

Limestone District School Board
Special Education Advisory Committee
SEAC Meeting

Wednesday, November 21, 2018

**Limestone District School Board Education Centre
220 Portsmouth Avenue, Kingston**

6:00 pm

AGENDA

- 1. Welcome**
- 2. Approval of Agenda**
- 3. Declaration of Conflict of Interest**
- 4. Business Arising From the Minutes**
- 5. Community Partner Presentation-Family and Children's Services of Frontenac Lennox and Addington-Charlene Whalen**
- 6. Educational Services Update-Reporting Progress: Building our Vision for the Future-Enhancing Special Education Services in our Board- Lynne Rousseau, Educational Services and Safe Schools Coordinator, Principal Darlene Scarlett and Associate Superintendent Alison McDonnell**
- 7. Correspondence (attached)**
 - Peterborough Victoria Northumberland and Clarington Catholic District School Board
 - Upper Grand District School Board
- 8. Association Updates (Attached)**
- 9. Other Business**
 - i) Ministry Updates –Associate Superintendent Alison McDonnell
 - ii) Policy on Accessible Education for Students with Disabilities (Ontario Human Rights Commission)-Associate Superintendent Alison McDonnell

iii) SEAC Membership-Associate Superintendent Alison McDonnell

10. Next Meeting Date

December 19, 2018

11. Adjournment



PETER L. ROACH
CATHOLIC
EDUCATION
CENTRE

October 4, 2018

Honorable Lisa Thompson
Minister of Education
22nd Floor, Mowat Block
900 Bay Street
Toronto, On M7A 1L2

RECEIVED
Limestone District School Board

OCT 19 2018

Alison McDonnell

Dear Minister Thompson:

The Peterborough Victoria Northumberland and Clarington Catholic District School Board Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) is writing in support of the findings contained in the Auditor General of Ontario's Annual Report, 2017. Specifically, we would like to address the information contained in Chapter 3 - Reports on Value-for-Money Audits, Section 3.08, entitled Ministry of Education: Ministry Funding and Oversight of School Boards. Further, we would like to address the impact of the recent changes in the Special Education funding model on our school district, which were made by the Conservative government, as outlined in the August 24th, 2018 memo received from Bruce Rodrigues, Deputy Minister of Education.

The Auditor General found that benchmarks in the funding formula and the dollar amount assigned to that factor are out-of-date. In 2002, an independent task force reviewed the formula used by the Ministry to determine funding to school boards, and recommended that the Ministry annually review and update the benchmarks, as well as conduct a more comprehensive review of the formula every 5 years. While the Ministry updates the labour costs annually, the other benchmarks have not been updated, and still reflect census data which is more than 10 years old. (p.429). When demographics such as income levels and immigration patterns are not reflected in the benchmarks, this creates a funding inequity between the various regions of the province.

The Auditor General's recommendation to remedy this inequity is as follows:

"To ensure that funds are allocated in a manner that supports school boards in providing a high standard of education to all students, we recommend the Ministry of Education:

- conduct a comprehensive external review of the funding formula, including all grant components and benchmarks, as recommended by the Education Equity Funding Task Force in 2002;
- regularly review the formula and update all benchmarks to reflect the province's changing demographics and socio-economic conditions; and
- use the more current census data available when determining allocations for grants." (p.441)

The Auditor General also found that the Ministry of Education does not allocate funding based on actual needs. The Special Education Grant is intended for students who need special education programs and services. However, half of the special-education funding is allocated based on a school board's average daily enrolment of all its students, instead of the number of students who are receiving special-education programs and

services. But the portion of special-education students in each board is not the same, ranging from 8% - 28% depending on the Board. (p.429)

At the October 31st, 2017 Peterborough Victoria Northumberland and Clarington Catholic District School Board (PVNC CDSB) enrolment report to the Ministry, the data indicates that our school board supports 15.7% of our elementary students, and 28.9% of our secondary students, with special education services, for a combined percentage of 19.8%.

The Auditor General's recommendations to remedy this inequity are as follows:
"In order to provide funding in a more equitable manner and ensure the funding meets the actual needs it is intended to address, we recommend the Ministry of Education assess whether the funding of grants intended to serve the needs of a specific group of students or for a specific purpose is achieving that purpose." (p.444)

Further, "in order for the Ministry of Education to provide funding in proportion to a school board's need, we recommend it:

- determine to what extent school boards are spending funds for specific education priorities (such as supports for ESL students and Indigenous students) on those specific purposes, and where it finds significant discrepancies, follow up with school boards to understand the reason for the discrepancies and better align funding with actual needs; and
- design and conduct validation procedures to verify the use of restricted funds." (p.448)

We are aware that our Board staff spend considerable time to complete and submit Special Incident Portion (SIP) claims annually in order to supplement the Special Education Grant to the Board. Without these SIP claims, we would be unable to address the significant student needs throughout our jurisdiction, and we would be spending significantly beyond the Special Education Grant envelope. We are advocating that either these grants continue indefinitely at appropriate levels, or the Special Education Grant itself reflects the actual student needs in the system.

