

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

The Special Education Advisory Committee meeting was held on **Tuesday, April 12, 2022** via Microsoft Teams Meeting.

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

Aimee Omstead, Trustee
Cathy Cooke, Trustee
Martha Vukov, Community Living Windsor-Essex County
Mary-Ann Fuduric, Learning Disabilities Association of Windsor-Essex County
Jan Matte-Gasparovic, Autism Ontario
Monica Gilles, Windsor-Essex County Down Syndrome Association
Sheila Ruggaber, Epilepsy Southwestern Ontario
Bette Turner, Home and School Instruction

BOARD PERSONNEL

Mike Wilcox, Superintendent of Special Education Services
Kristie Sweet, Supervising Principal of Special Education Services
Theresa Williams, OPC Secondary Representative
Michelle Lowes, OPC Elementary Representative

REGRETS

Louise Cervini, Indigenous Community Representative
Kelly Stack, Brain Injury Association, Windsor-Essex

ABSENT

RECORDER

Peggy Russette

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 1:08 p.m.

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

2. Approval of the Agenda

Moved by: M. Vukov

Seconded by: M. Fuduric

That SEAC approve the agenda for April 12, 2022.

The motion was carried.

3. Approval of Minutes

Moved by: M. Fuduric

April 12, 2022

Seconded by: S. Ruggaber

That SEAC approve the minutes for March 8, 2022.

The motion was carried.

4. Business Arising as a Result of the Minutes

No business arising as a result of the minutes.

5. Presentation

Right to Read Report – OHRC Report Summary Update

M. Wilcox shared a power point presentation with the SEAC committee outlining the OHRC Right to Read Report which is a public inquiry into human rights issues affecting students with reading disabilities. School boards, faculties of education and members of the public were consulted for input on this report. The report covers the findings and recommendations of the following:

- curriculum and instruction;
- reading interventions;
- accommodation;
- professional assessments, and;
- systemic issues

The power point, created by the Science of Reading Committee, was shared with school administrators in February 2022 as an update and indication of the board's plan to build teacher capacity across the system. Though absenteeism due to COVID has significantly impacted the board's ability to implement large scale PD initiatives around reading there have been opportunities for smaller PD sessions at individual schools. There has also been ongoing support for the Science of Reading by the board which includes messaging for staff meetings, a professional learning video series, administrator capacity building sessions, and Heggerty Q & A sessions for LSTs and Coaches.

The board is looking at implementing system wide diagnostics to identify students who are struggling with reading and we are hoping that PPM 155 is revised by the Ministry of Education which would promote this plan. These diagnostics will show if children are learning phonics and letter sounds. Currently, Lexia is used for Tier 2 reading intervention. Lexia Core5 is an intuitive online program that scaffolds support for students and alerts teachers through the teacher dashboard that a student is struggling in a specific area of reading. It also provides individual and small group lessons for the teacher to implement with students. Empower is used for Tier 3 reading intervention (it was created by Sick Kids' Hospital) to support students with more severe reading challenges. The board has been using these programs for approximately 5 years and both are highly recommended interventions supported by the OHRC's Right to Read report and are on the Ministry of Education's approved intervention list.

There has been excellent PD created in collaboration with the Program Department and the Special Education Department. Tammy Wilcox, Education Coordinator, and Melinda Hinch, Speech and Language Pathologist, worked to create PD videos aligned to the Science of Reading for administrators and educators. The Science of Reading Committee has also purchased resources (literacy kits) for all Early Years and Primary teachers and these have been distributed. Kits are coming for ELL and RISE classrooms and will be distributed.

6. Special Education Plan Review – Standards 7 to 11

K. Sweet went over the revisions in Standards 7 to 11 and welcomed feedback from the SEAC committee. The Standards covered were:

April 12, 2022

Standard 7: Specialized Health Support Services in School Settings
Standard 8: Categories and Definitions of Exceptionalities
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

Standards 12 – 16 will be reviewed at next month's meeting.

7. New Business

SEAC discussed moving STRIVE Conference to the fall from the previously determined date of May 24, 2022 as it is Learning Disabilities month and it would be nice if the event coincided with the designated month. Concerns were brought forward about the conference conflicting with EQAO testing in May. Both heavily depend on Learning Support Teacher participation to be successful. Another benefit to deferring would be that we may be able to hold STRIVE in-person in the fall which would be more engaging for the students. The SEAC committee agreed that the move to the fall would be a better option.

8. Association Reports

J. Matte-Gasparovic, Autism Ontario – Autism Ontario has hired qualified specific personnel, Occupational Therapist, Speech Pathologist, Behaviour and Social Work to provide more training for parents. Visit <https://www.autismontario.com> for more details and programming.

S. Ruggaber, Epilepsy Southwestern Ontario – March was Epilepsy Awareness month. Some of the events held were:

- #THEPURPLEDOOR2022, from March 1 to 31, 2022
- Epilepsy Awareness Month Party, March 14, 2022, this was a virtual event
- Tropical Togetherness Day, March 16, 2022 at Colasanti's Tropical Gardens
- 36th Annual Mad Hatter Tea Party, April 2, 2022 at the Hellenic Community Centre

9. Distribution

Autism Ontario – Response to PPM81

The meeting adjourned at 3:03 pm.

Aimee Omstead, Chairperson
Special Education Advisory Committee

Mike Wilcox, Administrative Liaison
Special Education Advisory Committee

NEXT MEETING May 10, 2022

Board Meeting Minutes Available on GECDSB 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/