

**GREATER ESSEX COUNTY DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD  
REPORT OF THE  
SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

The Special Education Advisory Committee meeting was held on **Tuesday, October 8, 2019** at the Administration Office.

**MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

Cathy Cooke, Trustee  
Martha Vukov, Community Living Windsor-Essex County  
Bette Turner, Home and School Associations  
Mary-Ann Fuduric, Learning Disabilities Association of Windsor-Essex County  
Monica Gilles, Windsor Essex County Down Syndrome Association  
Karen Wilson, Parents for Children's Mental Health  
Jan Matte-Gasparovic, Autism Ontario  
Sheila Ruggaber, Epilepsy Southwestern Ontario

**BOARD PERSONNEL:**

Mike Wilcox, Superintendent of Special Education Services  
Kristie Sweet, Supervising Principal of Special Education Services  
Tracey Rilett, OPC Elementary Representative

**REGRETS:**

Aimee Omstead, Trustee  
Theresa Williams, OPC Secondary Representative  
Kimberly John, Indigenous Community – FNMI

**ABSENT:**

**RECORDER:**

Peggy Russette

1. Call to Order  
M. Fuduric called the meeting to order at 1:10 pm.
  
2. Approval of the Agenda  
Moved by: B. Turner  
Seconded by: M. Vukov  
That SEAC approve the agenda for October 8, 2019. The motion was carried.
  
3. Approval of Minutes  
Moved by: J. Matte-Gasparovic  
Seconded by: K. Wilson  
That SEAC approve the revised minutes for September 10, 2019. The motion was carried.
  
4. Business Arising as a Result of the Minutes  
M. Wilcox met with J. Matte-Gasparovic to discuss a school incident. J. Matte-Gasparovic initiated a conversation regarding inclusion in some of our self-contained classrooms. M. Wilcox will follow through with sending a message to administration on the inclusive regulation and policy, and to the Education Coordinators on inclusion opportunities. He will also emphasize the opportunities to reverse integration into schools and have students visit STEPS/GAINS classrooms for social activities that will benefit everyone.
  
5. Early Years Program Overview  
Angeline Humber presented a power point presentation on Supporting all Children in Kindergarten.

The purpose of this program is to establish a strong foundation for learning in the early years, to help children make a smooth transition, to allow children to reap the many proven benefits of learning, and to set children on a path of lifelong learning and nurture competencies that they will need to thrive in the world of today and tomorrow.

There is a shared understanding that all children are competent, capable of complex thinking, curious and rich in potential and experience.

She discussed considerations for planning for children with special education needs. Kindergarten educators work closely with Special Education teachers to assist every child to prepare for living with the highest degree of independence possible.

B. Turner asked if the board knew how many early years students we would be receiving. A. Humber replied that we have students coming and going through the school year, so we really never know a concrete number of students that we will receive in early years.

**6. Special Education Update****Professional Development**

- LST Workshop
- Teachers New to Autism
- Hearing Awareness Workshop
- After School Workshop – JMCC, Digital Portfolios Using QRs and Edsby
- Coming in November – PD Day with ESS

**ESS Staffing at Re-organization**

- M. Wilcox informed the committee that we were down staff in June but have increased enrolment for September. We are currently up 10.5 EAs, plus 8 EAs from Jordan's Principle. There has been an increase of 0.5 Itinerant for blind/low vision, and 1.0 support worker for deaf/hard of hearing. There were two re-organization days due to high numbers in some areas. Support staff re-organized on September 23, while teaching staff were re-organized September 30.

**Identification of Children in Early Years**

- We are moving away from formal identification of students. There may be instances however, that an IPRC is warranted. K. Wilson expressed concern regarding modified days. The students are supported while in school but may not get the same kind of support at home. M. Wilcox replied that we work toward full-day for these students as soon as possible. There are supports that can be accessed outside of the school. S. Ruggaber asked how we identify students in grade 1, as this is a very difficult transition from early years. M. Wilcox responded that we monitor in early years and if warranted, may IPRC in grade 1.

**Updating Special Education Website**

- D. DiVincenzo (Education Coordinator) is working with M. Curtis (Social Worker) to update the website. They are looking to streamline it so that information is easier to find. K. Wilson added that the IEP night was very successful with approximately 70 parents attending. She asked if we would consider doing a Special Education night, to provide more learning opportunities for parents. This could be paired with transitioning students to schools. M. Wilcox will look into it in the new year due to Empower information evening sessions this fall. He also pointed out that T. Rilett does the Mental Health website and this could also be included in an information evening.

**Update on Intensive Reading Intervention Pilot Project**

- The Narrative Proposal was submitted to the Ministry. We have Empower and Lexia in all of our schools. We are finding that students are sometimes struggling readers in French Immersion schools. There are no RISE programs for French Immersion. We are looking at resources for French Immersion schools for students with and LD profile. We will continue to gather data around Empower and Lexia and engage our parents in workshops so they can understand what Empower and Lexia are, and how to support their children at home. Primary French Immersion teachers will be provided PD.

**7. New Business**

K. Wilson asked how early we do psychological assessments. We have done them as early as 4 years old but that is not typical. Are psychologists divided equitably? Do higher needs schools get more time with psychologists? M. Wilcox responded that we have psychologists who are assigned specific schools and a .5 psychologist this year who goes to where the needs are and is not assigned to a specific school.

**8. Association Reports**

M. Gilles – working hard on website, upaboutdown.org, to make it more user friendly.

M. Vukov – Jingle Bell Run, Walk & Wheel, Sunday November 10<sup>th</sup>. Please see website for more information.

Re:Action 4 Inclusion – is a movement of young people and their adult allies that puts youth voice and experience at the center of social justice, community change and school culture.

Career Compass – October is Disability Employment Awareness Month (DEAM). There is a Lunch Mob on November 1 at the Sandbar Waterfront Grill. If anyone is interested please RSVP [droy@communitylivingessex.org](mailto:droy@communitylivingessex.org).

# SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

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B. Turner – planning for fall activities in schools.

M. Fuduric – October is LD awareness month. There is also an LDAO survey looking for information on perceptions of learning disabilities. There is a pasta fundraiser the 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of every month which goes to five different charities.

J. Matte-Gasparovic – offering services regarding programming (e.g. Zones of Regulation)

S. Ruggaber – September 22 was Epilepsy Walk – money raised goes to education in schools. October 22 is the next meeting.

K. Wilson – Event on October 26, My Neurodivergent Child, at the Caboto. Bringing together families of neurodivergent children, health and wellness partners, community organizations and service providers. Next PCMH meeting November 7 from 1-2:30 pm at the Community Living Windsor building.

9. Distribution

10. Adjournment

Moved by: K. Wilson

Seconded by: B. Turner

The meeting adjourned at 2:08 pm.

Mary-Ann Fuduric, Chairperson  
Special Education Advisory Committee

Mike Wilcox, Administrative Liaison  
Special Education Advisory Committee

**NEXT MEETING November 12, 2019**

**Board Meeting Minutes Available on GECDSB Website**

<https://publicboard.ca/Board/Meetings/Pages/default.aspx>

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Erin Kelly  
Director of Education

Mike Wilcox  
Administrative Liaison

(Ministry SEAC Website) [www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/speced/seac/](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/speced/seac/)