

GREATER ESSEX COUNTY DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

REPORT OF THE

SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Special Education Advisory Committee meeting was held on **Tuesday, November 9, 2021** via Microsoft Teams Meeting.

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

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

BOARD PERSONNEL

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

REGRETS

Suzanne Kovach, Parents for Children's Mental Health

ABSENT

RECORDER

Peggy Russette

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 1:05 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

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2. Approval of the Agenda

Moved by: B. Turner

Seconded by: L. Cervini

That SEAC approve the agenda for November 9, 2021.

The motion was carried.

3. Approval of Minutes

Moved by: K. Stack

Seconded by: A. Omstead

That SEAC approve the minutes for October 12, 2021.

The motion was carried.

4. Business Arising as a Result of the Minutes

There was no business arising as a result of the minutes.

5. Robotics and Coding in GAINS and STEPS Classrooms, Jennifer Newton, Special Education Coordinator

Started in the fall of 2019 with a joint project by OZAD, GECSB and JMCCSA

- Summer prior several workshops were offered as a joint initiative between JMCCSA and GECDSB
- Several classes were picked at the Secondary and Elementary Level, research was conducted on the use of robots and engagement in self-contained classrooms with very positive results
- GECDSB established a Lending library at both the Elementary and Secondary Level
- Weekly after school training sessions were completed
- All Robots were consistently booked out
- Last school year shared materials were not allowed, and the robotics program was placed on hold.
- Two important things to note-many classrooms asked for the return of the robots, many schools purchased their own devices
- GAINS and STEPS monthly newsletters were created to keep staff up to date on new programs and technology

Why Technology and Coding?

- 21stCentury Learning
- Part of the Ontario Mathematics Curriculum
- Exciting, students receive visual and auditory feedback
- Normalizes instruction, age appropriate
- Allows students to demonstrate learning
- Peers/siblings are using them in classrooms, at home
- Creates integration opportunities
- Assists with developing communication skills
- Keeps pace with Coding to Learn Project
- K Course as part of STEPS curriculum (KTT)

Teaching Coding also Improves...

- Sequencing skills
- Problem-solving
- Logical thinking
- Cause and effect skills
- Computational thinking

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- Counting

Next Steps

- Application being submitted to present at ASET (Association for Special Education Technology) May 12/13
- Lunch and Learns and after school workshops starting in November
- Presentations at RSEC and SERCC Spring 2021
- SLP assistance to develop core boards with fringe vocabulary, video taping sessions and core boards being added to kits
- Continue to add to both the lending library and the apps as they are updated. Osmo and Marbotics both just released 2 new apps
- Robot and Resources highlighted on each GAINS monthly

6. Special Education Update

K. Sweet started off by showing the committee a video titled “*How to Talk About Indigenous People*”, which included the many people that make up the First Nations, Métis and Inuit.

Special Education PD Update

- Boardmaker Webinar Series for Developmental Service Workers - DSWs will learn Boardmaker software and how to develop tasks to support programming through after school sessions in November.
- New Teacher to Lexia After School Sessions - In this session, teachers will develop an understanding on how they can support students. The activities in Core5 support and build on curriculum while developing reading skills.
- Experienced Teacher Lexia After School Sessions - In this session, teachers will analyze data reports in MyLexia. Through this data, they will be able to have a deeper understanding of student progress, create small groups, and identify key skill areas to target with instruction.
- Keynote Speaker Dr. Muhammad Khalifa – Presentation on the topic of culturally responsive learning, teaching and leading.
- Roads to Freedom documents has been released to our educators – During the November 12th PD, staff will view an informative video sharing the rich history of Windsor and Essex County in connection to the Underground Railroad.
- Jordan’s Principle EA Information Session – Staff will have the opportunity to learn greater details about Jordan’s Principle and why it is so important to ensure equitable access to resources for Indigenous students and families. This is a requirement for Education Support Staff.
- Virtual Gifted Fieldtrip October 2021 – Our partnership with the University of Windsor has continued this year. On October 27th, we had 54 students identified as Gifted from across the system participate in our Virtual Gifted Field Trip. This trip provided experiential learning beyond their curriculum. Thirty-Two Grade 7 and 8’s toured the Faculty of Human Kinetics and participated in a lecture on the broad field of kinesiology, tracing its history from Aristotle to present, and how knowledge of how the human body responds to stress can help to increase health. Twenty-two Grade 5 and 6’s toured the Faculty of Engineering, participated in a Mechatronics simulation and attended a lecture on Engineering and The Profession.
- M. Wilcox shared Lexia data with the committee showing the increase in students’ progress over last year.

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- ESS Staffing – the Director has approved an additional 29 support staff this year. This is a large increase in years. We will continue to recruit support staff throughout the year.

7. New Business

M. Wilcox presented three letters from other boards in support of Bill 172 and Online Learning Supports. Two of the three letters were from Rainy River DSB and one from Trillium Lakelands DSB. The committee decided that a letter in support of Bill 172 would be appropriate from the GECDSB SEAC and IEAC.

Moved by: B. Turner

Seconded by: K. Stack

That a letter be drafted on behalf of SEAC and IEAC in support of Bill 172.

The motion was carried.

8. Association Reports

A. Omstead, Trustee – If there are any events/presentation that SEAC would like announced at a public Board session, please email Aimee Omstead or Mike Wilcox.

The meeting adjourned at 2:11 pm.

Mary-Ann Fuduric, Chairperson
Special Education Advisory Committee

Mike Wilcox, Administrative Liaison
Special Education Advisory Committee

NEXT MEETING December 14, 2021

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/