



SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT

Wednesday, February 7, 2024, 7:00 pm
Trustees' Committee Room
133 Greenbank Road
Ottawa, Ontario

Members: Cathy Miedema (Association for Bright Children), Allison Bunney (Community Representative), Hoda Seens (Community Representative), Katherine Kacew (Autism Ontario, Alternate), Lori-Ann Bradley (Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder/Ontario Network Expertise (FASD/ONE)), Jess Whitley (Inclusion Action in Ontario), Uzma Ihsanullah (Down Syndrome Association (DSA)), Mike Marta (Learning Disabilities Association of Ottawa-Carleton), Anthony Wong (Ottawa Carleton Assembly of School Councils), Waneek Horn-Miller (Indigenous Community Representative), Lindsay Copland (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), Nancy Dlouhy (Ottawa-Carleton Elementary Operations Committee)

Staff and Guests: Suzanne Nash (Trustee), Peter Symmonds (Superintendent of Learning Support Services), Shannon Smith (Superintendent of Instruction), Stacey Kay (General Manager, Learning Support Services), Kate Stoudt (System Principal, Learning Support Services), Deborah Lyon (System Principal, Learning Support Services), Claire Reynolds (Program Evaluation Officer, Learning Support Services), Courtney O'Halloran (Principal, Agincourt Public School), Sait Atas (Research Officer, Research, Evaluation and Analytics Department), Marie Wong (Guest), (Mellissa Applewaihe (Board/Committee Coordinator)

1. Call to Order

Chair Cathy Miedema called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

2. Acknowledgement of Territorial Lands

Chair Cathy Miedema acknowledged that this meeting is taking place on unceded Algonquin Homelands and thanked the Algonquin Nations for their stewardship of these lands since time immemorial.

3. Approval of the Agenda

Moved by Jess Whitley,

THAT the agenda be approved.

Lindsay Copland requested that the appointment of a replacement Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) Committee of the Whole (COW) Budget Representative be added under item 9, New Business.

Moved by Jess Whitley,

THAT the agenda be approved, as amended.

Carried

4. Delegations

There were no delegations.

5. Review of Special Education Advisory Committee Report

5.1 10 January 2024, SEAC Report

Moved by Mike Marta,

THAT the SEAC report, dated 10 January 2024 be received.

Trustee Scott requested that her name be added to the attendance.

Moved by Mike Marta,

THAT the SEAC report, dated 10 January 2024 be received, as amended.

Carried

5.2 Forward Agenda

The SEAC forward agenda was provided for information.

6. Presentations

6.1 Identity-Based Data (S. Atas)

Research Officer Atas from the Research, Evaluation and Analytics Department (READ) provided a presentation on Identity-Based Data.

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

- The Valuing Voices online survey will take place from 11 April 2024 to 26 April 2024 in conjunction with the School Climate survey, and READ will filter and disaggregate responses;
- READ will send the survey link to the parents of Grades 7 to 12 students who are located at special educational needs sites and may need assistance in completing the survey;
- It was noted that the READ would clarify the possibility of identifying special needs students in Grades 7 to 12 who are receiving support in the mainstream system in order to determine whether they can complete the survey independently;
- The first ten questions in the survey are prescribed by the Ministry of Education (MOE). The Indigenous category provides options for students who identify as First Nations, Inuit or Métis;
- It was noted that to align with the confidential nature of the data, full data access is restricted, and the system used to collect the data will not collect location information from survey respondents by default; and
- The survey contains a small section of qualitative questions and READ expects to share the survey with school administrators in the fall of 2024.

6.2 Consultation: Indigenous, Equity and Human Rights Roadmap (C. O'Halloran)

Principal O'Halloran provided a presentation on the Indigenous, Equity and Human Rights Roadmap.

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

- Considering intersectionalities and culturally appropriate interventions could assist in addressing some of the barriers to learning experienced by special needs students;
- The renewed document should reflect needs of Jewish students;
- Identity-specific educational assistants (EAs) could support the diverse needs of students in a culturally appropriate manner;
- The District should maintain updated professional assessments to support understanding of student needs;
- Facilities such as designated washrooms should provide an accessible space for students;

- The District should ensure a communications model that provides families with a clear understanding and awareness of Individual Education Plans (IEPs); and
- Educators should monitor student credit accumulation prior to Grade 10 to enable timely intervention.

Principal O'Halloran requested that SEAC members email additional feedback to herself, Superintendent Symmonds or Chair Miedema until 29 February 2024.

7. Department Update

7.1 Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Symmonds provided his report and noted that while we are discussing the specialized program class referral data at 7.2, the final memo will come forward at the 6 March 2024 meeting and highlighted the importance of a SEAC representative attending COW Budget meetings to provide a voice for the Committee.

7.2 Memo 24-010, Data Review to Inform the Specialized Program Class Referral Information 2023-2024 Report

General Manager Kay provided an overview of Memo 24-010, Data Review to Inform the Specialized Program Class Referral.

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

- The Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (OCDSB) does not currently have operational capacity to increase the number of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) classes for waitlisted elementary students;
- There are no students on the waitlist for ASD classes at the secondary level;
- The District is investigating strategies to address the needs of the waitlisted elementary students, such as utilizing Itinerant Educators, examining the criteria for ASD classes and researching an inclusive education model;
- The number of classes available for gifted students is higher than required as the District attempts to ensure a reasonable proximity to the students home community; and
- The waitlist of students requiring professional assessments is not disaggregated by exceptionality, and all schools now have access

to an integrated technology tool that will provide more specific data related to professional support services.

7.3 Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) Guide Review and Input

System Principal Stoudt provided an introduction to the Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) Guide.

During a breakout session, the following points were noted:

Recommendations brought forward were:

- Clarify the distinction between Committee members and additional supports mentioned in the document;
- Clarify the placement definition on page one (1) regarding the level of support;
- Clarify at the beginning of the guide that the IPRC is a collaboration between parents, educators and schools;
- Move the IPRC section to the beginning of the document, followed by the section on exceptionalities;
- Include a definition for gifted students;
- Reflect the parent perspective by using simple questions as section headers;
- Include a section with links and information on how to access supports and resources;
- Include visual graphics depicting various groups to assist parents in identifying themselves within them; and
- Ensure that clear and simple language is used throughout the document.

System Principal Stoudt requested that SEAC members contact her with further input.

7.4 Special Education Support for New Stittsville High School

General Manager Kay reported that the District is in the process of planning for the new Stittsville High School. She noted that the District intends for the school to provide an inclusive education model that responds to disability related needs of students within the boundary area.

General Manager Kay noted that the inclusion work that LSS is currently undertaking in collaboration with Program and Learning (P & L) will inform

departmental proposals for the foundation of an inclusive education model at the new school.

8. Committee Reports

8.1 Board

There was no report from the Board.

8.2 Committee of the Whole

There was no report from Committee of the Whole.

8.3 Committee of the Whole, Budget

There was no report from Committee of the Whole Budget.

8.4 Advisory Committee Meetings

There were no advisory committee reports.

9. New Business

Chair Miedema called for nominations for the SEAC Committee of the Whole Budget Representative.

Anthony Wong nominated himself.

Moved by Lindsay Copland,

THAT nominations be closed.

Carried

By acclamation, Chair Miedema declared Anthony Wong as the Committee of the Whole Budget Representative.

10. Upcoming Meeting Dates

The upcoming meeting dates were provided for information.

11. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:36 p.m.

Cathy Miedema, Chair, Special
Education Advisory Committee