. McCafferty, Robert De Souza

Staff Present:

S. Lee-Fernandes (Superintendent of Education), C. Congrady (Student Services Coordinator), F. Pileggi (Communications)

SEAC Representatives:

T. Robertson (APSSP Representative), L. Jemmott (OECTA Representative), M. Cope (CUPE Representative)

Regrets:

C. Julien (Community Representative), C. Nosseir (Grandview Kids), D. Allen (CPCO Representative),

1. Opening

1.1 Memorials and Prayer

Chair Adamo called the meeting to order at 7:33 p.m., offered the opening prayer, and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1.2 Land Acknowledgements

1.3 Roll Call and Apologies

1.4 Call to Order

1.5 Approval of the Agenda

SS-2023-02-14-01

Approval of Agenda

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

"That the Special Education Advisory Committee approve the agenda of the Tuesday, February 14, 2023 meeting, as printed."

CARRIED

1.6 Approval of the minutes of SEAC Meeting

SS-2023-02-14-02

Approval of the Minutes December 6, 2022

Motion moved by W. Heeney and motion seconded by A. Massis.

“That the Special Education Advisory Committee approve the Minutes of the December 6, 2022 meeting as submitted.”

CARRIED

1.7 Approval of the minutes of January 10, 2023 SEAC Meeting

SS-2023-01-14-03

Approval of the Minutes

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

“That the Special Education Advisory Committee approve the Minutes of the January 10, 2023 meeting as submitted.”

CARRIED

1.8 Declarations of Interest

None

2. Items for Information/Decision

2.1 Announcements

Superintendent Lee-Fernandes announced that following the Regular Board meeting on December 19th, Trustee Committees were confirmed. Jim McCafferty and Robert De Souza will serve on SEAC for the 2023 year.

The Superintendent shared that she has accepted a position with the Ontario Principal's Council as Director of Professional Learning and that her last day would be March 3rd. Superintendent expressed her sentiments about leaving the DCDSB as she said goodbye to the SEAC committee and thanked them for their dedication to children with special education needs. Superintendent Lee-Fernandes also announced that Paula Sorhaitz would be taking over the Student Services portfolio.

2.2 Election for Chair of Special Education Advisory Committee (deferred from previous meeting)

2.2.1 Election for the Position of Chair of the Special Education Advisory Committee - Susie Lee-Fernandes

Superintendent Lee-Fernandes opened the floor for nominations for the position of Chair of SEAC for the period of February 14, 2023 to December 31, 2023.

2.2.2 Comments from Candidates

<u>Nominee</u>	<u>Moved</u>	<u>Seconded by</u>	<u>Willing to Stand?</u>
V. Adamo	W. Heeney	A. Massis	Yes

2.2.3 Motion to Close Nominations

Superintendent Lee-Fernandes called for further nominations. Nominations were declared closed.

Motion:

SS-2023-02-14-04

Close Nominations

“THAT the Special Education Advisory Committee close nominations for the position of Chair of SEAC for the period from February 14, 2023 to December 31, 2023.”

Motion moved by W. Heeney and seconded by A. Massis.

CARRIED

2.2.4 Acceptance Speech by the Chair of the Special Education Advisory Committee

Superintendent Lee-Fernandes welcomed Valerie Adamo, Representative for VOICE for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children as Chair of SEAC for the period from February 14, 2022 to December 31, 2023. Valerie accepted the position of Chair.

2.3 Election for Vice Chair of the Special Education Advisory Committee (deferred from previous meeting)

2.3.1 Election for the Position of Vice Chair of the Chair Special Education Advisory Committee - Chair

Chair Adamo opened the floor for nominations for the position of Vice Chair of SEAC for the period of February 14, 2023 to December 31, 2023.

2.3.2 Comments from Candidates

<u>Nominee</u>	<u>Moved</u>	<u>Seconded by</u>	<u>Willing to Stand?</u>
W. Heeney	J. McCafferty.	A. Massis	Yes

2.3.3 Motion to Close Nominations

Motion:

SS-2023-02-14-05

Close Nominations

“THAT the Special Education Advisory Committee close nominations for the position of Vice Chair of SEAC for the period from February 14, 2023 to December 31, 2023.”

