



AGENDA – SEAC MEETING

SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, January 19, 2022 – 5:30 PM

Limestone Education Centre

220 Portsmouth Avenue, Kingston, ON

Virtual Meeting Link: <https://bit.ly/SEACJan192022>

Acknowledgement of Territory: “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.”

1. **WELCOME**
2. **ADOPTION OF AGENDA**
3. **DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST**
4. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
 - 4.1 **SEAC Minutes – December 15, 2021 (Pages 3-12)**
5. **BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES**
6. **EDUCATIONAL SERVICES UPDATE**
 - 6.1 **Presentation: LDSB IEP Presentation for SEAC 2022 – Assistive Technology**
Resource Teacher, Jessi Lalonde

Limestone District School Board

Limestone District School Board is situated on traditional territories of the Anishinaabe & Haudenosaunee.

SEE YOURSELF IN LIMESTONE

7. CORRESPONDENCE

- 7.1 Halton District School Board** – Letter to Minister of Education requesting that Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) be included in the list of categories of exceptionalities, dated December 16, 2021. (Pages 13-14)
- 7.2 Halton District School Board** – Letter to Minister of Education to consider amending the Immunization of School Pupils Act to include Covid-19 as a “designated disease”, due to the high impact of COVID on the disruption of learning for students with special education needs, dated December 13, 2021. (Pages 15-16)
- 7.3 Halton District School Board** – Letter to Minister of Education endorsing Bill 172, the Education Statute Law Amendment Act (Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder), dated December 13, 2021. (Page 17)
- 7.4 District School Board of Niagara** – Letter to the Minister of Health and the Minister of Education addressing the nursing shortage, dated December 20, 2021. (Page 18)

8. ASSOCIATION UPDATES

Zoe Rogers, Community Living Kingston and District (CLKD)

Family Support Virtual Presentations 2022: We are excited to be able to continue to offer virtual learning opportunities related to Assistance for Children with Severe Disabilities (ACSD) funding, Special Services at Home (SSAH) funding, and the Disability Tax Credit. There will be three presentations offered each quarter. Flyer with the dates and details attached. (Page 19)

9. OTHER BUSINESS - Administrative Report: Superintendent’s Report – Superintendent Scot Gillam (Pages 20-22)

9.1 Ministry Updates

9.2 Educational Services Updates – In-Person Learning Update

10. NEXT MEETING DATE

February 16, 2022

11. ADJOURNMENT



SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

December 15, 2021

PUBLIC MEETING

Roll Call:

Trustees:	Members:
B. Godkin K. McGregor (Chair)	<p>Present:</p> <p>S. Henderson-Todd, Lennox and Addington Resources for Children</p> <p>A. Martin, Member-at-Large (Queen's University)</p> <p>Z. Rogers, Community Living Kingston</p> <p>H. Simson, Learning Disabilities Association of Kingston</p> <p>C. Carriere-Prill, Member-at-Large</p> <p>Regrets:</p> <p>N. Carson, Epilepsy South Eastern Ontario</p> <p>C. Roberts, Easter Seals Ontario</p> <p>C. Tooley, Down Syndrome Assoc. Kingston</p> <p>C. Whalen, Family & Children's Services, Frontenac, Lennox & Addington</p>
	Staff:
	<p>M. Blackburn, Principal of Educational Services</p> <p>H. Box, Special Education Program Coordinator</p> <p>L. Conboy, Mental Health Lead</p> <p>W. Fisher, Educational Services and Safe Schools Coordinator</p> <p>S. Gillam, Superintendent, Learning for All</p> <p>J. Grasse, Vice-Principal of Educational Services</p> <p>C. Snider, Special Education Program Coordinator</p> <p>T. Vail, Special Education Program Coordinator</p>
Guests:	Recorder:
None at this time.	J. Senior, Administrative Assistant

Limestone District School Board

Limestone District School Board is situated on traditional territories of the Anishinaabe & Haudenosaunee.

SEE YOURSELF IN LIMESTONE

1. WELCOME

Chair McGregor called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Chair McGregor read the Acknowledgement of Territory:

“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. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

MOVED BY: Trustee Godkin that the agenda be approved.

3. DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None at this time.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

4.1 SEAC Minutes – November 17, 2021

MOVED BY: Trustee Godkin that the November 17, 2021, SEAC Minutes be approved.

5. BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES

The successful Member-at-Large Candidate will be approved at the January 12, 2022, Board Meeting. We are hopeful that the successful candidate will be able to join us at the January 19, 2022, SEAC Meeting.

6. EDUCATION SERVICES UPDATE

6.1 Presentation: Transitions

Special Education Program Coordinator Cheryl Snider began the presentation with a focus to share responsive practices related to significant transitions for students with special education needs. Transitioning children into the education system is a partnership with the child and family, community agencies involved with the family, and local school boards.

For students with special education needs, the Transition to Kindergarten (T2K) Meetings and our annual Transition to Kindergarten (T2K) Parent/Family Workshop are two key steps in this journey; both of which moved online last school year due to COVID-19. Considering the current reality, we continue to adapt and refine the T2K process based on feedback from those closely involved.

Our lead community agencies play a very active part in the T2K process. One key role is supporting parents to participate as equal partners and advocates for their child. The “All About Me” document is an important tool that helps parents/caregivers introduce their child to the school by focusing on their strengths, interests, and goals. Using the CanChild’s F-words framework (Function/Family/Fitness/Fun/Friends/Future) reminds us to focus on what children can do. Our community partners made a commitment to support all families in creating the “All About Me” document before each transition meeting.

This past school year in LDSB, school teams and coordinators facilitated over 110 transition meetings for students entering kindergarten with special education needs. Using a strengths-based Student Profile Form, offers simple, relatable language for families, and helps to frame things positively.

Based on feedback, we have recently updated our Student Profile Form to include a summary of strengths and areas of need. This small tweak will make the most critical information easily and quickly accessible for classroom educators and others who rely on this form.

As a direct result of COVID-19, we moved to virtual transition meetings last school year. This was uncharted territory and there was certainly some hesitation at first. In the end, because transition meetings are an information gathering opportunity, we found that we could accomplish this goal just as easily online, and the format was convenient which allowed all school and community partners to be at the table with families. The critical part of this process is building relationships with families, which is usually accomplished by being in the same room. Therefore, effective facilitation, leading introductions, and eliciting all voices at the table are just a few of the simple but key facilitation strategies we use to ensure a successful transition meeting. Also, while obvious barriers could be technology or access to Wi-Fi, community partners supported families, and this was not an issue overall. Based on feedback from schools, especially some of our larger sites, we plan to streamline the transition process by assigning one coordinator to each school site where possible.

The Transition to Kindergarten (T2K) Parent/Family Workshop is an important event that provides families with an overview of the transition process and the opportunity to connect with Educational Services staff. Last year, we took this event online and created a Transition to Kindergarten Website as an anchor for parents and families. Having the website provided a platform to share resources, recordings, and transcripts from the event for families to revisit or for those who were not able to attend. Some considerations include increasing attendance, adding to the parent panel, and investigating ways to increase parent voice and feedback.

The website was well received by parents, families, and community partners. Based on the positive response, we will continue to use and enhance our website moving forward. One consideration includes organizing resources on the website by topics and/or agencies for easier access.

Educational Services and Safe Schools Lead Wendy Fisher shared that the Grade 8-9 High Risk Transition Sharing Meeting is a collaborative process that supports students who exhibit extreme high-risk behaviours that put the safety of others at risk. This framework does not replace existing transition meetings but is meant to enhance and work in concert for a small group of students who fall under the high-risk category.

A student might fall into this category if one or more of the following apply: The student has been identified by an Educational Services staff member as requiring a more focused transition due to social, emotional, behavioural or significant mental health concerns; the student has been referred to the Behaviour Action Team in the past; the student is enrolled in an elementary District Learning Centre; the student has had a previous Violent Threat Risk Assessment completed or other exceptional circumstances.

Educational Services staff who have worked closely with the students and families are to complete the “Grade 8-9 High-Risk Transition” form which is to be submitted to the Educational Services and Safe Schools Lead. This form, which includes the student’s name, elementary school, Educational Services staff contact, and a summary of concerns, is then to be shared with individual secondary principals and vice principals. Student Support Counsellors, Behaviour Action Team members, Social Workers and School Attendance Counsellors will coordinate with elementary school staff in a High-Risk Transition Sharing Meeting before the end of the school year.

