

**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, September 15, 2020** via Microsoft Teams Meeting.

**MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE**

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

**BOARD PERSONNEL**

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

**REGRETS**

Kimberly John, Indigenous Community Representative  
Bette Turner, Home and School Instruction  
Michelle Lowes, OPC Elementary Representative

**ABSENT**

**RECORDER**

Peggy Russette

1. Call to Order  
The meeting was called to order at 1:00 pm.
  
2. Approval of the Agenda  
Moved by: C. Cooke  
Seconded by: M. Fuduric  
That SEAC approve the agenda for September 15, 2020. The motion was carried.
  
3. Approval of Minutes  
Moved by: M. Fuduric  
Seconded by: J. Matte-Gasparovic  
That SEAC approve the Minutes for July 28, 2020. The motion was carried.
  
4. Business Arising as a Result of the Minutes
  
5. Special Education Update
  - Update on Special Education in Virtual Schools

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- We have approximately 9,000 elementary and 3,000 students doing virtual online learning. Approximately 1,500 of these students have IEPs or receive Special Education services. Cohort C are online and cohort D are paper packages. Education Coordinators continue to service those students from their family of schools. They have already established good relationships with these students and families. Learning Support Teachers and Speech and Language Pathologists and Psychological Services Staff will be supporting the students in these cohorts as well as in-school learners. We will be meeting with the Learning Disabilities Association Windsor/Essex to see how we can support parents with technology to further support students who are learning virtually. The paper packages for cohort D only are designed for students in GAINS and RISE. Parents will be picking up these packages this week. Information for cohort C students and families will be sent by the end of next week.
- PD Update
  - Synchronous Learning in Special Education
  - Teaching Coding and Robotics Virtually – we purchased robotics kits that are signed out by GAINS and STEPS teachers for two-week periods. M. Wilcox will discuss with Autism Ontario the possibility of the kits being loaned out to them.
  - Assistive Technology and Distance Learning
  - Meeting Diverse Learning Needs Through Differentiated Instruction
  - Writing Meaningful IEPs
  - MyON – a digital literacy platform, was presented to RISE students. This program provides RISE teachers with data on the individual student as well as the entire class
  - Microsoft Teams presented to CYWs
  - GAINS PD next month
- Lexia Update
  - We have purchased additional licenses that will be used by Gr. 1, 2, 3, and 5 students as well as all RISE students. We are hoping to have Lexia up and running in schools next week.
- Enhanced Transition Program
  - We were provided Ministry funding for this program. There were teams of LSTs and CYWs at each secondary school who worked with over 300 students with a learning disability, to assist with the transition into secondary school. Students and parents were invited into the school at scheduled times to tour the school and to go over their schedule with the LST. This was a perfect opportunity to get to know the LST and what learning support would look like at their secondary school. Participating students also received “swag” bags filled with back to school supplies. Monarch supplies donated the actual swag bags for the items to be put in for each student.
- ESS Staffing Update
  - Principals resubmitted their school’s profiles to help us determine where support is most needed in the system. All elementary and secondary schools have now been staffed in the Virtual Elementary (Cohort C) with 6 GAINS classes, 6 DSWs, and 6 EAs and the Virtual Secondary (Cohort C) with 7 STEPS classes, 7 DSWs and ??DHH. There will be opportunities for parents to opt in or out of models in November. Early years started September 14<sup>th</sup> and we will take a look at the needs of

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these students as well. Teachers are supporting 225 minutes of online teaching and our support staff will join the teacher online to provide support. We also have the Boardmaker program which will help to develop structured activities that students can do right away. All staff are working extremely hard to make this virtual learning a successful experience.

We also received funding from the Ministry to run Camp Discovery. This camp had 56 students and 9 teachers. The focus was on the following:

- Support Mental Wellness
- Improved Mathematics Learning
- Support high-levels of engagement
- Support Parent Engagement
- Develop an understanding of technological literacy

Camp discovery was extremely successful and we will look at setting up a presentation for SEAC in the fall.

Empower will continue to run in our schools. We have training coming up for teachers new to Empower. It is very impactful for students who struggle with reading. We are looking at how it will be delivered virtually. The program will most likely start back up at the end of September.

6. New Business

No new business to report

7. Association Reports

M. Fuduric, Learning Disabilities Association Windsor/Essex – LDAWE has moved to the John McGivney Centre, located at XXXX Matchette Avenue, Windsor, ON. Some programs offered are: 1:1 Oline Tutoring for children with a learning disability from Grades 2 – 9. Grade 2& 3 receive 30 minutes one day per week and Grade 4 – 9 receive 60 minutes one day per week, and Reading Buddies which is a free 12-week program for children in Grades 1-6, for 30 minutes once per week. For more information, please visit [ldawe.ca](http://ldawe.ca)

M. Vukov, Community Living Windsor-Essex County – for the past 12 weeks, virtual meetings have been held. Registration for virtual support offerings will open on September 18<sup>th</sup>. Please visit [communitylivingessex.org](http://communitylivingessex.org) for more information. Some of the most popular virtual activities are Bingo, board games, book clubs and even tours of local attractions like Charlotte's Freedom Farm. This year the Ruthven Apple Festival will be held virtually. Funds raised will go to purchasing and maintaining accessible vehicles. Check out [ruthvenapplefestival.com](http://ruthvenapplefestival.com) for more information.

S. Kovach, Parents for Children's Mental Health – They are changing how they provide support. Meetings were previously held at Glengarda and have now changed location to Dr. Ahmad's office on Rhodes Drive. PCMH will be offering online evening support groups. For more information, go to [pcmh.ca](http://pcmh.ca)

S. Ruggaber, Epilepsy Southwestern Ontario – They are currently on hold due to COVID. They have brought back educators to start in schools again. Virtual "Seize the Day" 5K walk/run will take place from September 12 – 27. Please visit [epilepsyswo.ca](http://epilepsyswo.ca) for more information.

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J. Matte-Gasparovic, Autism Ontario – AO is providing a caregiver program called “Living Life to the Full”. This program is open to all caregivers, not just those caring for a person with autism. AO continues offering music therapy in a virtual setting and will begin a virtual Art Therapy program the first week of October. An online Christmas choir will begin in October and is open to everyone. Please visit [autismontario.com](http://autismontario.com) for more information. By direction of the AO Provincial Office, there will be no face to face programs operating until at least the end of December 2020.

8. Distribution

No distribution

9. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 1:49 pm.

Aimee Omstead, Chairperson  
Special Education Advisory Committee  
Committee

Mike Wilcox, Administrative Liaison  
Special Education Advisory

**NEXT MEETING October 6, 2020**