

**Special Education Advisory Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
Limestone District School Board**

**November 20, 2019**

A meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee was held in Barry C. O'Connor Board Room at the Limestone Education Centre, 220 Portsmouth Avenue, Kingston, Ontario, on Wednesday, November 20, 2019 at 6:00 p.m.

**Present:**

**Trustees:** K. McGregor, Chair  
B. Godkin, Trustee

**Members:** P. Dendy, Member-at-Large  
S. Henderson-Todd, Lennox and Addington Resources for Children  
A. Martin, Member-at-Large (Queen's University)  
C. Tooley, Down Syndrome Association Kingston  
C. Whalen, Family & Children's Services, Frontenac, Lennox & Addington

**Staff:** H. Box, Special Education Program Coordinator  
S. Burnett, Special Education Program Coordinator  
L. Conboy, Mental Health Lead  
K. Leggett, Vice-Principal of Educational Services  
A. McDonnell, Associate Superintendent, Learning for All  
J. Murphy, Special Education Program Coordinator  
L. Rousseau, Educational Services and Safe Schools Coordinator  
D. Scarlett, Principal of Educational Services

**Guests:** J. Cumming, Speech Language Pathologist  
M. Gill, Communicative Disorders Assistant

**Regrets:** N. Carson, Epilepsy South Eastern Ontario  
D. Jalovcic, Learning Disabilities Association of Kingston  
E. Sheldon, Community Living Kingston

**Recorder:** Liz Strange, Records Management Coordinator

**1. Welcome**

Trustee McGregor called the meeting to order, welcoming all those in attendance to the meeting.

Trustee McGregor read the Indigenous Acknowledgement:

"The Limestone District School Board is situated on the traditional territories of the Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee. We acknowledge their enduring presence on

this land, as well as the presence of Métis, Inuit and other First Nations from across Turtle Island. We honour their cultures and celebrate their commitment to this land.”

2. **Approval of Agenda**

*MOVED BY: A. Martin, that the agenda, as presented, be approved. Carried.*

3. **Declaration of Conflict of Interest**

There were no declarations of conflict of interest.

4. **Business Arising From the Minutes**

Topic ideas for information and discussion at future SEAC meetings:

- EQAO assessment changes
- How to write effective IEPs
- When restraints are used– BMS training
- Transition planning processes

5. **Presentation: Down Syndrome Association of Kingston**

C. Tooley shared a presentation on the Down Syndrome Association of Kingston (DSAK), which was established in 2012. It is a community support group for persons with Down Syndrome and their parents, relatives and care workers.

In connection with Queen’s University the organization runs ‘Extra Awesome’ groups for their youth members, which includes an academic component and social/physical activities.

DSAK has a partnership with the Jung Do Martial Arts Academy to run the ‘Tigers Can Kick” group.

DSAK has an annual golf tournament, where the funds raised are used to provide free or low-cost programs and events.

It was asked how many people are in the association. The numbers fluctuate from year to year, but DSAK serves about 20-25 families.

6. **Educational Services Update-Reporting Progress: Building our Vision for the Future-Enhancing Special Education Services in our Board-Oral Language Enrichment Groups: Jennifer Cumming, Speech Language Pathologist, Maddy Gill, Communicative Disorders Assistant, Principal Darlene Scarlett and Associate Superintendent Alison McDonnell**

Associate Superintendent McDonnell introduced J. Cumming, Speech-Language Pathologist, and M. Gill, Communicative Disorders Assistant.

Since 2017 the biggest change to speech and language service delivery in LDSB has been the implementation of the Oral Language Enrichment Groups across our whole district.

The current staffing model for the team is 5.5 FTE Speech-Language Pathologists (SLP) and 4 FTE Communicative Disorders Assistants (CDA).

Historically, LDSB has focused its efforts on remediating articulation (or speech) problems in students. Since the hiring of CDAs, LDSB is now capable of additionally providing support to students who struggle with language. When we are talking about language, we are referring to how a child understands or expresses information and ideas.

SLPs are regulated health care professionals, just like occupational therapists or physiotherapists, which means they must belong to a college that is responsible for ensuring that they provide services in a safe, professional and ethical manner. CDAs are support personnel who possess a graduate Certificate in combination with various undergraduate degrees or diplomas in areas such as Linguistics, Early Childhood Education, Social Work and Educational Assistants.

