



SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT

Wednesday, October 4, 2023, 7:00 pm
Trustees' Committee Room
133 Greenbank Road
Ottawa, Ontario

- Members: Cathy Miedema (Association for Bright Children), Susan Cowin (Community Representative), Allison Bunney (Community Representative), Hoda Seens (Community Representative), Sonja Elliott (Autism Ontario), Lori-Ann Bradley (Easter Seals), Jess Whitley (Inclusion Action in Ontario), Mike Marta (Learning Disabilities Association of Ottawa-Carleton, Alternate), Lindsay Copland (VOICE for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children), Terry Warner, Alternate (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, Teachers), Andrew Winchester (Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation, Alternate)
- Staff and Guests: Suzanne Nash (Trustee), Peter Symmonds (Superintendent of Learning Support Services), Shawn Lehman (Superintendent of Program and Learning Innovation), Marc Slesar (Principal, Emily Carr Middle School), Stacey Kay (General Manager, Learning Support Services), Kate Stoudt (System Principal, Learning Support Services), Deborah Lyon (System Principal, Learning Support Services), Mellissa Applewaithe (Board/Committee Coordinator)

1. Call to Order

Chair Miedema called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

2. Acknowledgement of Territorial Lands

Chair Cathy 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. Introduction: Director of Education, Pino Buffone

Superintendent Symmonds introduced Director Buffone to the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) members.

4. Approval of the Agenda

Moved by Trustee Kaplan-Myrth,

THAT the agenda be approved.

Carried

5. Delegations

There were no delegations.

6. Review of Special Education Advisory Committee Report

6.1 6 September 2023, SEAC Report

Moved by Donna Dickson,

THAT the Special Education Advisory Committee report, dated 6 September 2023, be received.

Jess Whitley noted that she should be added to the attendance.

Moved by Donna Dickson,

THAT the Special Education Advisory Committee report, dated 6 September 2023, be received as amended.

Carried

6.2 Forward Agenda

The SEAC forward agenda was provided for information.

7. Consultation

7.1 Bullying Intervention Plan (M. Slesar)

Principal Slesar provided a presentation on the consultation process for the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan. He noted that consultations will involve all advisory committees and other groups, including students from Grades 9 to 12 at the Student Senate and with the Student Co-Presidents.

Superintendent Lehman noted that there are plans to engage younger students from Grades 4 to 8 in the consultation process.

8. Presentations

8.1 Report 23-039, Student Suspensions (S. Lehman)

Superintendent Lehman and General Manager Rahim provided a presentation on student suspensions.

During the discussion and in response to queries, the following points were noted:

- The District is adopting a proactive approach to avoid situations that escalate into student suspensions by working with the Institute of Restorative Practice to provide training for all principals. The training initially targets priority schools but the District's long-term goal is to provide the training from within;
- The District is guided by the Education Act, which details instances where suspension must unequivocally be considered and instances where suspension may be considered, while taking mitigating factors into account;
- The District is focusing on ensuring that student suspensions are recorded accurately in the system;
- Suspension is the last option when it is a choice, and staff utilize progressive discipline whenever possible; and
- Committee members expressed concern regarding the number of students with undiagnosed Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) who exhibit behavioural issues that result in suspension.

The meeting went into recess at 8:42 p.m.

The meeting resumed at 8:48 p.m.

9. Department Update

9.1 Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Symmonds provided his report. He noted that the Ottawa-Carleton District Board (OCDSB) is working with the Ontario Student Transportation Authority (OSTA) to address transportation challenges and advised that he will provide an update in the future.

9.2 Special Education Plan (Standards)

a. Early Identification Procedures and Intervention Strategies

System Principal Stoudt provided an overview of the Early Identification Procedures and Intervention Strategies and noted that the purpose of the Standards is to provide clear accessible procedures for staff and families. She requested that SEAC members contact her with questions or input.

b. Equipment

System Principal Stoudt provided an overview of the Equipment Standard.

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

- The OCDSB may allocate a Special Education Amount (SEA) from both the Per Pupil Amount (PPA) and claims-based funding;
- Superintendent Symmonds will circulate the Special Education Funding Guide for Ontario in the future;
- Equipment funded by SEA usually stays with the intended student unless its dimensions and weight would require significant resources to relocate the item; and
- In the case of specialized, complex equipment, an on-call children's (OCC) therapist and an occupational therapist (OT) will make recommendations.

10. Committee Reports

10.1 Board

Trustee Scott noted that the appointment of the new SEAC representatives was approved at the 26 September 2023 Board meeting.

10.2 Committee of the Whole

There was no report from the Committee of the Whole.

10.3 Committee of the Whole, Budget

There was no report from Committee of the Whole Budget.

10.4 Ad Hoc Policy Committee

Trustee Scott provided a report on the Ad Hoc Policy Review Committee.

11. New Business

It was noted that reorganization is not expected to have a significant impact on special education support.

12. Upcoming Meeting Dates

The upcoming meeting dates were provided for information.

13. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:08 p.m.

Cathy Miedema, Chair, Special
Education Advisory Committee