The Grade 8-9 High-Risk Transition Sharing Meeting is an opportunity for staff to communicate their knowledge and understanding of the student’s interests, strengths, challenges, and advocate for individual student needs. The student safety plan is shared highlighting strategies that support student success. Ultimately, it is an opportunity for staff

to share current and relevant information that is individualized to each student to support a successful transition into high school.

Special Education Program Coordinator Hugh Box spoke about the Grade 8 to 9 transitions for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). The move from elementary to secondary is stressful for all students, and if you have ASD, the level of anxiety is even more challenging. Therefore, the transition meetings are a powerful tool to gather information and create meaningful transition plans to help these students and their families through this process. Due to COVID-19, the transition meetings are all virtual at this time, but they continue to be very successful.

Our Secondary Autism Support Teacher, Tagget Bonham-Carter is responsible for conducting these transition meetings. The transition meetings are attended by the student and family, staff and administrators from both school sites, Autism Team staff, and community partners. Having all the experts at the table is extremely valuable to discuss all the needs of the student. It is important to ensure that the secondary school has all the information about the student that is coming to their school, and that the student and their family are clear on what the school is going to be doing to support them. Every school is unique, and it is relationships that make these transition meetings important.

Special Education Program Coordinator Tiiu Vail shared information regarding School to Community Services (SCS) Transitions and specifically the transitions for students receiving SCS as they move from Grade 8 to Grade 9. For complex transitions, the facilitation of that process is coordinated by the SCS Team Coordinator, Transition Planning Coordinator, and Student Support Counselors. Great efforts to build capacity and make transition materials accessible on the Minds Online - Support Students with Intellectual Disabilities resource have been done.

Transition meetings begin in the winter and are attended by the student and family, staff from both school sites, Educational Services staff, and community partners. Strategies to support the transition such as visits to new school site, visuals and social stories are used. The Transition Plan considers the student's needs, and we ensure that the transition process is gradual and supportive.

For some students with complex needs, we need to consider the work around the provision of care such as connecting with home and community care support services to ensure that any delegated medical procedure is well-known, and that the new school site is aware of the needs of the student in that regard as well.

The Transition Plan for a student who is moving from secondary to Life Beyond School is a multi-year comprehensive transition planning process, and it does begin in the initial secondary years. This process involves the same stakeholders but most importantly it involves the student. This is a student-centered approach and Transition Planning Coordinator Donna Abbink coordinates all these meetings for students, which are now virtual due to COVID-19.

Last year we had our very first Life Beyond School Virtual Event. Prior to 2021, this event was held in person, but due to COVID-19, we had to pivot to a virtual format. This event took place on Microsoft Teams and was an hour long. We had presentations from our community partners, including Developmental Services Ontario and Passport Program Funding. Mental Health Lead Laura Conboy also shared information around mental health resources that are available to students with an intellectual disability. The event was well-attended, and as we move forward with planning for next year, our goal is to increase attendance.

Inspired by the T2K website, our participation in the transition pilot project, and through connecting with other boards, we were able to put together our own Life Beyond School website for students and families to navigate. This website contains great information for this important transition to Life Beyond School.

Chair McGregor called upon SEAC Members for questions regarding the Transitions Presentation. The link to the Life Beyond School website will be sent to all SEAC Members.

7. CORRESPONDENCE

7.1 Avon Maitland District School Board – Letter to Minister of Education regarding Support for Bill 172 An Act in Relation to Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, provided for information.

7.2 Halton District School Board – Letter to Minister of Education regarding Decision Making Regarding the Return to Traditional Semester Model, provided for information.

7.3 Waterloo Region District School Board – Letter to Minister of Education regarding Online Learning Supports and Universal Design for Learning, provided for information.

8. ASSOCIATION UPDATES

Nadine Carson, Epilepsy South Eastern Ontario:

Our recent nursing students from Queen's University created an Epilepsy South Eastern Ontario information document for youth transitioning to adult care and for caregivers of youth transitioning to adult care. We have also received funding through United Way to support a youth transition worker to assist us in this much needed area of epilepsy care and youth transition.

