

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

The Special Education Advisory Committee meeting was held on **Tuesday, March 19, 2019** at the Administration Office.

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Cathy Cooke, Trustee
Aimee Omstead, Trustee
Martha Vukov , Community Living Windsor-Essex County
Bette Turner, Home and School Associations
Mary-Ann Fuduric, Learning Disabilities Association of Windsor-Essex County
Monica Gilles, Windsor Essex County Down Syndrome Association
Karen Wilson, Parents for Children’s Mental Health
Jan Matte-Gasparovic, Autism Ontario
Sheila Ruggaber, Epilepsy Southwestern Ontario

BOARD PERSONNEL:

Mike Wilcox, Superintendent of Special Education Services
Chris Mills, Supervising Principal of Special Education Services
Tracey Rilett, OPC Elementary Representative

REGRETS:

Kristie Sweet, OPC Secondary Representative

ABSENT:

Kimberly John, Indigenous Community – FNMI

RECORDER:

Peggy Russette

1. Call to Order

M. Fuduric called the meeting to order at 1:06 pm.

Motion to move Dr. Pyke’s presentation to the end of the meeting.

Moved by: K. Wilson

Seconded: A. Omstead

That SEAC approve moving Dr. Pyke’s presentation to the end of the meeting.

The motion was carried.

2. Approval of the Agenda

Moved by: K. Wilson

Seconded by: A. Omstead

That SEAC approve the agenda for March 19, 2019.

The motion was carried.

4. Approval of Minutes

Moved by: K. Wilson

Seconded by: M. Vukov

That SEAC approve the minutes for January 15, 2019.

The motion was carried.

5. Business Arising as a Result of the Minutes

There was no new business.

6. Special Education Presentations**STRIVE: Sharon Maxwell, Educational Coordinator**

GECD SB will host Strive 2019 on Tuesday April 30 at the WFCU Centre. This day is for students with Learning Disabilities in grades 7, 8, and 9 from every elementary and secondary school. We are looking forward to welcoming approximately 500 attendees this year, including 300 or more students, parents, teachers, and presenters. Our focus will be on Technology, Well-being, Pathways in High School, and Self-Advocacy. Students prepare for the day, by working with their teachers on understanding their learning strengths and needs as well as knowing the “tools for success” in their learning. Students will have the opportunity to hear our keynote speaker Blake Fly who will target themes of transitions, shared experiences, and empowering yourself.

M. Wilcox explained how students were happy to see that there were many other students just like them – identified with LD. This made them realize that they are not alone. The feedback from last year was very positive. C. Mills handed out the STRIVE invitations for this year to the committee members. J. Matte-Gasparovic asked how the student selection process for STRIVE went. M. Wilcox answered that the schools select their students and are asked to send different students each year.

Mindforce: Dana DiVincenzo, Educational Coordinator

The 9th Annual GECD SB Mindforce Competition will be held on Saturday, April 13, 2019 at Tecumseh Vista Academy, 9:00 am to 3:30 pm. Mindforce is GECD SB’s creative problem-solving competition. It consists of teams of seven students who compete in one of three problems - vehicle, technical, classic. All solutions are presented in an 8 minute skit – everything is done by the students (building sets, writing scripts, technical elements). Teams also compete in on-the-spot problem-solving called Quick Wits at the competition.

M. Wilcox thanked D. DiVincenzo for doing Mindforce year after year. A. Omstead asked how the teams are chosen. D. DiVincenzo responded that schools are asked to choose a variety of talents for their student team, not just gifted students.

7. Special Education Update**• PD Update**

Chris – Sam Mulcaster – Behaviour pathway tool – Janaury

February – LST – STRIVE, Sam Mulcaster Competing Behaviour Pathway in pm

Secondary LST – Read and Write will be doing another session with elementary soon

Feb 27 – ABA Tier 3 teams explained roles and what each team does

Feb 28 – Elementary IEP Audit

Mar 6 – Boardmaker Online – purchased for GAINS classrooms

Mar 19 – Empower for Secondary

Mar 22 – Chris D’Souza, Thrive in the Hive (DSWs)

Mar 28 – LST workshop (technology for EQAO)

Mike: United Way came and did poverty simulation for principals.

• Conscious Classrooms

Update: we are not moving ahead with the program this year. M. Wilcox explained the components of the program and that it does not totally align with our policies. The program is being piloted with another board and we are in contact with them to see how it is going. Another reason for not going forward with Conscious Classrooms is due to the high absenteeism with support staff.

• Special Education Plan

The time has come to review the plan for this year. It gets submitted at the end of July. M. Wilcox and C. Mills have viewed other boards’ Special Education Plans and will suggest enhancements/revisions.

