



GREATER ESSEX COUNTY DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

The Special Education Advisory Committee meeting was held on September 11, 2024, at the Administration Building, 451 Park Street W., Windsor, ON.

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

Tim McCarthy, Autism Ontario
Martha Vukov, Community Living Essex County
Kim McKinley, Trustee
Sarah Yang, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder/Ontario Network of Expertise
Joanna Conrad, Windsor-Essex Down Syndrome Association
Nancy Armstrong, Trustee
Mary-Ann Fuduric, Learning Disabilities Association of Windsor-Essex County

BOARD PERSONNEL IN ATTENDANCE

Chris Mills, Superintendent of Schools/Special Education Program and Services
Laura Bates, Supervising Principal of Special Education
Michelle Lowes, OPC Elementary Representative
Bianca Rota, Education Coordinator
Vicki Houston, Director of Education
Marc Crundwell, Supervisor of Psychological and Speech Language Services

REGRETS

Chelsea Lackovic, Windsor Council of Home and School Association
Theresa Williams, OPC Secondary Representative

ABSENT

Louis Cervini, Indigenous Representative

RECORDER

Melissa Beaton

1. Call to Order
The meeting was called to order at 1:02 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-ohme) 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: S. Yang

Seconded by: J. Conrad

That SEAC approve the Agenda for September 11, 2024.

The motion was carried.

4. Approval of Minutes

Moved by: T. McCarthy

Seconded by: J. Conrad

That SEAC approve the Minutes of June 11, 2024.

The motion was carried.

5. Business Arising as a Result of the Minutes

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

6. Welcome and Introductions

- C. Mills welcomed everyone back. Introduced L. Bates to the committee, she comes to us with many years in a leadership position and a lot of good ties to the community. C. Mills asked for introductions around the table. He also thanked Director Houston for joining us and introduced B. Rota to the group.

7. Special Education Plan

- Review of Standard 12 – Special Education Staff
L. Bates shared the Special Education Staff compliment for the coming year. Since the budget was not finalized in June, we were not able to complete the Special Education Plan. Feedback/revisions were collected to apply to the 2024-2025 plan.

8. Summer Psychological Assessments

- M. Crundwell, reported on the Professional Assessment fund. This past year we received funds to allow us to complete assessments during the school year. The focus was on assessing those students who had the longest wait times and explore assessing student who may meet the criteria for Autism.
We started assessments in April and continued until the end of August. We completed a total of 39 Speech and Language and 55 Psychological Assessments. We were able to significantly reduce the number of students currently on our wait lists, as well as 10 assessments where Autism was being explored.
We will be starting the 2024-2025 Professional Assessments in October.

9. Special Education Proposals

- C. Mills shared, this year Special Education applied to 6 Breaking Barriers Grants, we were successful in 4 of those. Universal Design for Learning & Differentiated Instruction, Inclusive Math, Inclusive Physical Education and year 2 of Project Search.
- B. Rota presented to the group the Inclusive Math Pilot Project for Special Education. The goals of this project were to purchase resources that support math intervention, test and/or develop a math screener and increase classroom teacher capacity. Six schools will be selected based on Grade 3 and 6 EQAO Math data, to determine

buildings that may need additional support to target intensive math interventions, with the focus of working with Grade 4 and 5 classroom teachers.

Screeners will establish an accurate baseline so teachers can track progress and adapt their instructional strategies to support student success. Professional Development and direct classroom support will build teacher capacity for delivering targeted Tier 2 and 3 math interventions to students with diverse learning needs.

This pilot aims to close learning gaps and promote equitable success in mathematics. Directly support students in preparing for the destreamed math curriculum in secondary school and enhance teacher capacity.

- B. Rota also presented Universal Design for Learning (UDL). The goals of this project are to strengthen lesson design, student engagement, and provide in-depth key content areas while addressing the need to reduce inequities in education.

Tiered Training Initiative: embed UDL principles across the board to ensure inclusive practices and address attitudinal and systemic barriers, particularly those that lead to streaming, by providing staff capacity to program for diverse students needs and profiles.

This is a collaboration between Special Education and Program Department, the committee includes: Principals, Vice Principals, Student Success, Education Coordinators and Program Consultants for both elementary and secondary.

A partnership with Novak Education to deliver focused UDL modules with keynote presentations and book talks. Novak Education was founded by Dr. Katie Novak, a leader in inclusive education and expert in Universal Design for Learning. The Novak Institute provides professional development, coaching and resources to support inclusive education.

Tentative professional development sessions are being scheduled throughout the school year.

UDL fosters a shift in mindset, moving away from traditional methods of streaming and focusing on inclusive, student-centered approaches that enhance achievement for all.

This collaborative and sustained effort will provide long-term benefits, creating an equitable education system that meets the diverse needs of all students.

10. New Business

- Questions arose regarding replenishing our support staff supply list?
We currently have 28 temporary support staff, looking to add additional. We interview approximately once a month. We will need to build capacity with our new hires.
- What are the numbers like for students with special needs?
Profiles are done at the end of May. They update those in the fall with any new students and adjust staffing needs. We will have a clearer picture of this at the end of September.
- Has there been any discussion with St. Clair College around the support staff title change and integrating those roles?
We have a meeting coming up with St. Clair College to discuss this.

11. Association Reports

- S. Yang, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder/Ontario Network of Expertise – September is FASD Awareness Month. Our caregiver support group met on September 4th. Check out our social media pages for events and updates.

- J. Conrad, Windsor-Essex Down Syndrome Association – would like to get information out to new families and will send Up About Down resources to the Board, to share with the system as appropriate.
- T. McCarthy, Autism Ontario – We are starting our music therapy program this week, three different groups: under 10, 10-17 and 18 plus. Lego and Building Social Skills Club one for youth and another for teens. A Dungeons and Dragon Program for 16 plus. A large line-up of webinars will be coming out. A lot of our time is going into cooking and life skills programs, which will run for multiple years. We are expanding our space on Drouillard to offer more services. Online meetings to be scheduled amongst SEAC members representing Autism Ontario are being held monthly.
- M. Fuduric, Learning Disabilities Association of Windsor-Essex County – our Program Catalogue is out for the entire year. We offer a variety of programs including JUMP Math, literacy, social clubs etc. We received a grant from Trillium, and we are building classrooms. We are still running programs within the school, once done we plan to have an open house.
- M. Vukov, Community Living Essex County – is promoting the Ruthven Apple Festival. They are the beneficiary of this event; proceeds go towards the maintenance of their accessible vehicles. Link shared with SEAC.

12. Distribution

There was no distribution.

13. Adjournment at 2:05pm



NEXT MEETING, October 9, 2024

Board Meeting Minutes available on [GECDSB website](#).

Vicki Houston, Director of Education

Chris Mills, Administrative Liaison

[Ministry SEAC website](#)