9. OTHER BUSINESS – Administrative Report: Superintendent's Report

9.1 Ministry Updates

Selection of Service Providers to Deliver Entry to School Services in the Ontario Autism Program

The Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) has selected 14 Service Providers from across the province to deliver the new Entry to School Program as part of the new needs-based Ontario Autism Program (OAP). This new program will begin to be implemented in January 2022.

In the needs-based OAP, all children/youth up to age 18 with a written diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) from a qualified professional are eligible to register for the OAP. The following service pathways and program supports are available in the needs-based program:

- Core clinical services that include Applied Behaviour Analysis, speech language pathology, occupational therapy and mental health services;
- Foundational family services for all families in the program, to build their capacity to support their child's learning and development;
- Caregiver-mediated early years support and entry to school services to help young children access critical services when they will benefit most, and to prepare them to enter school;
- Urgent response services to support children and youth who are in service, or are waiting for service, and have significant and immediate needs; and
- Care Coordinators to support families throughout their journey by providing orientation to the program, service planning and navigation, and help with managing transitions.

One of the early years supports that will be offered in the needs-based OAP is the Entry to School Program. This program was designed based on advice from the Ontario Autism Program Implementation Working Group with input from the Ministry of Education.

The Entry to School Program will be delivered by 14 OAP community service providers and their partners. The program will be a six-month group-based skill-building program for young children on the autism spectrum (up to 6 years of age), who are entering kindergarten or grade one for the first time. Eligible children will participate in this program before their school start date. The focus of the program will be on preparing children to enter school.

Following the group-based program, OAP community service providers will work with a child's identified school to support the child's transition to school. Children who complete the program will receive transition supports from the OAP community service provider as they enter school. Families and educators will have access to targeted consultation support, upon request, from OAP community service providers during a child's first six months in school to support a successful school transition. School boards will play an integral role in supporting these transitions by participating in the development and implementation of child-specific transition plans based on the needs of each student. The service provider selected for the East MCCSS Region is ACT Learning.

Special Incidence Portion Funding Changes for 2021-22

For the 2021-22 school year, the Ministry of Education has once again made changes to the Special Incidence Portion (SIP) to provide school boards with greater operational flexibility and reduced administrative requirements by following last year's process and not rely on a SIP claims-based process.

The Ministry of Education intends to make regulatory amendments to Ontario Regulation 616/21, that if passed would allocate 2021-22 SIP funding through a temporary formula instead of a claims process. All school boards will be funded at their 2020-21 SIP allocation amounts, plus a 5% increase.

In 2020-21 the Ministry of Education provided school boards with an SIP allocation based on the higher amount of either:

- Their 2019-20 SIP funding allocation; or
- An average of the previous three years (2016-17 to 2018-19).

The Ministry then provided a 5% increase to that higher amount for all school boards. This established every board's final 2020-21 SIP allocation. This school year, school boards will be provided with that final 2020-21 amount plus an additional 5% increase. SIP is one of the six allocations that make up the Special Education Grant, which is part of the Grants for Student Needs. SIP is intended to support students with extraordinary high needs who require more than two full-time staff to address their health and/or safety needs, and those of others at their school.

9.2 Educational Services SEAC Update

Building Our Vision for the Future: Enhancing Special Education Services in Our District – December 2021 Monitoring Report - Principal Michael Blackburn and Vice Principal Jenn Grasse presented a report illustrating the indicators of success in key areas of focus under the four Big Ideas of the Special Education Services Monitoring Document.

