

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

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The Special Education Advisory Committee meeting was held on **Tuesday, October 12, 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  
Suzanne Kovach, Parents for Children's Mental Health  
Tim McCarthy, 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

**BOARD PERSONNEL**

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

**REGRETS**

Monica Gilles, Windsor-Essex County Down Syndrome Association  
Sheila Ruggaber, Epilepsy Southwestern Ontario

**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](#)), Lenni ([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*

M. Wilcox, introduced our new SEAC Committee Association Member, Kelly Stack, from the Brain Injury Association, Windsor-Essex. Anna Jurak will be the alternate member for this association.

October 22, 2021

2. Approval of the Agenda

Moved by: B. Turner

Seconded by: L. Cervini

That SEAC approve the agenda for October 12, 2021.

The motion was carried.

3. Approval of Minutes

Moved by: A. Omstead

Seconded by: M. Vukov

That SEAC approve the minutes for September 14, 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. Special Education Update

• **ESS Staffing Re-organization Update**

M. Wilcox has met with several other boards and this issue seems to be impacting many boards across the province. We continue to work with Human Resources and Education Support Staff union partners to hire.

• **Camp Discover/Stride Update**

The focus participants for **Camp Discovery** were students with a RISE profile formally identified with a Learning Disability or Mild Intellectual Disability.

Goals included:

- ▶ Supporting student wellbeing and mindfulness
- ▶ Developing oral language skills
- ▶ Reading intervention using explicit and systematic instruction
- ▶ Promote caregiver education about learning challenges
- ▶ Building social skills
- ▶ Enrich learning with STEAM activities
- ▶ Provide support to prevent COVID/summer slide

Data was collected between initial, midway, and final assessments and was shared with the SEAC committee.

The focus participants for **Camp Stride** were students with a GAINS profile which included students with development delays and students with autism.

Goals included:

- ▶ Supporting student wellbeing
- ▶ Maintaining consistency in routines
- ▶ Building caregiver partnerships
- ▶ Promoting caregiver education
- ▶ Providing enriched STEAM activities
- ▶ Promoting language/math through music and movement
- ▶ Supporting transition back to their brick and mortar school for September 2021
- ▶ Maintaining skills developed from 2020/21 virtual school
- ▶ Maintaining communication skills developed to date
- ▶ Providing ongoing social interaction opportunities for students who would normally not attend summer camps.

The Camp was very well received and parent feedback was positive. Responses from parent feedback indicated that all felt the program met or exceeded expectations.

- **FNMI Empower Tutoring Update**
  - ▶ In September, two teachers (tutors) were trained in Empower by Sick Kid's Hospital staff. Kits were purchased for the two tutors.
  - ▶ A list of students from Aspen who self-identified as Indigenous and are currently in Grade 7 or 8 was compiled.
  - ▶ Principals were asked to work with their LSTs/Special Education Coordinators/Classroom teachers to determine which students were potential candidates.
  - ▶ Parents/caregivers were contacted by school principals and asked to commit to the after school tutoring program.
  - ▶ We are expecting to have the Empower Tutoring Program up and running in the next two weeks.
- **Special Education PD Update**
  - ▶ **Empower Refresher Training**  
All LSTs who facilitated Empower were provided with a refresher session to support them given the interruption to face to face learning over the last 18 months.
  - ▶ **GAINS TEAMS Resources**  
This session explored the teaching resources available on our Microsoft TEAMS platform to support GAINS teachers in the event we need to pivot to remote learning
  - ▶ **EDSBY Report Card Training for STEPS and GAINS Teachers**  
EDSBY is a learning management software system for teachers to communicate with parents and students, store assessment and evaluation data and compiles data analytics. Individual Education Plans (IEPs), annual goals and expectations were reviewed as well as reporting expectations and report card comments for the alternative report card.
  - ▶ **Science of Reading (SOR)**  
Working in partnership with the Program Department, we have begun the Science of Reading (SOR) PD sessions to build educator capacity to teach reading based on evidence-based research from SOR. All primary classroom teachers, Learning Support Teachers, ESL Teachers, RISE Teachers and Early Childhood Educators will attend 4 half day PD sessions developed by a multi-disciplinary team of Program Consultants, Special Education Consultants, Speech and Language Pathologists and Psychological Services staff. All classroom teachers will be provided with literacy kits to support the implementation of reading interventions in their classrooms.
  - ▶ **Lexia for Administrators**  
All elementary principals and vice-principals attended a professional development session provided by Lexia Core5 trainers. The focus of the session for administrators included how to "dig deeper" on the Lexia Core5 dashboard to further understand the literacy needs of students in their buildings.

6. New Business

The focus within the board this year has been on Equity and Diversity. T. DiCastro, Program Consultant, suggested a video to share which will be viewed at the November 2021 SEAC meeting.

7. Association Reports

- K. Stack, Brain Injury Association, Windsor-Essex

October 22, 2021

**Pediatric Caregiver Group**

This is a group for parents & caregivers of children who have an acquired brain injury. The child must be between the ages of 6 to 18 for the parent/caregiver to attend. The group will be led by a social worker and is free to attend.

Meetings are held the **2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of each month at 7:00pm via zoom**. The meetings will run about 1 to 1.5 hours. We are hoping that in person meetings will start in January 2022. There will be child care available in another room while parents meet.

There are no other groups in the Windsor-Essex area addressing this need for parents of children with an ABI to meet and talk. This group is unique in that it provides an opportunity for children's caregivers to feel less lonely, isolated or judged, thereby reducing distress, depression, anxiety or fatigue. It provides an opportunity to talk opening and honesty about feelings in a non-judgmental atmosphere, to stay motivated to manage the symptoms of brain injury; gain a sense of empowerment, control and hope; improve their understanding of brain injury, get practical feedback about treatment options and learn about health, economic and social resources including school.

Supports help people to learn about additional resources, learn from people who understand their situation and provide emotional support – to feel they are not alone. This helps in recovery and prevents more serious mental health issues.

For more information please feel free to email [info@biawe.com](mailto:info@biawe.com) or [clientservices@biawe.com](mailto:clientservices@biawe.com)

- B. Turner, Home and School Instruction  
Getting good feedback from community regarding virtual meetings with parents. It is much more convenient and efficient for them.
- Mary-Ann Fuduric, Learning Disabilities Association of Windsor-Essex County  
In honour of Learning Disabilities month, the Learning Disabilities Association of Windsor-Essex presents our first webinar from our Technology for Learning Series. Join us on October 19th at 7 pm and learn all about the built-in #accessibility features Microsoft has to offer. This free event will explore the many tools available to students in the GECDSB school board.

There is room in the Reading Buddies program. Children must be in grades 1-6 and be reading at least one level below.

The meeting adjourned at 2:05 pm.

Mary-Ann Fuduric, Chairperson  
Special Education Advisory Committee

Mike Wilcox, Administrative Liaison  
Special Education Advisory Committee

**NEXT MEETING November 9, 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/](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/speced/seac/)