

GREATER ESSEX COUNTY DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

REPORT OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Special Education Advisory Committee meeting was held on Tuesday, April 11 2023 at the Administration Office, 451 Park St. West, Windsor, Ontario. This meeting was held in-person and virtually via Microsoft Teams.

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

Nancy Armstrong, Trustee

Kim McKinley, Trustee

Bette Turner, Home and School Association

Tim McCarthy, Autism Ontario

Mary-Ann Fuduric, Learning Disabilities Association of Windsor-Essex County

Louise Cervini, Indigenous Community Representative

BOARD PERSONNEL

Mike Wilcox, Superintendent of Special Education Services

Kristie Sweet, Supervising Principal of Special Education Services

Marc Crundwell, Supervisor of Psychological Services

ABSENT

REGRETS

Sarah Yang, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder/Ontario Network of Expertise

Martha Vukov, Community Living Windsor-Essex County

Joanna Conrad, Windsor-Essex Down Syndrome Association

Theresa Williams, OPC Secondary Representative

1. **Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 1:18 p.m.

2. **Land Acknowledgement**

We acknowledge that we are on land and surrounded by water, originally inhabited by Indigenous Peoples who have travelled this area since time immemorial. This territory is within the lands honoured by the Wampum Treaties; agreements between the Anishinaabe ([Ah-nish-e-naa-bay](#)), Haudenosaunee ([Hoe-den-oh-show-nee](#)), Leni ([Len-eh](#)) Lenape ([Le-naw-pay](#)) and allied Nations to peacefully share and care for the resources around the Great Lakes. Specifically, we would like to acknowledge the presence of the Three Fires Confederacy, Ojibwe ([Oh-jib-way](#)), Odawa ([Oh-dah-wah](#)), Potawatomi ([Paw-taw-watt-oh-me](#)) and Huron/Wendat ([Wen-dat](#)) Peoples. We are dedicated to honouring Indigenous history and culture while remaining committed to moving forward respectfully with all First Nations, Inuit and Métis

3. Approval of Agenda
Moved by: B. Turner
Seconded by: K. McKinley
That SEAC approve the agenda for April 11 2023 The motion was carried
4. Approval of Minutes
Moved by: K. McKinley
Seconded by: T. McCarthy
That SEAC approve the minutes for March 7, 2023 The motion was carried
5. Business Arising as a Result of the Minutes
There was no business arising as a result of the minutes.
6. Special Education Presentation – Science of Reading (SOR) – Tammy Wilcox
T. Wilcox is a Special Education Coordinator with the GECDSB and one of the staff leading the team across the system.

The Science of Reading (SOR) committee, developed professional learning sessions for teachers based on the Science of Reading. The goal of these sessions is to further build teacher capacity around the science of teaching students to read. SOR is evidence-based and demonstrates to us how children learn to read, what instruction is required and what materials and resources are needed to support that instruction.

T. Wilcox explained the assessment tools used to gather the data and provided examples of the data collected to show where students were in various grades (At or Above, Below, or Well Below) at different stages of the assessment.

Professional development was provided for all teachers from early years to grade 3, all RISE and ESL teachers as well as all Learning Support teachers. Staff were provided with full day PD in January to learn about the science approach to reading, use of diagnostics and how to implement, along with ways to implement a structured program in a Junior classroom.

As part of the project, all teachers received a copy of UFLI (University of Florida Institute) Foundation Manual along with an additional Quick Phonics Screener/Quick Spelling Screener copy for their school team. All teachers selected 5 random students to submit data for collection. Initial student data collected from the Quick Spelling Survey and the Quick Phonics Screener showed significant gaps in grade 4 and 5 students' foundational reading skills.

