



AGENDA – SEAC MEETING

SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, March 20, 2024 – 5:30 PM

Limestone Education Centre

220 Portsmouth Avenue, Kingston, ON

Virtual Meeting Link:

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 – February 14, 2024 (Pages 3-10)**
- 5. BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES**

Limestone District School Board

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

SEE YOURSELF IN LIMESTONE

6. EDUCATIONAL SERVICES UPDATE

6.1 Presentation: Building Our Vision for the Future, Enhancing Special Education Services in our District, 2023/24 Monitoring Document – Principal Blackburn and Vice Principal Dillard (Pages 11-14)

7. CORRESPONDENCE

None at this time.

8. ASSOCIATION UPDATES

8.1 Autism Ontario Updates – Report from Haley Clark - Sent to SEAC via email on March 5, 2024. (Page 15)

8.2 Autism Ontario – Participants Required for Research Study. A research project (undertaken by Ally Frid) requires special education teachers, and teachers who work with children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) from across Ontario, for a research study about their experience working with children with ASD who use augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) devices in the classroom, before and during the COVID-19 pandemic. This study has been reviewed for ethical compliance by the Queen's University General Research Ethics Board. Contact Ally Frid or Dr. Thomas Abrams for more details. (Page 16)

9. OTHER BUSINESS

9.1 Administrative Report: Superintendent's Report - Superintendent Gillam (Pages 17-19)

9.2 Special Education Mission Statement – Principal Blackburn

10. NEXT MEETING DATE

April 17, 2024

11. ADJOURNMENT



SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

February 14, 2024

PUBLIC MEETING

Roll Call:

Trustees:	Members:
T. Lloyd	Present: H. Clark, Autism Ontario E. Clow, Member-at-Large K. Hill, Member-at-Large A. Martin, Member-at-Large (Queen's University) S. Patay, Lennox & Addington Resources for Children L. Clouthier, Easter Seals Ontario H. Simson, Learning Disabilities Association of Kingston Regrets: Trustee K. McGregor M. Covey, Community Living Kingston
	Staff:
	Present: M. Blackburn, Principal of Educational Services S. Gillam, Superintendent, Learning for All N. Dillard, Vice-Principal of Educational Services C. Snider, Special Education Program Coordinator T. Vail, Special Education Program Coordinator A. Ward, Special Education Program Coordinator L. Conboy, Mental Health Lead W. Fisher, Educational Services and Safe Schools Coordinator J. Lalonde, Special Education Program Coordinator
Guests:	Recorder:
None at this time.	J. Senior, Administrative Assistant

1. WELCOME

Superintendent Scot Gillam called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Principal Mike Blackburn 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: Member-at-Large Erin Clow that the agenda be approved. Carried.

3. DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None at this time.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

4.1 SEAC Minutes January 24, 2024

MOVED BY: Member-at-Large Katrina Hill that the January 24, 2024, SEAC Minutes be approved. Carried.

5. BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES

None at this time.

6. EDUCATION SERVICES UPDATE

6.1 Presentation: Mental Health Literacy Modules for Grades 7 and 8 – Laura Conboy, Mental Health Lead and Wendy Fisher, Educational Services and Safe Schools Lead shared an in-depth report on Mental Health Literacy Modules for Grades 7 and 8.

The modules will become mandatory in January 2024, and offer educators support to deliver the existing Health and Physical Education curriculum.

What are the Mental Health Literacy Modules?

- Three 40-minute modules per grade are provided by the Ministry of Education to support the delivery of existing mental health literacy expectations within Strad D of Grad 7 and 8 Health and Physical Education curriculum.
- The format is a three-part lesson plan:
 - Minds On
 - Action Tasks
 - Consolidation

The modules enhance Mental Health Literacy in Grades 7 and 8 and can help to equip students with culturally responsive, evidence-based knowledge, skills, and strategies to support their mental health and well-being. The modules are easy to use, and additional supports are available in English and French.

There are important reasons to prioritize mental health and learning:

- Students want to learn about mental health in the classroom.
- It helps students develop skills that support positive mental health.
- Supports learning in other areas.
- Encourages conversations and helps students in need access support.
- As caring adults in the lives of students, we want them to be well.