We will review the Plan at the next three SEAC meetings before submitting it to the Ministry. B. Turner asked if this was a result of the Ministry’s plan to reduce Special Education money. M. Wilcox

responded that it was not because of this, that the review/update of the Special Education Plan is a yearly requirement. K. Wilson asked if we could co-develop changes and ask for parental input. M. Wilcox replied that the timeline may not permit it this year, but we would certainly like input in the future reviews of the Plan. We may look at a sub-committee for this next year.

8. New Business

M. Fuduric handed out a letter from PAAC on SEAC to Lisa Thompson, Minister of Education, requesting an update on key education issues and to assist in sharing the PAAC on SEAC Effective Practices Handbook for SEAC Members with Chairs of SEACs across the province.

Some of the issues outlined were:

- SEAC Training
- Ministry of Education Website
- Parents Reaching Out Grants
- Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education
- Definitions of Exceptionalities
- Ministry Consultations with Labour Partners
- Inter-Ministry Collaboration
- Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities (AODA) Education Accessibility Standard
- Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC) Policy on Accessible Education for Students with Disabilities

M. Fuduric also presented a letter from the Durham District School Board to Lisa Thompson, Minister of Education, regarding the Ministry of Education's decision to take back the funds offered to increase the Special Incidence Portion that was previously announced for the 2018/2019 school year. M. Fuduric proposed that the Greater Essex County District School Board send a letter to the Minister of Education outlining our concerns for this issue. M. Wilcox explained what the Special Incidence Portion (SIP) is. These funds are used for students who require 2:1 support. There is an application process in consultation with the Educational Coordinator.

Motion to write a letter to the Ministry:

Moved by: B. Turner

Seconded: M. Gilles

That SEAC write a letter to the Ministry regarding Special Incidence Portion (SIP)

The motion was carried.

9. Association Reports

B. Turner – planning annual meeting at the beginning of April in Hamilton. Looking forward to meeting parents across the province and discussing education.

M. Gilles – World Down Syndrome Day is March 21: theme is "Rock your Socks". March 22 was "Up About Down" where some proceeds from the Windsor Express game went to this organization. March 24 at the University of Windsor is the 5th annual Down Syndrome Walk at Malden Park. Tickets will be \$10.00 and all proceeds will go to Up About Down.

K. Wilson – March 29 and 30 is the PCMH leaders retreat in Toronto. April 4 is the next PCHM meeting at Glengarda.

S. Ruggaber – The "Strike out Epilepsy" event will be held at the Rose Bowl on March 31. March 26 is Epilepsy Day where people are asked to wear purple in support of epilepsy. There is also the Purple Door Campaign from March 1-31 where schools can decorate their classroom doors and be entered to win a Purple Door party for their class.

J. Matte-Gasparovic – received a memo from the provincial office which she handed out to the committee. J. Matte-Gasparovic went over what Autism Ontario is saying about recent government changes. The government is saying that the waitlist will be gone by 2020, but we are skeptical. We will have to continue to wait for more clarification. M. Wilcox added that we as a board have been proactive in hiring our teams and will continue to provide this support.

M. Fuduric – handed out flyers outlining the 2019 Spring Program for LDAWE. She also spoke about an upcoming scholarship opportunity. All information can be found on their website www.ldawe.ca

Special Education Presentation

Mental Health, Provincial Direction: Dr. Sharon Pyke, Superintendent of Education

Dr. Pyke presented our board’s mental health and well-being priorities in the overall board strategic Plan, the board improvement plan, and in the mental health strategic plan. The Ministry of Education supported our board through more mental health workers in the school and through additional funding. Over the past five years our board has seen a decline in the number of times our social workers were sent out for student crisis situations and overall in our worrisome and threat-risk assessments.

K. Wilson asked if the school mental health worker is a new position. S. Pyke responded that these are new positions added due to increased funding. We still have our nurses but they focus strictly on addictions. The numbers of responding to students in crisis has decreased dramatically over the years. S. Pyke asked for the SEAC committee to send a letter to the Ministry and the Premier stating the importance of our mental health work as it directly impacts students and their families.

Motion: for the SEAC committee to send a letter to the Ministry and the Premier in support of our mental health work.

Moved by: C. Cooke

Seconded: A. Omstead

That the SEAC committee send a letter to the Premier

The motion was carried.

10. Distribution

LDAWE 2019 Spring Program Guide

Mental Health Seminar Series 2019

Memorandum from Autism Ontario, Re: Autism Ontario SEAC Circular

PAAC on SEAC letter to Lisa Thompson, Minister of Education

Mindforce Invitations

STRIVE Invitations

Letter from Durham District School Board of Lisa Thompson, Minister of Education

11. Adjournment

Moved by: C. Cooke

Seconded by: M. Gilles

The meeting was adjourned at 2:37 pm.

Mary-Ann Fuduric, Chairperson
Special Education Advisory Committee

Mike Wilcox, Administrative Liaison
Special Education Advisory Committee