The recent funding changes announced by the government do not reflect the findings or the recommendations which the Auditor General made in 2017. Increasing the Special Education per Pupil Amount (SEPPA) to school districts, which uses outdated benchmarks, as described above, and which does not reflect the actual needs because it is based on average daily enrolment, creates an inequity between those boards with larger enrolments and those with smaller enrolments. Further, by decreasing the maximum amount for Special Incident Portion (SIP) by \$11,000 per claim, the government has put those districts, such as ours, which rely on SIP claims to support our highest needs students, in an untenable position. This decision was made without full consultation as to the impact this would have on equity and inclusion of our students with special needs, and it does not support school districts in implementing the Ontario Human Rights Commission Policy on Accessible Education for Students with Disabilities (2018).

Because of our relatively small enrolment of approximately 15,000 students, an increase in the SEPPA does not have the same impact as the SIP claim amounts for which we can apply, so we are actually now facing a reduction in Special Education Support Staff already hired for the 2018-2019 school year to balance the budget. We had already budgeted in the spring with the knowledge that we could expect \$38,000 per pupil rather than \$27,000 (see chart, below). If this was a decision which the government felt

necessary to make, then this should have occurred next spring, when school districts had time to budget appropriately for the following school year.

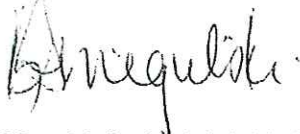
		Potential reduction in SIP revenue	PVNC SEPPA increase	Potential lost revenue
Ministry estimates 2018-2019	Equiv. of 55 full SIP claims*	(661,419.00)	211,453.00	(449,966.00)
PVNC estimates 2018-2019	Equiv. of 128 full SIP claims	(1,293,670.00)	211,453.00	(1,082,217.00)

*This number could be based on the Ministry's estimate that we would submit a minimum of 55 SIP claims for the full amount, but we are unsure as to how the number was derived.

In this era of a renewed focus on workplace violence, specifically student to staff violence, funding is required to ensure that there is sufficient, trained staff in the schools to address the student needs which can manifest in unsafe behaviour. Staff stress levels are at an all-time high, which directly impacts the sick leave costs to all boards. Training for all school staff is an essential step, and this needs funding to occur.

As a SEAC, we support the Auditor General's recommendations, as outlined above. We look forward to a response which will help us to understand the Ministry of Education's rationale for the changes to funding. We also look forward to learning of Ministry follow-up action ensure an ongoing, equitable distribution of funds across boards to serve and support the students who need it the most.

Sincerely,



Mrs. Kelly Smigielski, Chair
Peterborough Victoria Northumberland and Clarington Catholic District School Board
Special Education Advisory Committee

Cc. M. Nasello - Director of Education PVNC CDSB
D. Smith - MPP, Peterborough
L. Park - MPP, Durham
D. Piccini - MPP, Northumberland-Quinte West
L. Scott - MPP, Haliburton –Kawartha Lakes-Brock
M. Griepsma - Chair, PVNC CDSB
- PVNC CDSB Trustees
- PVNC CDSB SEAC Members
- Provincial DSB SEAC Chairs



**UPPER GRAND
DISTRICT SCHOOL
BOARD**

Carrie Proudfoot
Chair, Special Education Advisory Committee
Board Office: 500 Victoria Road N. Guelph, ON N1E 6K2
Email: clproudfoot@rogers.com

October 10, 2018

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson
Minister of Education
22nd floor, Mowat Block
900 Bay Street
Toronto, Ontario
M7A 1L2

Dear Hon. Lisa M. Thompson,

The Special Education Advisory Committee to the Upper Grand District School Board supports Grand Erie District School Board's Special Education Advisory Committees' request for support of Bill 44. We request that the Ministry of Education amend the Education Act so that every board shall promote awareness and understanding of permanent brain injury resulting for prenatal alcohol exposure, including best practices to support pupils who may have FASD. Furthermore, we would like this lifelong brain injury recognized as a neurodevelopmental disorder, diagnosed under Fetal Alcohol Disorder (FASD).

Thank you, we look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Carrie Proudfoot
Chairperson
UGDSB Special Education Advisory Committee

Cc: Chairs of Ontario Special Advisory Committees

Upper Grand District School Board

• Linda Busuttill; Chair • Mark Bailey • Kathryn Cooper • Barbara Lustgarten Evoy • Martha MacNeil
• Marty Fairbairn; Vice-Chair • Susan Moziar • Bruce Schieck • Lynn Topping • Barbara White



We're Putting Wellness First



We're Turning Innovation into Action



We're Committed to Collaboration

Special Education Advisory Committee

NOVEMBER 21, 2018

Report to: Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)

From: Alison McDonnell, Associate Superintendent, Learning for All

Subject: Associate Superintendent's Report

Date: November 21, 2018

- (i) **Ministry Updates**
- (ii) **Policy on Accessible Education for Students with Disabilities (Ontario Human Rights Commission)**

The Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC) has released its new policy on Accessible Education for Students with Disabilities along with recommendations at <http://bit.ly/2C5hHKG>. Please draw your attention to Appendix A, page 112-113, which provides specific recommendations to school boards and private educational providers that focus on removing barriers and making education accessible.

- (iii) **SEAC Membership**

SEAC members will be appointed by the new Board of Trustees for the next four-year term at the January 23, 2019 Board Meeting and will begin their term in February 2019.