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

CARRIED

2.3.4 Acceptance Speech by the Vice Chair of the Special Education Advisory Committee

Chair Adamo welcomed W. Heeney, Representative for Durham Down Syndrome Association as Vice Chair of SEAC for the period from February 14, 2023 to December 31, 2023. Walter accepted the position of Vice Chair.

2.4 Presentations

2.4.1 Special Education Review Parent/Guardian Survey Presentation - Richard DeCaires

Mr. Richard DeCaires, Data/Research Officer, provided a High-Level Analysis & Breakdown of the Results of the Parent/Guardian Feedback Survey conducted in October 2022.

The data was presented for all participants, including those who responded to the Survey Questions, as well as indicating the number of participants who chose not to provide a response.

The overall response rate for the Parent/Guardian Survey was **64 submitted surveys.**

Mr. DeCaires noted that the Survey questions and rate of responses provided for each question were analyzed for an added layer of context and understanding of the results that were presented. Multiple data cleaning processes took place with careful considerations to ensure data was presented as it was

initially reported to help honour the voice of the DCDSB community and how parents/guardians chose to respond. Mr. DeCaires highlighted that 73 per cent of 47 submitted responses had children accessing or in need of Student Services supports, and noted that the Parent/Guardian level of satisfaction with the Student Services supports results are as follows:

- 6% Extremely satisfied
- 8% More than satisfied
- 23% Satisfied
- 9% Partly satisfied
- 27% Not satisfied
- 27% No response provided

Parent/Guardian feedback on this survey question provided the following responses:

- 26% Lack of supports when needed between the time requested and the follow-through is too long
- 16% Services provided are adequate to good, and appreciated. More staff needed to provide focused intervention
- 58% No comment

Mr. DeCaires answered questions as they arose.

2.4.2 Project SEARCH - Christine Congrady

Christine Congrady, Student Services Coordinator, shared that Project SEARCH is an internationally successful 10-month transition-to-work program for young adults with developmental or intellectual disabilities. The primary objective is to secure competitive and meaningful employment for persons with disabilities after high school. During their final year of high school, students will be fully immersed with a host business site, gaining employment skills through a combination of classroom instruction and hands-on career training. The program has partnered with the Regional Municipality of Durham, the Host Business and Abilities Centre, Employment Service Provider.

Ms. Congrady informed that on March 2, 2023, there would be a Parent/Guardian Information Night for parents with students in the secondary panel. Parents/guardians must register through the

[Project SEARCH webpage](#) to indicate whether they will attend in person or virtually. Ms. Congrady also provided the following Project SEARCH timelines:

- March 2, 2023 - 7:00 - 8:30 p.m. Parent/Guardian Information Night
- March 2, 2023 - 9:00 a.m. Online Application Opens
- April 3, 2023 - 5:00 p.m. Online Application Closes
- April 25, 2023 - 2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. and/or 7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. Interview/Skills Assessment Day
- May 1, 2023 - 4:00 p.m. Admission to program letters sent to successful candidates
- May 8, 2023 - 2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. Interns sign contract at Board Office

Meetings with the Region of Durham and the Abilities Centre occur monthly. During the month of February, the partners have been attending the Project SEARCH Fundamental Training sessions every other day.

The Secondary Program Support Curriculum Chairs have received training on the Vocational Fitness Assessment (VocFit), an American online assessment tool developed to collect data on the interns' skills. The data collected helps match the intern's skill set with a potential job.

Ms. Congrady also informed that the Business Advisory Council (BAC) meets 4-6 times a year. The members act as champions within the community that help to raise awareness about Project SEARCH.

Ms. Congrady invited the committee to bring forward any names of businesses that are or would embrace students with disabilities in their workplace.

Businesses that hire Project SEARCH graduates will:

- Access to new, diverse, talent stream with skills matching labour needs
- Increased performance and retention in high-turnover, entry-level positions
- Access to a demographic of the economy with intense buying power

2.5 Discussion Items

None

2.6 Business arising from previous meeting

- 2.6.1 Feedback from Committee re: Letter Peel-Dufferin CDSB dated October 14, 2022 - 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

The committee agreed that a letter be drafted and brought back to the next SEAC meeting.

