

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

The Special Education Advisory Committee meeting was held on **Tuesday, September 14, 2021** via Microsoft Teams Meeting.

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

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

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

Suzanne Kovach, Parents for Children's Mental Health

ABSENT

RECORDER

Peggy Russette

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 1:03 p.m.

2. Approval of the Agenda

Moved by: B. Turner

Seconded by: A. Omstead

That SEAC approve the agenda for September 14, 2021.

The motion was carried.

3. Approval of Minutes

Moved by: A. Omstead

Seconded by: S. Ruggaber

That SEAC approve the minutes for June 8, 2021.

The motion was carried.

4. Business Arising as a Result of the Minutes

Letter from the Durham District School Board regarding Needs-based Funding/Services for Children with a Diagnosis of Autism – New Pilot Program, was reviewed at the SEAC meeting on June 8, 2021. J. Matte-Gasparovic offered to take the information back to Autism Ontario and review with the committee at the SEAC meeting on September 14, 2021. In consultation with the

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local Autism Ontario chapter, the recommendation to the GECDSB SEAC, was a “no stand” position on this new pilot program at this current time mainly due to the election taking place, which may change the funding model yet again.

5. Special Education Update

Lexia Update

- Lexia Core5 licenses continue to be available in all of our elementary schools as a Tier 2 reading intervention.

Empower Update

- Empower is continuing in all of our schools as a Tier 3 reading intervention. Teachers new to the role of Learning Support Teacher (LST) will be receiving training from Sick Kid’s hospital at the end of this month after re-organization. Coaching from Sick Kid’s continues for those teachers who are Empower trained.

Annual Accessibility Report for 2020-2021

- The goal of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (2005) is to have an accessible Ontario by 2025.
- GECDSB falls in the 50+ Public Sector employee organizations.
- We have to have a 5 year Accessibility Plan and provide an annual accessibility status report each year which is available to the public on our website in an AODA compliant version.
- After it is reviewed with SEAC for feedback, the draft will go back to the Accessibility Committee.
- We are looking to establish an Ad Hoc committee with staff with disabilities to provide input on accessibility issues at the school board and to provide insight into barriers that exist.

FNMI Empower Tutoring

- This year, based on feedback from the Indigenous Education Advisory Committee (IEAC), the Special Education Department in conjunction with the Program Department, will be providing the opportunity for self-identified FNMI students (Grades 6-8) to participate in after school Empower tutoring.
- This opportunity will be provided to self-identified FNMI students who are formally identified with a Learning Disability in the area of reading.
- Based on student and family interest, we may be able to expand the criteria to give the opportunity to other intermediate self-identified FNMI students who have reading struggles who are not formally identified.

Summer Psychological Assessments Update

- Through the *Return to School* transfer payment agreement we received from the Ministry of Education, we were able to utilize funding to have additional psycho-educational assessments completed over the summer.
- We completed 53 assessments through this funding
- Dr. Crundwell completed an additional 6 assessments over the summer
- While this did not eliminate our current wait list, it was effective in reducing the wait list in some of our schools with high-needs.

Enhanced Transition Program in Secondary Schools

- This summer during the month of August, we were able to provide an Enhanced Summer Transition program in all of our secondary schools.
- Students moving from Grade 8 to Grade 9, formally identified with an LD and students who attend MAPS programming were provided an opportunity for an individualized appointment to tour their new school. Each student and a family/caregiver were provided with the opportunity to:
 - Tour the school with the Child and Youth Worker (CYW)

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- Meet either the Learning Support Teacher (LST) or MAPS Department Head
- Review their schedule
- Receive a swag bag with school supplies

Science of Reading (SOR) initiative with Program Department

- At the GECDSB, we are committed to providing an equitable inclusive responsive and comprehensive literacy program based on the Science of Reading (SOR), that utilizes assessments and instructional practices to ensure every student has the fundamental right to learn and read. The Special Education Department in partnership with the Program Department will be building teacher capacity in the area of reading instruction based on the research from the Science of Reading (SOR) through professional development this year. Focus will be on the 5 big ideas in reading: *phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and language comprehension*. This fall, a four-part learning series will be held for administrators, primary homeroom teachers, learning support teachers, RISE teachers, ESL teachers and coaches (ESL & Early Intervention).

6. Professional Development Update

Equity and Inclusion Symposium Developing Knowledge and Understanding: Moving to Action, September 2, 2021

Key Note Speakers included:

- Tanya Talaga, esteemed author and truth-teller, and the first woman of Anishinaabe descent to be named a CBC Massey Lecturer.
- Kyle Sipkens, performing artist with an emphasis on building up individuals & strengthening communities.
- Gillian Parekh, educator, assistant professor and Canada Research Chair in Inclusion, Disability and Education.

Other presenters were:

- Niigaanwewidam Sinclair, *Discover Ways to Be a Helper in Our Collective Journey Towards Reconciliation*
- Irene Moore Davis, *Black History in Windsor and Essex County: Dispelling Myths*
- Dr. Andrew Allen, *Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Social Justice in the Curriculum*
- Aaiiyah Khan, *A Teachable Moment on Islamophobia*
- Beth Veale, *Making Space for Contagious Awesomeness*
- Alice Te, *Addressing Anti-Asian Racism*
- Chris D'Souza, *Anti-Racism in a Canadian Context*

Summer 2021

- Supporting Students with Behavioural Challenges through the Lens of Unmet Needs
- Supporting Students with Learning Disabilities in the Regular Classroom
- Supporting the Implementation of KTT in STEPS (Technology Course)
- Programs that can be Utilized in Self Contained Classrooms
- Unit Planning in Self Contained Classrooms
- Writing Individual Education Plans
- Immersive Reader
- Assistive Technology on SEA Laptops

For service/repair requests for SEA assistive technology, the following procedures should be followed:

- Virtual Students Only: please send requests to technologysupport@publicboard.ca and include the student name, student ID, serial number of the device issued by the board and a brief description of the problem.

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- Students learning In-Person: the LST (Learning Support Teacher) will work with the Software Support Technician at your child's school. Parents should reach out to the LST at their child's school for any SEA assistive technology service/repair requests.
- Reading Intervention Summer Series that included topics such as:
 - The Problem-Solving Model
 - Scope and Sequence of Reading
 - Putting it into Practice
 - Oral Language Development

7. New Business

8. Association Reports

S. Ruggaber, Epilepsy Southwestern Ontario – Seize the Day Walk/Run, Sept 24 – 26, 5k virtual walk/run in honour of someone affected by seizures. For more information, visit

<https://epilepsyswo.ca/seize-the-day/>

Purple Pumpkin Project 2021 to help raise awareness about epilepsy. For more information, visit

<https://epilepsyswo.ca/purple-pumpkin-project-2021/>

B. Turner, Home and School Instruction – Parents and children are very happy to be back at school. Home and School Instruction will continue to support families.

J. Matte-Gasparovic, Autism Ontario - Focusing on on-line/virtual programming at this time.

M. Fuduric, Learning Disabilities Association of Windsor-Essex County – Virtual Fall Programs.

Some of the programs offered are *One-on-One Tutoring*, *Reading Buddies*, *E-Sports*. For a complete list of programs and for more information, visit <https://www.ldawe.ca/>

The meeting adjourned at 2:21 pm.

Mary-Ann Fuduric, Chairperson
Special Education Advisory Committee

Mike Wilcox, Administrative Liaison
Special Education Advisory Committee

NEXT MEETING October 12, 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/