



## SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT

Wednesday, November 1, 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), Sonja Elliott (Autism Ontario), Lori-Ann Bradley (Easter Seals), 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), Nancy Dlouhy (Ottawa-Carleton Elementary Operations Committee)

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), Deborah Lyon (System Principal, Learning Support Services), Mellissa Applewaithe (Board/Committee Coordinator)

1. Call to Order

Chair Miedema called the meeting to order at 7:07 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 Terry Warner,**

**THAT the agenda be approved.**

**Carried**

#### 4. Delegations

##### 4.1 Taylor Jenkins, re Autism

Taylor Jenkins introduced herself as a psychologist on the autism spectrum and the mother of an autistic child in senior kindergarten at the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (OCDSB). She expressed concern regarding the lack of representation of autistic staff within the OCDSB.

Taylor Jenkins expressed the view that autistic people should be represented as part of the OCDSB's autism support and should be directly involved during Autism Awareness Month.

Superintendent Symmonds acknowledged the concerns raised and noted that he would contact Taylor Jenkins in the future regarding her concerns. He noted that while OCDSB staff may volunteer information about their identity, it is not a mandatory requirement to do so. Staff members who identify as autistic and have chosen not to share this information may be employees of the OCDSB. He noted that P.146.HR, Equitable Hiring and Recruitment Policy intends to establish fair, consistent, transparent and equitable recruitment and hiring processes for all positions within the OCDSB that will result in a qualified and diverse workforce.

#### 5. Review of Special Education Advisory Committee Report

##### 5.1 4 October 2023, SEAC Report

**Moved by Trustee Scott,**

**THAT the Special Education Advisory Committee report, dated 4 October 2023, be received.**

**Carried**

##### 5.2 Forward Agenda

The SEAC forward agenda was provided for information.

Chair Miedema noted that the Gifted Academy review will be added to a future agenda.

#### 6. Discussion

##### 6.1 Removing Barriers for Students with Disabilities (S. Kay)

General Manager Kay provided an update on ongoing work using the Removing Barriers for Students with Disabilities funding.

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

- The District has received Ministry of Education (MOE) funding under the Partnership and Priority Funding (PPF) intended to remove barriers for students with disabilities;
- The PPF has been reduced by approximately 40 percent compared to the funding received in the 2022-2023 school year;
- Learning Support Services (LSS) plan to pilot an inclusive education model at an elementary site and hire one Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) special education teacher;
- To expand on knowledge of staffing requirements for support structures and resources, staff will examine an inclusive model that will encompass an increased range of students with exceptionalities and diverse learning profiles, in addition to students with mild intellectual disabilities (MID); and
- LSS are working with the Research Evaluation & Analytics Division (READ) on data collection to establish an informed approach to system level learning.

## 6.2 Parent Online Resource

System Principal Stoudt provided an overview of the LSS Guide to Supporting Students with Special Educational Needs, an online resource to support parents and educators in meeting the needs of special education students within the classroom.

During a breakout session, the following points were noted:

- Members expressed the view that the language requires simplifying as it includes many MOE specific terms and phrases. It was suggested that it may be helpful to consult with the Indigenous Education Council (IEC) in consideration of the Indigenous cultural perspective and sensitivity to terminologies;
- It was suggested that the font should be larger and the landing page should contain simple directives on how to navigate the site;
- Common searches should be accessible via “one click tabs” in order to more effectively locate information; and
- It was suggested that the site should be more visually appealing, colourful and user-friendly.

Superintendent Symmonds noted that special education is a highly regulated area with prescriptive directives. He noted the balance of using language that parents understand, while equipping them with the information they require to understand language and terminology that educators will use when discussing their child’s situation.

## 7. Department Update

### 7.1 Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Symmonds reported that the OCDSB Family Conference will take place from 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. on 4 November 2023 at Brookfield High School featuring Randell Adjei, Ontario's first Poet Laureate.

Superintendent Symmonds noted that during the 2023-2024 school year, new applications and referrals to specialized program classes will only be considered in exceptional circumstances. This approach has been implemented as the majority of specialized program classes are filled to capacity.

### 7.2 Special Education Plan (Standards)

#### a. The Identification Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) Process and Appeals

System Principal Stoudt provided an overview of The Identification Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) Process and Appeals Standard. She noted that she will be collaborating with the communications department to develop IPRC parent guides in visually appealing and accessible formats. System Principal Stoudt noted that she would bring the final drafts of the guides to SEAC members for consultation in the future and requested that SEAC members contact her with questions or input.

#### b. Individual Education Plans (IEP)

System Principal Stoudt provided an overview of the Individual Education Plans (IEP) Standard.

She noted that she would welcome feedback on approaches to discussing the progress of an IEP at the midpoint and requested that SEAC members contact her with questions or input.

## 8. Committee Reports

### 8.1 Board

There was no report from the Board.

### 8.2 Committee of the Whole

There was no report from the Committee of the Whole.

### 8.3 Ad Hoc Policy Review Committee

There was no report from the Ad Hoc Policy Review Committee.

Chair Miedema noted that a SEAC representative has not yet been appointed to the Ad Hoc Policy Review Committee and requested that members contact herself and Board Services to express their interest.

9. New Business

Terry Warner noted that there should be a mechanism to make parents of hard of hearing children with cochlear implants aware of the fact that these children are eligible to enter the school system early.

10. Upcoming Meeting Dates

The upcoming meeting dates were provided for information.

11. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:11 p.m.

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Cathy Miedema, Chair, Special  
Education Advisory Committee