Some of the resources available to staff to help enrich instruction are:

- Heggerty (K-1)
- Pratique Phonémique
- Quick Phonics Screener, QPS (x3)
- Literacy Kits (K-3, RISE & ESL)

- Decodable Readers
 - English: Dandelion Readers (x6), SyllaSense (x6) & Catchup Readers for RISE & ESL
 - French: Facile à lire, Sami et Julie
- BEE for Reading (tier 1 K, tiers 2 and 3)
- Graphique tout-en-un
- Son-au-graphe
- University of Florida Literacy Institute, UFLI (Gr. 1-3)
- Brightspace Course – Growing Literacy
- Lakeshore Learning Kits and literacy kits for FI
- Sound Walls (posters available at the Media Centre)
- Big Books – Oral language resource (Piloted in 5 schools – Kindergarten)

Discussion took place following T. Wilcox's presentation where the following questions were answered:

1. How is this different from DRA?
 - DRA is not a research-based tool, and Quick Phonics Screener gives a more detailed report.
2. How are Lexia and Empower being used?
 - Lexia is a Tier 2 reading intervention based on needs and Empower is for Tier 3 students. These interventions are provided in all of our schools.
3. Are ESL students taught differently?
 - ESL students may learn easier if they know the meaning of the words by attaching visuals.
4. How were the schools selected?
 - Schools were selected based on the EQAO scores and the schools with lower scores were selected.

7. Review of the Special Education Plan (Standards 9 to 16)

The following standards were reviewed with the SEAC committee:

- Standard 9: Special Education Placements Provided by the Board
- Standard 10: Individual Education Plans (IEP's) and Transition Planning
- Standard 11: Provincial Demonstration Schools in Ontario
- Standard 12: Special Education Staff
- Standard 13: Staff Development
- Standard 14: Equipment
- Standard 15: Accessibility of School Buildings
- Standard 16: Transportation

Feedback/revisions were collected to apply to the 2023-2024 plan.

8. Special Education Update – PD Update

- Empower Day 4 training for new LSTs
- Reading Language Intervention Pilot Project Workshop #5 for selected GAINS teachers.

- Subject Specific PD Day, April 28th which includes PD for secondary LSTs, STEPS teachers and support staff.
- Gifted Fieldtrip to St. Clair College, for students with a gifted exceptionality from grades 5 to 8.

9. New Business

M. Wilcox shared that he will be stepping down as Superintendent of Special Education and that Chris Mills will be in the role effective May 1st.

10. Association Reports

T. McCarthy, Autism Ontario – World Autism Day was celebrated this past Sunday (April 2, 2023). The theme is ‘Celebrate the Spectrum’, for the month of April.

Autism Ontario has recently shared with all of its SEAC members, the following resources related to special education funding, as Boards and SEAC members review Special Education Budgets:

- 2022-23 Education Funding
- A Guide to the Special Education Grant
- PAAC on SEAC Tip Sheet (PAAC – Provincial Advisory Committee)
- PAAC on SEAC Funding Resource Guide

We are now accepting online applications for Autism Ontario scholarships! The deadline to apply is April 30, 2023.

Sibshops, registration opens April 3 at 12:00 p.m. Sibshops are lively, pedal-to-the-metal celebrations of the many contributions made by brothers and sisters of kids with special needs. Sibshops acknowledge that being the brother or sister of a person with autism is, for some, a good thing; for others, a not-so-good thing; and for many, somewhere in between.

Please visit <https://www.autismontario.com/region/west> for more information on all of our events.

B. Turner, Home and School Association – parents are very happy that school is back to normal and students are busy getting involved in the many school activities.

L. Cervini, Indigenous Community Representative – attending training entitled Beautiful Difference: a primer on intellectual and developmental disabilities for indigenous people. Training will be offered to those who are working with our indigenous students. L. Cervini is planning on bringing this forward to IEAC (Indigenous Education Advisory Committee).

M. Fuduric, Learning Disabilities Association of Windsor-Essex County – Transition to Post-Secondary is a free one-day in-person workshop supporting students in grades 11 and 12 with learning disabilities who are transitioning to post-secondary education. For information on this workshop and other LDAWE events, please visit <https://www.ldawe.ca/>.

Message on behalf of the SEAC committee:

The committee thanked M. Wilcox for his many years serving on the SEAC committee and supporting our students and community.

11. **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 2:39 p.m.

NEXT MEETING May 9, 2023 1:00 p.m.

Board Meeting Minutes available on GECD SB Website

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

Erin Kelly
Director of Education

Mike Wilcox
Administrative Liaison

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