PPM 169 – Mandatory Mental Health Literacy Learning for Students:

- School boards will implement ministry-approved, teacher-led, and culturally responsive mental health literacy learning modules for students in Grades 7 and 8.
- Modules will be aligned with the existing curriculum expectations in the Grades 7 and 8 Health and Physical Education curriculum.
- Students will learn about mental health and mental illness and build awareness of the impact of stigma associated with mental illness.
- In preparation for the transitions that come with adolescence, students will continue building strategies for supporting their mental health, including self-care strategies to maintain good mental health and to know where and when to seek help.

PPM 169 comes into effect January 1, 2024. The purpose of the PPM is to outline requirements for school boards to provide culturally responsive, evidence-informed student mental health promotion, prevention, and early intervention services, and to provide clear pathways to and from more intensive community and hospital-based mental health services, when needed.

Implementation Plan:

- October regional implementation session.
- Consultation with Senior Leadership.
- December presentation to KFL&A Family Advisory Committee
- February education information sessions – virtual and in-person sessions.
- Focused implementation support for specific sites where Grades 7 and 8 classes are concentrated.
- February presentation to Parent Involvement Committee and SEAC.
- Ongoing reporting to Ministry of Education/PPM 169.

Co-Chair Martin called on SEAC Members for questions.

6.2 Presentation: Mental Health and Substance Use Strategy Overview – Laura Conboy, Mental Health Lead shared an overview of the 2021-2024 Mental Health and Substance Use Strategy to refresh existing SEAC Members and to offer a bit of insight for new SEAC Members.

2021-2024 Mental Health and Substance Use Strategy Overview:

- A variety of stakeholders were engaged including students, caregivers, and staff.
- Acknowledgement of the intersection of Mental Health and equity and the impact of COVID.
- Framework focused on a tiered model of intervention and four foundational principles to guide our collective work.

The results of combined analysis of student, caregiver, and staff surveys are six areas of focus that have informed school mental health and substance use work in the board over the last 2.5 years:

- Mental Health and Substance Use Knowledge
- Student Mental Health and Substance Use Support
- Culturally Responsive Mental Health Promotion, Prevention, and Intervention
- Pathways To/Through/From Care
- Equip and Support Staff
- A Relationship-Based Approach to Student Well-Being and Achievement

Next Steps:

- Gathering input from MHSU Committee Members and Educational Services Staff.
- Developing summary infographic for 2021-2024.
- We want your input!
- Opportunity to share your thoughts at March 20, 2024, SEAC Meeting.
- Are there areas of focus that are missing, that we should be focusing on over the next three years?

Mental Health Lead Laura Conboy ended the presentation by asking SEAC Members to focus on any areas that might be missing from our current strategy and if there are any areas of focus that we should be adding over the next three years. Please bring your thoughts and input back to the March 20, 2024, SEAC Meeting, or you can email your input to Jill Senior before the meeting.

Co-Chair Martin called on SEAC Members for questions.

7. CORRESPONDENCE

None at this time.

8. ASSOCIATION UPDATES

8.1 Helen Simson, Learning Disabilities Association of Kingston (LDAK) – Helen spoke to the Writing and Self-Confidence Event being sponsored by LDAK on February 27, 2024.

9. OTHER BUSINESS

9.1 Administrative Report: Superintendent's Report – Superintendent Scot Gillam shared the following:

A. Ministry Updates:

None at this time.

B. Educational Services Update:

February 2, 2024 – Professional Activity (PA) Day

A large contingent of Education Assistants participated in a day of learning and collegiality at Educational Services during the February 2, 2024, Professional Activity Day. Educational Services staff, including Principal Michael Blackburn, Vice Principal Nicola Dillard, Special Education Coordinators Ash Ward, Jessi Lalonde, Tiiu Vail, and Cheryl Snider, and our Mental Health Lead Laura Conboy provided multiple sessions on topics like supporting diverse learners, relationship-based approaches to supporting students, and bringing the joy. A huge thanks to everyone who made this day such a success.

Special Education Service Delivery Model

As previously reported to SEAC, a Special Education Review was completed in the Spring of 2023 to gather feedback from students and families related to key supports and services that directly impact student success.

Findings from the review identified the need for ongoing capacity building for educators and support staff, multi-tiered systems of support within schools, and flexible and responsive learning environments with a focus on purposeful, planned, and meaningful inclusion.