1. **Reallocation of Resources:** Restructuring supports, services, teams and programs to meet the changing needs of students and schools and to equitably distribute resources.
 - **Key area of focus:** Continuing - Align and coordinate referral processes for District Teams and support multi-disciplinary team collaboration.
 - **Indicators of Success:**
 - Development of Tri-Team Referral Form.
 - Intentional focus on school based multidisciplinary team development.
 - System wide pulse check on multidisciplinary team approaches.
 - Enhancement of cross-team information sharing and collaborative problem solving.
2. **Professional Learning:** Provide ongoing and relevant professional learning to a variety of staff in order to build capacity to meet the needs of diverse learners in an inclusive learning environment.
 - **Key area of focus:** Continuing – Provide professional learning opportunities focused on a relationship-based approach to supporting student learning and well-being.
 - **Indicators of Success:**
 - Continuation and collaboration of learning with Behaviour Action Team (BAT).
 - Expansion of professional learning opportunities for District Learning Centre (DLC) teachers.
 - CRI training (trauma informed and resilience building) for staff.
3. **Strengthening Partnerships and Leveraging Supports:** Strengthen and enhance partnerships with families and community partners to leverage supports and maximize student learning and well-being.
 - **Key area of focus:** Enhancing – Enhance partnerships to provide mental health and well-being resources and supports.
 - **Indicators of Success:**
 - Enhancement of partnerships and supports for LINKS Program.
 - Intentional meetings and collaboration with Hotel Dieu, Maltby, Public Health (Mental Health Leadership Committee), KFLA Parent Advisory Committee.
 - Leadership support for ECPP (Education Community Partnership Program).

4. **Learning for All:** Support the implementation of differentiated, precise and research-based instructional strategies to support the learning and well-being of all students.
- **Key area of focus:** Enhancing – The continued training and effective use of accommodations to support student learning and success (i.e., Assistive Technology)
 - **Indicators of Success:**
 - Ongoing partnership with Discovery OT.
 - School based support for remote and virtual learning.
 - Assistive Technology Resource Support for individual, school, and system capacity building.

Chair McGregor called upon SEAC Members for questions regarding the December 2021 Monitoring Report.

10. NEXT MEETING DATE

Wednesday, January 19, 2022

Prior to calling for a motion to adjourn, Chair McGregor shared that due to a shift in staffing, SEAC Member, Charlene Whalen of Family & Children's Services, Frontenac, Lennox & Addington, must step down as a member of SEAC. Chair McGregor thanked Charlene for her many years of contribution to SEAC.

11. ADJOURNMENT

MOVED BY: Trustee Godkin that the meeting adjourn.

The meeting adjourned at 6:38 pm.

December 16, 2021

The Honourable Stephen Lecce
Ministry of Education 5th Floor
438 University Ave.
Toronto, ON M5G 2K8

Dear Minister Lecce,

At the December 7th, 2021, meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) of the Halton District School Board (HDSB) the following motion was carried unanimously:

“That the Chair of the HDSB Special Education Advisory Committee write a letter to the Minister of Education requesting that Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) be included in the list of categories of exceptionalities”

ADHD is a neurobiological disorder that affects 5-12% of the population, more than 100,000 elementary and high school students in Ontario. ADHD impacts focus, impulse control, planning, and other executive functions, all skills which are required to succeed in a school setting. ADHD is recognized as a neurodevelopmental disorder in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (the DSM–5), in the same category as Learning Disabilities and Autism Spectrum Disorders. It is a life-long condition and is often genetic in nature.

ADHD has a neurobiological cause. It is thought to be related to an imbalance of neurotransmitters in the affected individual's brain and a lag in the development of the brain's pre-frontal cortex of up to 30% versus peers. This equates to up to approximately 3 years of lag in executive functioning skills in elementary students and up to 6 years in high school students. It can have a profound impact on a student with ADHD's physical health, academic and occupational success, and socio-emotional and mental well-being.

Many students with ADHD experience significant difficulty at school. Focus and executive functioning skills are vital in any student's life and are more closely linked to academic outcomes than intellect. Unfortunately, these essential skills require long-term explicit teaching, and cannot be remediated through the use of technology. To be successful, our students need access to specialized executive functioning programming and to be accommodated in the regular classroom

Without this support, ADHD “is associated with poor grades, poor reading, and math standardized test scores, and increased grade retention. ADHD is also associated with...relatively low rates of high school graduation and post-secondary education” (Loe et al, 2007). This lack of academic success for students with ADHD “may affect a child's emotional well-being in several ways, including feelings of anxiety, lower self-esteem, poorer psychosocial health, and poorer overall quality of life” (Peasgood et al, 2016).

