



SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT

Thursday, June 13, 2024, 7:00 pm
Zoom Meeting

- Members: Hoda Seens (Community Representative), Peter Davidson (ABC), Katherine Kacew (Autism Ontario, Alternate), Lori-Ann Bradley (Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder/Ontario Network Expertise (FASD/ONE), Anthony Wong (Ottawa Carleton Assembly of School Councils), Lindsay Copland (VOICE for Children Who Are Deaf and Hard of Hearing), Terry Warner (VOICE for Children Who Are Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Alternate), Donna Dickson (Trustee), Nili Kaplan-Myrth (Trustee), Lynn Scott (Trustee)
- Non-Voting Representatives: Connie Allen (Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation, PSSP), Andrew Winchester (Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation, Alternate), Suzanne Nash (Trustee), Peter Symmonds (Superintendent of Learning Support Services), Christine Kessler (Occasional Principal), Kate Stoudt (System Principal, Learning Support Services), Kathy Mak (Board/Committee Coordinator)

1. Call to Order

Chair Scott called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

2. Acknowledgement of Territorial Lands

Chair Scott 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 Trustee Kaplan-Myrth,

THAT the agenda be approved.

Carried

4. Delegations

There were no delegations.

5. Matter For Action:

5.1 Special Education Plan 2023-2024 (P. Symmonds)

Your committee had before it Report 24-085, seeking approval for the 2023-2024 Special Education Plan.

Superintendent Symmonds and System Principal Stoudt provided an overview of the 2023-2024 Special Education Plan and noted especially changes to the Early Identification Procedures and Intervention standard, the focus on inclusive practices in the Staff Development standard, and the key initiatives in the department in the Board Consultation section. In addition, the new Individual Education Plan (IEP) and Identification Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) Parent Guides have been reviewed and are presented in a more accessible format for families. These are available through the Special Education Plan and on the website.

Moved by Trustee Kaplan-Myrth,

THAT the 2023-2024 Special Education Plan, attached as Appendix A to Report No. 24-085 be approved.

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

- Lori-anne Bradley requested that on Page 134 of Appendix A, “Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder/ One Network Expertise” be corrected to “Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder/ Ontario and Network of Expertise”. She further added that FASD should be included in the acronym list and be presented in the list of learning activities;
- Superintendent Symmonds noted that, in regards to resource allocation, the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (OCDSB) will request schools to provide details for students with special education and medical needs to ensure resource allocations are distributed equitably; and
- The OCDSB has the capacity to offer emergency Educational Assistant (EA) support as student safety is always the primary concern with every decision made.

Moved by Trustee Kaplan-Myrth,

THAT the 2023-2024 Special Education Plan, attached as Appendix A to Report No. 24-085 be approved.

Carried

6. Presentations

6.1 Crystal Bay and Clifford Bowey Developmental Disabilities Report

Superintendent Symmonds and review lead Christine Kessler provided an overview of Report 24-078, Developmental Disabilities Program (DDP) Review of Crystal Bay and Clifford Bowey, which was discussed at the Committee of the Whole (COW) meeting on 21 May 2024.

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

- Superintendent Symmonds noted that students at the Crystal Bay Centre for Special Education and Clifford Bowey Public School require specialized equipment and devices to support their learning, physical mobility and occupational therapy needs, as well as adjustments to the school building and facilities;
- The current Elementary Program Review will not include changes to Crystal Bay or Clifford Bowey schools;
- The OCDSB aims to provide specific professional learning opportunities to staff that recognize the unique needs and strengths of students in the two schools;
- Occasional Principal Kessler noted that there will be room for growth in terms of professional learning and applied behaviour analysis for instructional purposes will be implemented to address the behaviour challenges some students may experience;
- Strong evidence in academic literature urges the continual use of behaviour analysis to adjust the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP) based on collected data. This serves as support for educators and a measurement of outcomes and achievements for students ;
- Families have expressed the importance of having an open conversation regarding students with severe disabilities as this can help address the attitudinal barriers experienced within community schools;
- The two specialized schools are currently full and the OCDSB will need to consider resourcing implications with class size and student:educator ratio adjustments;
- Students' education are tailored to their learning needs based on assessment and consultation with their families and alternative programming has been implemented to ensure the students are meeting their outcomes;

- The Board of Trustees had passed the staff recommended budget for 2024-2025 and there will be an increase of 3.0 Full-time Equivalent (FTE) Communication Disorder Assistants (CDA), 0.5 FTE Speech and Language Pathologist (SLP) and 1.0 FTE Occupational Therapist (OT);
- Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) members urged the District to consider the experiences and inclusivity of students with special needs in community schools. The OCDSB aims to work towards an inclusive education and to promote diversity within community schools; and
- The OCDSB continues to listen to the lived experiences of students and families and aims to provide the families with multiple options for schools.

7. Review of Special Education Advisory Committee Report

7.1 1 May 2024, SEAC Report

Moved by Lindsay Copland,

THAT the Special Education Advisory Committee report, dated 1 May 2024, be received.

Carried

7.2 Forward Agenda

SEAC members requested that updates be provided in the Forward Agenda for items that will be brought to the Board for approval.

8. Department Update

8.1 Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Symmonds provided his report and noted the following:

- A key legislative responsibility of SEAC is to review the Special Education Plan annually and to provide advice to the Board regarding special education;
- The Elementary Program Review consultations continue throughout the month of June and feedback can be provided through the OCDSB Engage website. The next phase of the program review will start in the Fall and there will be additional opportunities to provide input;
- The Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Developmental Disabilities (DD) summer learning programs will begin in July 2024

and additional mental support for students has been implemented throughout the summer;

- The OCDSB encourages mental health staff who are interested in working over the summer to continue their work with students they are currently supporting. There will be opportunities to attend workshops like Stress Lessons throughout the summer. This offers students strategies to identify the signs of stress and positive strategies to manage stress for the upcoming school year;
- The OCDSB aims to collaborate with regulated mental health professionals and to support Program and Learning Innovation to engage and encourage students to return to school and continue their education;
- Summer transition programs will be offered to school teams for transition activities prior to the beginning of the school year to help students transition into the new school year; and
- Superintendent Symmonds thanked the SEAC members on behalf of the leadership team and Learning Support Services (LSS) for their advice and guidance to assist the Board in making informed decisions.

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 (COW).

9.3 Committee of the Whole, Budget

Anthony Wong provided an update from the 27 May 2024, 2 June 2024, and 10 June 2024 Committee of the Whole Budget meetings.

10. New Business

Terry Warner thanked the SEAC members for the fruitful discussions and impactful guidance the committee has provided as this will be his last meeting after 15 years on SEAC.

Trustee Kaplan-Myrth noted that while it is not normal OCDSB practice to have students repeat a year in school, if repeating a grade is beneficial to the student then the District should accommodate the student's needs without the family having to go to great lengths to receive the support needed.

Lori-anne Bradley noted that there will be an awareness walk on 8 September 2024 at 10:30 a.m. for the Red Shoes Rock Ottawa Event to promote Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) awareness.

11. Upcoming Meeting Date

The next SEAC meeting will take place on 14 September 2024.

12. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:42 p.m.

Lynn Scott, Acting Chair, Special
Education Advisory Committee