Achievement and success of students with special education needs continues to be an area of concern within LDSB and alternative approaches to supporting students in the margins should be explored.

Schools and families continue to advocate for school-based supports for complex learners to safely and supportively engage in inclusive learning environments.

Students shared that they need flexible and responsive spaces within the school setting to regulate, access support, and connect to caring and knowledgeable adults.

LDSB currently has four District Autism Classrooms (DAC), five District Learning Centres (DLC), and 2.5 Learning Disability Programs (LD). In addition, there are currently 19 itinerant and site-based School to Community teachers, and a 1.0 Itinerant Behaviour teacher. School to Community teachers primarily serve students who have an identification of Developmental Disability through the Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) process. Similarly, the Itinerant Behaviour teacher provides service to a small number of students with behaviour/safety concerns.

At the system level, we currently have three District Teams: The Behaviour Action Team, the School to Community Team, and the Autism Team. These teams are deemed to be Tier 3 Interventions and as such, are only available through a referral process. These teams contain the following staff: 1.8 Speech Language Pathologist, 0.5 Clinical Consultant, 8 Student Support Counselors, 1 Board Certified Behaviour Analyst, and 3 Intervention Assistants.

Finally, Educational Services is supported by four Special Education Coordinators, two of whom primarily support students with Autism and Intellectual Disabilities, and two who support other services such as Individual Education (IEP) development and Transition to Kindergarten.

Based on the Special Education Review and an assessment of services provided by Educational Services, we will be proposing some changes to the current service deliver model based on the following considerations:

- Equity of access to supports and services in a students' home school.
- Flexible and responsive support, programming, and access to spaces that adapt and respond to a student's unique learning profile.
- Fully inclusive learning environments supported by caring and knowledgeable staff.
- Increased access to supports/services through a reduction of independent and identification specific service delivery.

A detailed description of these changes will be shared by Principal Blackburn.

9.2 Presentation: Special Education Support Model – Elementary – Principal Mike Blackburn shared an in-depth presentation on the new Special Education Support Model for Elementary which is based on our response to the Special Education Review conducted in the spring of 2023.

As a result of these changes, all elementary LDSB Special Education Classrooms will be dissolved, and all staff will be reallocated into schools. This includes the District Autism Classrooms (DACs), the District Learning Centres (DLCs), and the Learning Disabilities Programs. In addition, all Itinerant and school-based School to Community teachers will also be reallocated into schools. This adjustment will allow us to increase supports in elementary schools as follows:

- The addition of at least twenty-six (26) Intensive Support Teachers
- The addition of three (3) Student Support Teachers
- Increased support for Literacy Intervention
- Seventeen (17) Educational Assistants

In addition to this reallocation of resources, we will also be adding a Board-Certified Behaviour Analyst (BCBA) and an additional Educational Services Coordinator, which is a teaching position. Further changes include the dissolution of the Autism Team, the School to Community Team, and the Behaviour Action Team. Two new teams will be created to support the system. The first team, the Intensive Support Team will provide Tier 3 interventions to schools/students as needed. The second team will be a Safe Schools Team and support situations that require specific interventions related to the Violence Threat Risk Assessment process and/or suspension/expulsion procedures. This change will provide additional supports to elementary schools in the following areas:

- Three (3) additional Student Support Counselors
- One (1) Speech Language Pathologist
- 0.2 Clinical

Information gathered from SEAC will be shared in a final presentation to Trustees at the February 28th, 2024, Board Meeting.

Co-Chair Martin called on SEAC Members for questions/comments.

10. NEXT MEETING DATE

Wednesday, March 20, 2024

11. ADJOURNMENT

MOVED BY: Member-at-Large Erin Clow, that the meeting adjourn. Carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:12 pm.

Special Education Services in our District

Monitoring Document 2023-24



Programs and Programming - *Programs and Programming matter*

Explore and implement programs and programming that are personalized to student's strengths and needs and responsive to goals, progress and future opportunities.

Individualized Supports and Accommodations - *Supports matter*

Explore and implement supports and accommodations that increase access and opportunities for learning and reduce barriers to success.

Inclusive and Supportive Culture - *Culture matters*

Explore and implement strategies to support an inclusive and supportive culture that creates a sense of belonging, teamwork and shared belief in what is possible.

