



SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT

Wednesday, September 6, 2023, 7:00 pm
Trustees' Committee Room
133 Greenbank Road
Ottawa, Ontario

Members: Cathy Miedema (Association for Bright Children), Hoda Seens (Community Representative), Lori-Ann Bradley Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder/Ontario Network Expertise), Jess Whitley (Inclusion Action in Ontario), Dr. Maggie Mamen (Learning Disabilities Association of Ottawa-Carleton), Mike Marta (Learning Disabilities Association of Ottawa-Carleton, Alternate), Terry Warner (VOICE for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children), Donna Dickson (Trustee), Nili Kaplan-Myrth (Trustee), Lynn Scott (Trustee)

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

Staff and Guests: Suzanne Nash (Trustee), Peter Symmonds (Superintendent of Learning Support Services), Reg Lavergne (Superintendent of Program and Learning Innovation), Stacey Kay (General Manager, Learning Support Services), Kate Stoudt (System Principal, Learning Support Services), Deborah Lyon (System Principal, Learning Support Services), Lindsay Copland (VOICE for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children), Steven Massey (System Principal, Program and Learning Innovation, Secondary), Mellissa Applewaihe (Board/Committee Coordinator)

1. Call to Order

Chair Miedema called the meeting to order at 7:12 p.m.

2. Acknowledgement of Territorial Lands

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

3. Approval of the Agenda

Moved by Trustee Scott,

THAT the agenda be approved.

Carried

4. Delegations

There were no delegations.

5. Presentations

5.1 VOICE - for Children who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing (T. Warner)

Mr. Warner provided a presentation on VOICE for Children who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing that gave an overview of the organization and the support that it offers.

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

- The District is facing challenges in procuring staff with the required level of American Sign Language (ASL) skills to provide sign interpretation services to high school students;
- As many as 1 in 100 school-aged children have a hearing loss, and 40% of students with hearing loss have other physical or learning challenges;
- Students enrolled with the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (OCDSB) who are deaf and hard of hearing (DHH) are assisted in developing speaking skills with the support of itinerant teachers, speech-language pathologists and educational assistants (EAs). Students with the highest requirements receive three to four blocks per week;
- All DHH students supported by Learning Support Services (LSS) are enrolled in the English program; and
- The District provides a 0.5 FTE social worker to support DHH students by assisting them to access social work services or to facilitate private conversations with guidance counsellors, principals and other staff members.

6. Review of Special Education Advisory Committee Report

6.1 7 June 2023, SEAC Report

Moved by Donna Dickson,

THAT the Special Education Advisory Committee report, dated 7 June 2023, be received.

Carried

6.2 Forward Agenda

The SEAC forward agenda was provided for information.

Superintendent Symmonds noted that a more detailed Forward Agenda will be available for the 4 October 2023 meeting. He requested that members email himself or Chair Miedema with specific information.

7. Matters for Discussion

7.1 De-streaming Update

Mr. Massey provided a presentation on de-streaming.

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

- The streaming of courses disproportionately removed pathway choices from traditionally underserved communities and students;
- The de-streaming approach intends to remove the barriers associated with streamed courses and to provide all students with support and time to consider their future direction;
- Approximately 1,375 more students obtained a Grade 10 Math credit in 2022-2023 as a result of de-streaming than in 2019-2020;
- The District has prioritized support for the 5% of students who experience difficulty in Grade 10 math and strategies are being developed to assist all students in achieving the provincial standard;
- Educators are aiming to provide a personalized course delivery model for students;
- The OCDSB is focused on early identification of students experiencing difficulties in math and literacy so that appropriate interventions and supports can be implemented earlier;
- The OCDSB is focused on providing direct support within the classroom over the removal of students for external support; and
- Tier 1 interventions are key in bringing student support into classrooms, focusing on areas of challenges and providing an easier transition to high school.

The meeting went into recess at 7:30 p.m.

The meeting resumed at 7:45 p.m.

8. Department Update

8.1 Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Symmonds provided his report.

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

- Over the next four years, there is a need to significantly reduce transportation costs; and
- As part of the Upcoming Speaker's Series, Ann Douglas will provide a virtual presentation, *Journeying Together: Parenting Through the Storm*, on 19 September 2023.

8.2 Special Education Plan (Standards)

a. Draft Schedule

Superintendent Symmonds advised that the draft Special Education Plan Schedule follows the same model as previous years. He requested that SEAC members contact him to provide input.

b. SEAC - The Role and Composition - Discussion

The updated Special Education Plan was published on the OCDSB website in July 2023. SEAC members should contact System Principal Stoudt with any required changes.

c. Special Education Staff - Discussion

The Special Education Staff Standard was provided in the agenda package for information. SEAC members should contact System Principal Stoudt with questions or edits.

8.3 Inclusive Education Project

System Principal Stoudt provided an overview of the Inclusive Education Project.

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

- Learning Support Services (LSS) and Program and Learning Innovation have developed an inclusive education team with a portion of the 2023-2024 Partnership and Priority Funding (PPF);

- The team consists of eight educators and one learning support consultant. They will work directly with students and educators, four high schools and the associated “feeder schools”; and
- The team aims to support students with diverse learning profiles, de-streamed Grade 9 and 10 classes and ease the transition to high school by developing inclusive practices.

9. Committee Reports

9.1 Board

There was no report from the Board.

9.2 Committee of the Whole

There was no report from the Committee of the Whole.

9.3 Committee of the Whole, Budget

There was no report from the Committee of the Whole Budget.

10. New Business

There was no new business.

11. Upcoming Meeting Dates

The upcoming meeting dates were provided for information.

12. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:50 p.m.

Cathy Miedema, Chair, Special
Education Advisory Committee