2.7 Staff Reports

Christine Congrady reported that the Student Services Coordinators are currently visiting schools to review student needs across the system as the first step in the EA allocation process for the 2023-2024 school year.

The new Program Support Teacher mentoring continued with a session on administering and scoring the Weschler Fundamentals assessment.

The Sharing of Excellence Workshop Series for February includes: Principles of ABA: Individualized Programming – a 2-part series focusing on the components of a clearly defined IEP goal and what teaching strategies can be used to help students meet their IEP goals.

Recently, Greenfield Learning provided 2 learning sessions for Program Support Teachers (PSTs) using Lexia Core 5 and Power Up programs to assist educators with ongoing implementation of Lexia. The sessions allowed educators to delve deeper into understanding student data essential for informing instruction. Suggested materials for use with planning and tracking were shared, as well as a review of the resources available within the Lexia program. All 500 licenses are in use in schools across our system at both the elementary and secondary level.

The Geneva Centre Sonderly online courses have been offered to all educators in the board through the Numbered Memo. Currently, 45 employees are participating in the program. The registration closes February 17, 2023.

The Friendship Lab has started a new session at Sir Albert Love on Wednesday evening. PEERS is continuing to run at Msgr. Pereyma on Thursday night, and PEERS dating runs at Fr. Leo J. Austin twice a week during the lunch hour.

The DCDSB is partnering with Durham College to place students in the Behavioural Science Program, beginning in March.

Christine answered questions as the arose.

2.7.1 Student Services Report - Dr. Michaela Evans, Christine Congrady, Susie Lee-Fernandes

Superintendent Lee-Fernandes, on behalf of Dr. Michaela Evans provided the Mental Health report.

- On January 25th, Bell Let's Talk Day, the CEC held a drop in event for staff to come and complete activities related to mental health. A Numbered Memo went out to all staff with activities and information to be shared with students for this event.
- The Mental Health First Aid ran on Jan 25th and 26th with 12 participants.
- Sharing of Excellence- Kindergarten and Educator Well-being ran on January 31st.
- Students and staff from St. Mary, Father Leo J. Austin, Msgr. Paul Dwyer and All Saints attended the Durham Youth Drug Awareness Committee (DYDAC) Conference on February 8th. Students will create a campaign within their schools with the help of their public health nurse.

Upcoming:

- Human Trafficking Symposium on Feb. 20th to 22nd - both elementary and secondary schools have registered.
- Black Mental Health Day Event - Families are invited to attend the event at Notre Dame CSS on Monday, March 6th @ 6 pm to recognize Black Mental Health Day, a day to raise awareness of the specific mental health needs of Black communities across Ontario.

Superintendent Lee-Fernandes informed that the Special Education Review survey presentations were shared with the Student Services Department on January 27, 2023, with SEAC on February 14, 2023. In addition, the data will be presented to Senior Administration on February 21, 2023, and at the Director's Meeting on March 1, 2023.

Superintendent Lee-Fernandes expressed gratitude to the SEAC committee for their commitment and advocacy for children with

special needs. She thanked APSSP, OECTA, CUPE-EA, the Student Services Department, and the Student Executive Team for their dedication and hard work.

Superintendent Lee-Fernandes congratulated and welcomed Paula Sorhaitz to the Student Services Department.

Motion:

SS-2023-02-14-06

Approval of the February 14, 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 February 14, 2023 meeting.”

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

CARRIED

2.8 Correspondence

- 2.8.1 Letter from Durham District School Board dated November 22, 2022
Re: Special Incidence Portion Claim Funding (deferred from previous meeting)

The committee agreed that Student Services discuss and provide feedback in regards to our position on this topic at the next meeting.

2.9 Association Reports

None

3. Other Business

3.1 Board Communications

None

3.2 Motion to Adjourn

Motion:

SS-2023-02-14-07

Motion to Adjourn

“THAT the Special Education Advisory Committee meeting of February 14, 2023 adjourn.”

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

CARRIED

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

3.3 Closing Prayer

Closing prayer was offered by Chair Adamo.

The meeting adjourned at 8:53 p.m.

Valerie Adamo
Chair, Special Education Advisory Committee

Susie Lee-Fernandes
Superintendent of Education

Recording Secretary: Delfina Pinto