The Education Act identifies five categories of exceptionalities for exceptional students: behavioural, communicational, intellectual, physical, and multiple. None of these categories specifically include ADHD. While the memorandum, “Categories of Exceptionalities,” issued by the Ministry of Education on December 19, 2011, provides further guidance to

school boards on supporting students with ADHD, the lack of inclusion of ADHD as an exceptionality, in its own right, has led to inconsistent support for students with ADHD in Ontario.

In passing this motion, the Special Education Advisory Committee of the HDSB is asking you to consider adding ADHD as a separate exceptionality in the same category as learning disabilities and autism spectrum disorders. This category could then be more appropriately renamed Neurodevelopmental exceptionalities, rather than Communication, with Deaf and Hard of Hearing being moved into Physical Disabilities.

The inclusion of ADHD as an exceptionality would:

1. Increase the ease of access by students with ADHD to the specialized programming and appropriate accommodations they need to be successful
2. Ensure more consistent service for students with ADHD within different school boards. Currently, a child with ADHD may obtain a “Behavioural” identification in one board and a “Communication” identification in another board. Transfer between boards then becomes difficult.
3. Decrease the stigma felt by students with ADHD and their parents that often comes with the Behavioural identification required to access support.

Until ADHD is included as an exceptionality, we also recommend that the Ontario College of Teachers’ programs include education and resources on supporting students with neuro-diversities, including ADHD, as part of the curriculum and pre-service training.

I would like to thank you in advance for your consideration of this request. The members of the HDSB SEAC believe this change would allow the educational community to better serve students with ADHD and their families in Halton, and across Ontario, and create a more supportive and inclusive environment for all.

Yours Sincerely,



Alison Brindle
Chair, Special Education Advisory Committee, HDSB

Works Cited:

Irene M. Loe, MD, Heidi M. Feldman, MD, PhD, Academic and Educational Outcomes of Children With ADHD, Journal of Pediatric Psychology, Volume 32, Issue 6, July 2007, Pages 643–654,

Peasgood, Tessa et al. “The impact of ADHD on the health and well-being of ADHD children and their siblings.” European child & adolescent psychiatry vol. 25,11 (2016): 1217-1231.

December 13th, 2021

The Honourable Stephen Lecce
Ministry of Education 5th Floor
438 University Ave.
Toronto, ON M5G 2K8

The Honourable Christine Elliot
Ministry of Health, 8th Floor
438 University Ave. Toronto, ON M5G 2K8

Dear Minister Lecce and Minister Elliot:

At its most recent committee meeting on December 7th, 2021, the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) of the Halton District School Board (HDSB) carried the following motion:

“That the HDSB SEAC write a letter asking the Minister of Education and the Minister of Health to consider amending the Immunization of School Pupils Act to include Covid-19 as a “designated disease”, due to the high impact of COVID on the disruption to learning for students with special education needs”

Students with special education needs have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic, academically, emotionally, and through loss of support services typically provided in a school setting. To ensure equitable access to education for all, it is essential that schools remain open so that students with special needs can be accommodated appropriately. This will only be possible if we are able to ensure safety in our schools throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

Currently, there is no mandate for eligible students to be vaccinated against COVID-19. Eligible students now include all students from the age of 5 and over. The addition of COVID-19 as a “designated disease” within the Immunization of School Pupils Act is a crucial step in our fight against this disease. It will hopefully inspire an increased uptake of the vaccine amongst our children and youth, which will provide increased protection for those who are too young or medically unable to be vaccinated in school communities. This will result in a safer environment for all students, staff, and their families. It will also help ensure consistent and equitable access to appropriate learning environments for students with special education needs.

In approving this motion, the HDSB Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) is adding its voice to the many boards and SEACs who have made the same request. I would like to thank you in advance for your consideration of this request to further improve the safety of the learning environments in Halton and across Ontario.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Alison Brindle".

Alison Brindle, Chair of the Halton District School Board Special Education Advisory Committee

Cc: Margo Shuttleworth, Chair of Halton District School Board



December 13, 2021

The Honourable Stephen Lecce
Ministry of Education 5th Floor
438 University Ave.
Toronto, ON M5G 2K8

Dear Minister Lecce:

The Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) for the Halton District School Board recently received letters from the Avon Maitland District School board, the Rainy River District School Board, and the Rainbow District School Board SEAC, regarding their support of Bill 172, the Education Statute Law Amendment Act for Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). This proposed legislation will require all Boards of Education throughout Ontario to develop policies and guidelines with respect to FASD and require the Ontario College of Teachers ECE programs to provide training with respect to FASD.

