

GREATER ESSEX COUNTY DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

REPORT OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Special Education Advisory Committee meeting was held on **Tuesday, September 13, 2022** at the Administration Office, 451 Park St., West, Windsor, ON.

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

Aimee Omstead, Trustee
Martha Vukov, Community Living Windsor-Essex County
Louise Cervini, Indigenous Community Representative
Tim McCarthy, Autism Ontario
Monica Gilles, Windsor-Essex County Down Syndrome Association
Sheila Ruggaber, Epilepsy Southwestern Ontario
Bette Turner, Home and School Instruction
Mary-Ann Fuduric, Learning Disabilities Association of Windsor-Essex County
Robyn Hodges, Brain Injury Association of Windsor-Essex

BOARD PERSONNEL

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

REGRETS

Cathy Cooke, Trustee
Bette Turner, Home and School Association (due to technical difficulties during Microsoft Teams meeting)

ABSENT

RECORDER

Peggy Russette

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 1:06 pm.

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-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

3. Approval of the Agenda

Moved by: Tim McCarthy
Seconded by: M. Fuduric

That SEAC approve the agenda for the SEAC meeting of September 13, 2022

The motion was carried.

4. Approval of Minutes

Moved by: M. Fuduric

Seconded by: S. Ruggaber

That SEAC approve the minutes for the SEAC meeting of June 14, 2022

The motion was carried.

5. Science of Reading Update

Heggerty Phonemic Awareness Resources, one of the interventions recommended in the OHRC's Right to Read Report, have been distributed to all Kindergarten, Grade 1, RISE, and Learning Support teachers. Approximately 110 teachers took advantage of the Heggerty training in August during our GECDSB summer learning PD series. Lexia and Empower are also interventions recommended in the OHRC's Right to Read Report, which we are utilizing in all of our elementary schools. Lexia Core5 is a Tier 2 intervention, and Empower is a Tier 3 intervention. These programs are both aligned to the Science of Reading.

6. Camp Discovery

Camp Discovery has been held for three years now, with this year being the first year that it was held in person. The goals of Camp Discovery were:

- Supporting student well-being 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 summer learning slide

Indicator of growth and success determined that 93% of the students demonstrated an increase in phonic reading skills between the first and final assessment.

The program ran from 8 am to 2 pm daily. Students in the RISE program were selected to participate in the program. Transportation was not provided but we worked with families if there were any transportation issues.

7. Enhanced Transition Program

Secondary Learning Support Teachers, Child and Youth Workers and Developmental Service Workers were able to meet and support over 216 incoming grade 9 students who were identified with a Learning Disability or Mild Intellectual Disability. The feedback was very positive. Parents felt that the in-person meetings made their child feel very welcome and helped relieve the anxiety that they and their child were feeling.

8. Summer Psychological Assessments

The GECDSB received Ministry funding for a third summer that allowed us to complete an additional 48 psychological assessments over the course of July and August. In an average year, our Psychological Services Staff complete approximately 325 assessments in a school year. We have a current wait list of approximately 70 students moving into the 2022-23 school year.

We offered various locations to make it more convenient for families to be able to get their child to the assessment and we helped with transportation costs where there was a concern.

9. Special Education Survey Update

Available from September 1 – September 30th, our Communications Officer will be sending out information about the survey on our various social media platforms and Principals were asked to share the survey with their Parent Councils. Results of the survey will be shared with SEAC and the Special Education Department. The survey will take you to the 16 standards in the Special Education Plan to review and provide feedback.

Student Demographic Census

The GECDSB will be collecting demographic student data in the 2022-23 school year. This demographic data will be reviewed to determine which students are currently receiving special education support and programming in our board. It will inform us of changes that we may need to make regarding special education services and how they are provided in the GECDSB. We will be reviewing the RISE program this school year. The review will be completed by external researchers from York University.

10. New Business

There was no new business to report.

11. Association Reports

T. McCarthy, Autism Ontario – will start back to in-person programs this month. Autism Ontario hosted a large summer picnic at the Vollmer Complex in LaSalle in August for families and had approx. 370 people come up for the day. They will continue to offer virtual learning and social opportunities across the West Region. As a region we are trying to access the need in the different areas to best plan.

There is a workshop being offered virtually for families to understand the Ontario Autism Program and its changes.

Autism Ontario has increased the number of workshops being offered to families and hired Subject Matter Experts - BCBA, Speech Pathologists, Occupational Therapists, and Social Workers. We are in the process of hiring an educational SME – Subject Matter Expert

We have scheduled opening for the Toldo Multi-Sensory Experience (Oct). A large room where will families of individuals of all ages can book a quiet time to enjoy a Snoezelen/sensory experience at the Windsor location. Contact Autism Ontario to arrange a time.

Provincial Virtual Meeting for all A.O. SEAC reports occurring the last week of September. The focus is on priorities for the coming year. To be led by Marg Spoelstra (E.D. for Autism Ontario and Liz Ziraldo who is the Strategic Advisor with Learning Disabilities Association of York Region. Please visit <https://www.autismontario.com> for more information.

M. Fuduric, Learning Disabilities Association of Windsor-Essex County – Open House October 3, 2022. October is Learning Disabilities Awareness month. There will be fun activities for children. All programs are out now and we are returning to in-person learning. Some of the programs that are available are: Literacy, Jump Math, Growth Mind Set (virtual), Reading Intervention (virtual), Homework Club. Please visit <https://www.ldawe.ca/> for more information.

S. Ruggaber, Epilepsy Southwestern Ontario – Welcomed Lori Duhig as the SEAC alternate representative for Epilepsy Southwestern Ontario. Lori is available to visit schools to present to staff and/or students. The annual Seize the Day run/walk event will be held on September 25, 2022, at Malden

Park to raise funds to provide support and educational services for people living with epilepsy. For more information, please visit <https://epilepsyswo.ca/>

12. Distribution

No distribution

13. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 2:11 pm.

NEXT MEETING, October 11, 2022

Board Meeting Minutes available on GECDSB website at

<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/