



SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT

**Wednesday, June 7, 2023, 7:00 pm
Trustees' Committee Room
133 Greenbank Road
Ottawa, Ontario**

Members: Cathy Miedema (Association for Bright Children), Lori-Anne Bradley, electronic communication (Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder/Ontario Network Expertise (FESD/ONE), Allison Bunney, electronic communication (Community Representative), Susan Cowin (Community Representative), Sonja Elliot (Autism Ontario, Ottawa Chapter), Dr. Maggie Mamen (Learning Disabilities Association of Ottawa-Carleton (LDAO-C), Hoda Seens, electronic communication (Community Representative), Terry Warner (VOICE for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children, Alternate), Jess Whitley (Inclusion Action in Ontario), Donna Dickson, electronic communication (Trustee), Nili Kaplan-Myrth, electronic communication (Trustee), Lynn Scott, electronic communication (Trustee)

Association Representatives (Non Voting): Connie Allen, electronic communication (Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation, PSSP), Catherine Houlden, electronic communication (Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation, Teachers), Jennifer Titley (Ottawa-Carleton Elementary Teachers' Federation), Andrew Winchester, electronic communication (Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation, Alternate)

Staff and Guests: Suzanne Nash (Trustee), Peter Symmonds (Superintendent of Learning Support Services), Stacey Kay (General Manager, Learning Support Services), Kate Stoudt (System Principal, Learning Support Services), Mellissa Applewaihe (Board/Committee Coordinator)

1. Call to Order

Chair Miedema called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m.

2. Acknowledgement of Territorial Lands

Chair Miedema acknowledged that the meeting is taking place on unceded Algonquin Territory and thanked the Algonquin people for hosting the meeting on their land.

3. Approval of the Agenda

Moved by Mr. Warner,

THAT the agenda be approved.

Mr. Warner requested that item 9.3, Committee of the Whole Budget, be moved and included with item 8.1.a, Review of Staff Recommended Budget.

Ms. Mamen requested that the committee discuss Applied Level Math at Grade 10 before item 8, Department Update.

Moved by Mr. Warner,

That the agenda be approved as amended.

Carried

4. Delegations

4.1 Lauren Reid, re Grade Retention

Ms. Reid introduced herself as a specialist physician of physical medicine and rehabilitation, focused on working with people with cognitive and physical disabilities and a graduate of the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (OCDSB).

Ms. Reid expressed the view that grade retention can be an appropriate strategy for some students, particularly those who have developmental delays, learning disabilities or have Attention Deficit Disorder (ADHD).

Superintendent Symmonds noted that the District procedure PR.614-CUR - Promotion allows for student retention or promotion.

5. Presentations

5.1 Association for Bright Children (Cathy Miedema)

Chair Miedema provided a presentation on the Association for Bright Children.

During the discussion and in response to queries, the following information was provided:

- It was noted that only four students were assigned to the elementary gifted classroom for the 2021-2022 school year. The low number of students compared to previous years could be due to a lack of testing, French Immersion programs and that schools do not always encourage the gifted route for students;
- Testing for gifted students today is considerably more advanced than the basic testing of ten years ago with current score

requirements of 99.6% for grades 1 to 4 and 96.98% for the junior intermediate program;

- Gifted students are often tested for other neurodevelopmental disorders such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), as boredom can lead to the display of similar behaviours; and
- Superintendent Symmonds noted that there are challenges in identifying gifted students.

6. Review of Special Education Advisory Committee Report

6.1 SEAC Report, 3 May 2023

Moved by Terry Warner,

THAT the Special Education Advisory Committee Report dated 3 May 2023 be received.

Carried

6.2 Forward Agenda

The SEAC forward agenda was provided for information.

Superintendent Symmonds requested that Committee members consider items for the 2023-2024 year and contact himself or Chair Miedema with suggestions.

7. Matters For Action

7.1 Special Education Plan (Standards)

Your committee had before it Report 23-045, seeking approval for the 2022-2023 Special Education Plan.

System Principal Stoudt provided an overview of the 2022-2023 Special Education Plan and noted that early identification procedures, intervention strategies and the Identification Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) process and appeal standard have been reviewed and are presented in a more accessible format for families.

Moved By Susan Cowin (Community Representative)

THAT the 2022-2023 Special Education Plan, attached as Appendix A to Report No. 23-045 be approved.

THAT the 2022-2023 Special Education Report, attached as Appendix B to Report No. 23-045 be approved.

Carried

8. Grade 10 Mathematics: Destreaming

Ms. Mamen expressed her understanding that since the destreaming of Grade 10 Mathematics has not been sanctioned by the Ministry of Education (MOE), the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (OCDSB) should continue to offer applied classes in Math, English, History and French.

Following discussion and in response to queries, it was noted that:

- Due to previous data collected by the OCDSB that identified racially diverse and minoritized students were being disproportionately streamed into applied classes, the OCDSB has chosen to offer academic mathematics;
- There is a gap between Grade 10 and Grade 11 Mathematics;
- The committee will revisit the destreaming issue in the fall of 2023 and enlist the involvement of Program and Learning (P&L) staff and secondary school principals; and
- It was suggested that a list of questions regarding the challenges affecting special education and marginalized students be collated. Further information will be provided at a future date.

The meeting went into recess at 8:45 p.m.

The meeting resumed at 8:52 p.m.

9. Department Update

9.1 Superintendent's Report

a. Review of Staff Recommended Budget

Mr. Warner, the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC), Committee of the Whole Budget representative, provided an overview of the 6 June 2023 Committee of the Whole Budget meeting.

During discussion and in response to queries, it was noted that:

- Part of the OCDSB budget proposal is to reallocate approximately \$6,000 that previously funded a summer learning program for special educational needs students. The reallocation will fund nine Educational Assistants (EAs) and 1 EA Coordinator;
- The summer learning program has faced operational issues in hiring qualified staff to support the site, which required the support of 137 positions; and

- Memo 23-041, Summer Learning Program (SLP) for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Developmental Disabilities (DD) which was circulated to trustees on 6 June 2023, will be shared with SEAC members at a future date.

Mr. Warner provided the email address, budgetinfo@ocdsb.ca, where members can submit comments and feedback to the finance team regarding the proposed budget. He noted that he would confirm the SEAC support for the summer learning program at the next budget meeting.

b. Storefront Update (oral)

System Principal Stoudt provided the annual update on the Storefront program.

c. Summer Programs Update

Superintendent Symmonds provided an update on summer programs for the current year and thanked SEAC members for their input throughout the 2022-2023 school year.

10. Committee Reports

10.1 Board

Trustee Scott noted that awards were presented to community volunteers at the Board meeting on 30 May 2023, and that Janet Bowen from Crystal Bay School was one of the award recipients.

10.2 Committee of the Whole

There was no report from the Committee of the Whole.

10.3 Committee of the Whole, Budget

Mr. Warner provided an overview of the Committee of the Whole Budget meeting of 6 June 2023 under item 9.1a.

11. New Business

Mr. Warner noted that he has represented deaf and hard of hearing children since 2008 and will step down from the SEAC after the September 2023 meeting. He introduced his replacement, Ms. Copeland.

Superintendent Symmonds read an email submitted by SEAC member Ms. Elliott, requesting that the SEAC write a letter to Stephen Lecce regarding

proposed changes to Special Incidence Portion (SIP) funding that would considerably reduce funding support for school boards. The Committee agreed to work on preparing a draft for September 2023.

12. Upcoming Meeting Dates

The upcoming meeting dates will be distributed to SEAC members at a future date.

13. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9.58 p.m.

Cathy Miedema, Chair, Special
Education Advisory Committee