The itinerant CDA works with 1-2 SLPs across 12-14 schools. Speech and Language services are provided in 4-week blocks throughout the school year. Last year CDAs saw 152 students in Oral Language Enrichment Groups. Many students were seen for multiple blocks of therapy

Oral Language Enrichment Groups are Tier 2 remedial groups for SK students who needed to improve their oral language skills. They consist of 8, 30-minute sessions, twice a week for 4 weeks. Language areas that targeted include:

- vocabulary
- concepts
- grammar
- following directions
- categorization
- story retelling
- phonological awareness

If a student continues to demonstrate difficulties in many language areas following participation in this group:

- A language assessment may be recommended.
- Classroom and home suggestions/activities may be provided to target specific areas of difficulty.

Next steps will be to continue the early intervention work in the primary grades and look at the data gathered from the first block of therapy to determine its

effectiveness. Moving forward the team plans on implementing the evidence-based strategies we have been using to target narrative development.

It was asked if the team works in connection with Kids Inclusive. It was explained that Kids Inclusive has CDAs as well, and that the LDSB team would connect if a student is being treated at HDH. It was also clarified that LDSB only works with mild articulation cases.

The prevalence of speech/language disorders is about 7% of the school population.

It was asked what supports are available for parents whose children participate in the Oral Language Enrichment Groups. There is a folder that goes back and forth with the child with information that documents the students programming and an opportunity to communicate with the CDA as programming occurs. All students who participate in these groups must receive consent from their parent/guardian.

## **7. Correspondence**

Associate Superintendent McDonnell shared a letter of information regarding a pilot project (together with the Algonquin Lakeshore Catholic DSB, Limestone DSB, Hastings Prince Edward DSB, Kids Inclusive and the Quinte Children's Treatment Centre) for a new, tiered Occupational Therapy intervention model of service delivery to better meet the needs of children and families in our region.

1. Collaboration of educators and OTs at universal and targeted levels and one to one intervention with the OT at the intensive level
2. Initial emphasis on relationship building and utilization of CanChild resources and expertise
3. Each school board identifies 10 - 12 schools for year 1 of the pilot with 6 additional schools per board entering in year 2 and 8 more schools per board in year 3
4. Each Children's Treatment Centre dedicates 2 FTE OTs in year 1, an additional OT in year 2 and a third OT in year 3
5. A project facilitator with clinical experience in schools bridges the leadership void between education and health care organizations
6. OTs assigned to 8 - 9 schools each, whole school as client
7. Educators and parents support generalization of skills in all school and home environments as coached by OT
8. Evaluation of process and outcomes conducted in collaboration with research partners

Expected Outputs:

- Reduction/elimination of waitlists in participating schools
- Improved generalization of skills for students

- Improved parent satisfaction with services and communication
- Educators and OTs collaborate regularly in classroom and school settings implementing tiered interventions
- Educator self efficacy increases in supporting generalization of skills with students
- A full evaluation of the pilot

Expected Outcomes:

- Collaboration of OT and educators in the classroom promote the use of universal design for learning principles
- Education and health outcomes are integrated effectively in the child's primary settings of participation
- Increased confidence in publicly funded education and health services

Next Steps:

A budget is currently being developed through the collaboration of the two Children's Treatment Centres and all of the local district school boards. All partners within the region will be approached and welcomed into the pilot should they wish to collaborate including Quinte Mohawk School and the French Catholic and Public School Boards. The model proposed is contingent on receiving financial support from the Ministry of Education. The model will be adjusted as needed based on the scale of financial support.

The LDSB SEAC unanimously agreed to support participation in the proposed pilot and to write a letter of support to include with the application package. SEAC requested that Associate Superintendent, Alison McDonnell, draft a letter to be sent electronically to all SEAC members for input/approval by the deadline of Dec. 13, 2019.

**8. Association Updates**

As circulated with the meeting package.

**9. Other Business**

- i) Ministry Updates – Associate Superintendent Alison McDonnell

None at this time.

- ii) The Provincial Parent Association Advisory Committee on Special Education Advisory Committees (PAAC on SEAC) Survey-Chair Karen McGregor

The committee will work on a SEAC response at the January meeting.

Associate Superintendent McDonnell stated that L. Samson from the Association of Bright Children has resigned.

N. Nicholson has resigned from Autism Ontario (Kingston). Another member of the organization will be identified to replace her on SEAC in the near future.

LDSB did not have any applicants apply to the ad for a member-at-large posted this Fall. Another ad will be reposted. All SEAC members were requested to share these vacancies widely within their networks.

iii) SEAC Goal Setting-Chair Karen McGregor

K. Leggett lead the committee in a goal setting exercise.

Draft goals were collaboratively developed by SEAC members and will be confirmed at the December SEAC meeting.

**10. Next Meeting Date**

December 10, 2019 at 6 p.m.

**11. Adjournment**

*MOVED BY: P. Dendy, that the meeting adjourn.*

The meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.