A FASD diagnosis impacts children's ability to thrive in school due to the combination of deficits associated with the diagnosis and their limited capacity to understand expectations and demands. For this reason, staff need to be taught about the early signs and symptoms of FASD and how to provide appropriate accommodation in the classroom and school boards need to develop policies and guidelines with respect to FASD for the academic environment.

At our committee meeting on December 7th, 2021, the Halton District School Board Special Education Advisory Committee approved the following motion:

That the Special Education Advisory Committee recommends sending a letter to the Minister of Education endorsing Bill 172, the Education Statute Law Amendment Act (Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder).

Carried unanimously.

In approving this motion, the members of the Halton District School Board's Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) ask that you acknowledge our support for Bill 172 as it will help our students and educators experience success in their classrooms and improve their overall wellbeing.

We appreciate your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Alison Brindle'.

Alison Brindle, Chair of the Halton District School Board Special Education Advisory Committee

Cc: Margo Shuttleworth, Chair of Halton District School Board



DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD OF NIAGARA

191 CARLTON ST. ■ ST. CATHARINES, ON ■ L2R 7P4 ■ 905-641-1550 ■ DSBN.ORG

December 20, 2021

Via email: christine.elliott@pc.ola.org; minister.edu@ontario.ca; stephen.lecce@pc.ola.org;

Honourable Christine Elliott
Minister of Health
5th Floor, 777 Bay Street
Toronto, ON M7A 2J3

Honourable Stephen Lecce
Minister of Education
Mowat Block, 900 Bay Street
Toronto, Ontario, M7A 1L2

Honourable Christine Elliott and Honourable Stephen Lecce,

We are aware that the Province of Ontario is currently challenged by a shortage of nurses. Both the health and education sectors are experiencing the impact of these shortages. Currently, there are hundreds of students across the province awaiting nursing care that is required for them to safely and meaningfully attend school. We acknowledge that school staff cannot perform the duties of a nurse/registered health care professional, but stress that it is also imperative that we take every reasonable step to ensure that all students have access to education.

Though this shortage is not the responsibility of school boards, in the DSBN, like many other school districts, we are committed to being part of a temporary solution for students and families affected. One way we have supported students requiring health care services in our schools has been to allow parents/guardians or a temporary health care service provider, designated by the parents/guardians, to visit the school, adhering to all safety protocols, to provide the health care services, where possible, for their child. Furthermore, our schools are creatively engaging with and providing academic support to students who are at home awaiting nursing care. We are aware that the Ministry of Health **'Family-managed home care/Self-directed care'** program eligibility requirements have been updated to include parents/guardians of students with complex medical needs that prevent them from attending school due to the shortage of school nurses through HCCSS. The funding for this program is very difficult to access and currently, there are no families receiving this support in our region, which is likely due to the extensive and complex process required to procure the funding.

It is a clear and widespread fact that in-person learning is the best learning environment for students. With support from the province and significant planning, commitment and efforts by District School Boards, schools opened this fall. Tragically, however, many students are unable to attend school with their peers, and their families are bearing the majority of the burden in managing the care of students who do not have at-school nursing support secured at this time.

While we acknowledge that there are ongoing Provincial level discussions occurring across various Ministries, in regard to the nursing shortage, we request that this issue be the top priority for this government and that an immediate and accessible solution be developed to allow all children access to the learning they require and deserve.

Sincerely,

Linda Morrice, Chair
Special Education Advisory Committee, District School Board of Niagara

cc: Chairs of all Ontario Special Education Advisory Committees

Family Support Virtual Presentations 2022

We are excited to be able to continue to offer virtual learning opportunities Related to ACSD Funding, SSAH Funding and the Disability Tax Credit in the coming year

There will be three presentations offered each quarter.
Presentations will take place virtually between 12:00PM and 1:00 PM
via the BlueJeans Platform with Q&A to follow.

- Assistance for Children with Severe Disabilities (ACSD)
January 20th , April 14th , September 8th
- Special Services at Home (SSAH)
February 10th , May 12th , October 13th
- Disability Tax Credit
March 10th , June 9th , November 10th

If you are interested in joining us for any of these presentations please contact Diane Stewart at diane.stewart@clkingston.ca



ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT: SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

01/19/2022

9.1 Ministry Updates:

Ministry of Education Update

On January 3, 2022, the government of Ontario announced a range of time-limited public health actions to help curb the spread of COVID-19 variants in Ontario. As part of this announcement, starting January 5, 2022, students at all publicly funded and private schools will pivot to teacher-led remote learning until at least January 17, subject to public health trends and operational considerations.

Remote Learning

Remote learning will be provided for all students in alignment with [Policy/Program Memorandum \(PPM\) No.164: Requirements for Remote Learning](#). This PPM provides standards for synchronous learning so that parents and students know what to expect and there is a consistent approach across the province to ensure students are fully engaged in their learning. School boards are asked to distribute technology to students and staff to support remote learning, as required and to ensure that staff working from home have access to technology and the teaching materials they need. School boards should complete these arrangements as expeditiously as possible and endeavour to communicate with parents and students to ensure a smooth transition to remote learning.

All staff who are able to work from home should do so. Staff who are unable to provide remote instruction from home will be permitted to do so in schools. Any staff required to provide remote instruction in schools must not congregate with other staff and should avoid use of school space outside the classroom. Any staff that are required to take rapid antigen screening 3 times per week must continue to do so if they are working in-person.

Student Supports

As in previous shifts to remote learning, boards must ensure that plans are in place to support students with special education needs to learn remotely. These plans should

leverage the capacity of education workers and board professionals (e.g., behavioural experts, speech language pathologists, and other professionals) to support remote learning.

School boards are expected to make provisions for in-person support for students with special education needs who cannot be accommodated through remote learning. While students with special education needs will be learning remotely during this period, all attempts should be made to accommodate those children that cannot learn from home.

In-person learning should be reserved for students who cannot be accommodated through remote learning. School boards are best positioned to determine which students with special education needs may require this accommodation. School boards have flexibility in determining how to deliver in-person instruction in such circumstances, based on local conditions. However, consideration should be given to limiting overall movement and limiting the number of sites that will be open. School boards should prioritize schools with modern ventilation to support safety. School board staff who are supporting in-person learning will be eligible for emergency childcare.

The Ministry continues to encourage school boards to work closely with local First Nations and take steps to ensure continuity of learning for enrolled First Nation students who may live on reserve and/or require additional supports.

It is important that school boards have safety plans in place for those students who are experiencing or could be expected to experience mental health challenges. Safety plans should include provisions for students to have continued remote access to services, through the school, community child and youth mental health or local healthcare partners. In addition, students and families should be provided with information about the mental health resources that are available to them.

School Mental Health Ontario also has a number of great resources for students, parents and families on their website at www.smho-smso.ca. In addition, child and youth mental health agencies across the province continue to provide services.

Student Transportation

While elementary and secondary students are learning remotely, student transportation services will only be provided for special needs students who cannot be accommodated through remote learning based on student needs.

9.2 Educational Services SEAC Update:

In-Person Learning Update

A big thanks to Principal Blackburn and Vice Principal Grasse for their efforts in ensuring that students with significant special education needs could continue with in-person learning. Principal Blackburn, Vice Principal Grasse, Educational Services staff, LDSB teachers and support staff, and Tri-board are to be commended on their efforts. We had students start as early as Wednesday. The criteria for in-person learning is as follows:

- Students who attend a self-contained special education or mental health partnership program.
- Students who access School to Community services.
- Students who require direct and intensive support from an Educational Assistant. (at least 50% of the school day) to access curriculum and alternative learning expectations.

Administration then reached out to parents/guardians to gauge their interest in having their child(ren) return.

As of Tuesday, January 11th, we had 505 students returned to in-person learning at 53 Elementary and Secondary schools. We had 418 teaching and support staff supporting these students.

Prepared by: Scot Gillam, Superintendent of Learning for All and Indigenous Education