Staff Support/Human Resources - *People matter*

Explore and implement staff and team capacity building to support a team approach within a multi-tiered system of support.

Programs and Programming	Beginning	Continuing	Enhancing
Support system-wide learning and implementation of effective and research-based instructional strategies and program accommodations.		✓ 	
Critically examine District programs, services, and supports to assess impact and efficacy.		✓	

Support school teams to implement purposeful, planned, and meaningful inclusion for students.		✓	
Support personalized, adaptable, engaging, and responsive school-based programming and experiences.		✓	
Individualized Supports and Accommodations	Beginning	Continuing	Enhancing
Support processes and practices for understanding diverse learners (student profiles, goals/hopes, gifts, areas for growth).		✓	
Reduction of instructional, environmental, and attitudinal barriers and increase of access/accessibility.		✓	
Examine and focus on transitional supports for students with particular attention to Transition to Kindergarten, K-1, 7-9.			✓

Inclusive and Supportive Culture	Beginning	Continuing	Enhancing
Develop and share supportive resources for students and parents (e.g. IEP, IPRC, transitional supports).		✓	
Communicate and collaborate with students, families, and community partners to gather voice and lived experiences.	✓ →		
Support and promote school and classroom cultures to celebrate neurodiversity, implement identify affirming support, and focus on a strength and relationship based approach.		✓	
Staff Support/Human Resources	Beginning	Continuing	Enhancing
Continue to build staff knowledge and capacity to support diverse learners within inclusive classrooms.		✓ →	

Facilitate system and school-based Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) within a multidisciplinary teams framework.	✓		
Increase understanding and awareness of pathways to care, support, and services.		✓	

Autism Ontario March 2024 Updates

Here are some events/updates from Autism Ontario!

“Paperwork Party”- Supporting Caregivers in Completing an Application for Assistance for Children with Severe Disabilities (ACSD)

Come cross something off your ‘to do’ list! This workshop will provide an overview of Assistance for Children with Severe Disabilities (ACSD), a funding program that families may be able to access here in Ontario to reduce financial strain. A facilitator from Autism Ontario will provide tips and resources, as well as answer questions families may have.

Date: March 6, 2024

Time: 12:00 PM – 1:00 PM

Link: <https://www.autismontario.com/civicrm/event/info?id=9187&reset=1>

Ausome Moms

Join us each month to meet with other moms, female caregivers, and transgender/non-binary folks. This casual setting allows you to socialize, share your experiences, or simply sit back and listen.

Date: March 21, 2024

Time: 7:30 PM – 8:00 PM

Link: <https://www.autismontario.com/civicrm/event/info?id=9130&reset=1>

Webinar. Autism Ontario Presents: Exploring Autism

This webinar aims to introduce autism and neurodiversity. We will discuss autism and neurodiversity, the features of autism, and provide information on how autistic people may perceive and interact with their environment. We will also discuss how you can be an autistic ally, offering practical tips and strategies on how to create an inclusive environment and support autistic people in your home, school, or community.

Date: March 25, 2024

Time: 12:00 PM – 1:00 PM

Link: <https://www.autismontario.com/civicrm/event/info?id=9192&reset=1>

Rad Dads

Join us monthly to meet with other dads, male caregivers, and transgender/non-binary folks. This casual setting allows you to socialize, share your experiences, or sit back and listen.

Date: March 25, 2024

Time: 7:30 PM – 9:00 PM

Link: <https://www.autismontario.com/civicrm/event/info?id=9143&reset=1>

To stay informed about Autism Ontario's initiatives and events in your area, subscribe to one of our [newsletters](#) or become a member of a local Facebook group. Don't miss out on valuable opportunities to stay informed — sign up today to stay connected and involved!

Study on The Experiences of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder and their Use of Augmentative and Alternative Communication Devices in the Classroom

The purpose of this study is to transform the basic understanding of the use of augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) devices and how they may impact the communication of students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), before and during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Participant Criteria:

- Live and work in Ontario, Canada
- Have the ability to communicate in English
- Work as a special education teacher, or work in a classroom with children with ASD, in an elementary school
- Have experience working with children with ASD who use AAC devices
- Have worked as a special education teacher, or worked in a classroom with children with ASD, before and during the COVID-19 pandemic
- Have access to an internet-accessing device

Participation in this study consists of a 1 hour long (approx.) recorded interview via Zoom

If you are interested, please email Ally Frid – ally.frid@queensu.ca

This study has been reviewed for ethical compliance by the Queen's University General Research Ethics Board.





ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT: SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

03/20/2024

A. Ministry Updates:

Regulatory and Policy Reforms to Support the Better Schools and Student Outcomes Act, 2023 – Strengthening Parental Involvement and Increasing Transparency

As you are aware, the Better Schools and Student Outcomes Act, 2023 (the Act) received Royal Assent on June 8, 2023. The Ministry of Education (the Ministry) is moving forward with regulatory and policy reforms that refocus school boards on academic achievement in addition to **strengthening parental involvement and increasing transparency**. The ministry has consulted with key sector partners through various channels to inform the development of the regulation and policies, and we appreciate the feedback provided.

The reforms and supporting materials will:

- Foster greater parental involvement through the release of an accessible parent-friendly resource to help parents support their child's success and make informed decisions about their education; and
- Increase transparency to support greater engagement of parents in their child's education through:
 - A Student Achievement Plan tool and public reporting template that will support school boards in adopting provincial priorities into their publicly posted multi-year plans.

Strengthening Parental Involvement

Your Child's Education: A Parent Guide to our School System

A key theme of the Act is strengthening parental involvement. To support parent involvement in their children's education and to promote parent participation in school, the ministry has developed a parent-friendly resource with easy to access information. This webpage is intended to be a "one-stop shop" resource for parents with links to existing webpages and ministry-developed resources so that parents have the information they need to make informed decisions about their child's education and support their learning.

Increasing Transparency

Student Achievement Plan Tool and Public Reporting Template

As part of the July 2023 memorandum, the ministry released a Student Achievement Plan Framework, which aligns with the regulated provincial priorities (O. Reg. 224/23). The framework sets out goals and performance indicators for school boards to monitor student achievement, develop action plans and measure their progress on improving student outcomes.

The Ministry provided pre-populated materials to support the development and reporting of board Student Achievement Plans as part of the Ministry Communications to District School Boards in January 2024. All Student Achievement Plan materials are available on a secure Ministry SharePoint site. Access has been provided to all Directors of Education.

These materials included:

- 1) **Student Achievement Plan Tool:** Guides school boards through the action planning process based on the analysis and interpretation of quantitative and qualitative data.
- 2) **Student Achievement Plan Public Reporting Template:** Provides a consistent approach for communicating boards' data, action plans and progress on indicators to their communities.

Under the Act, school boards are required to publicly report on progress toward the provincial priorities and meet with parents in the first two months and last two months of each school year to discuss the priorities and progress towards them. To support school boards in meeting this requirement and in preparation for their meeting with parents and communities on multi-year plans before the end of the school year, school boards are expected to complete the Student Achievement Plan Public Reporting Template and post to their website by April 2, 2024. School boards are also expected to notify the ministry once the Student Achievement Plan Public Reporting Template is posted on their website by emailing a weblink to the Regional Office.

B. Educational Services Update:

Elementary Special Education Service Delivery Update

Communication has been shared with all impacted staff and current students attending the various programs that are being dissolved. Transition supports will be offered to support students returning to their home schools, with the support and guidance of staff currently allocated to the programs and staff at the home school. More general communication has been shared with all staff, and parents/caregivers across Limestone. Key community partners have also been contacted by Superintendent Gillam and other members of the Educational Services leadership team.

Staffing will follow the established LDSB procedures, and more updates will be provided as this process continues in the Spring of 2024. The allocation of Intensive Support Teachers, additional Student Support teacher and literacy intervention support, and Education Assistants will take place in the upcoming weeks as schools prepare their school profiles. These profiles assist Educational Services leadership team members in allocating supports across the system. A more fulsome report on these allocations will be forthcoming to SEAC in the coming months.

Transition to Kindergarten Event

The Transition to Kindergarten Virtual Family Workshop took place on Wednesday, March 6, 2024. This event is the result of collaboration between the three local school boards and our community partners. The workshop is for families of children with special education needs and provides vital information to support the transition into Kindergarten. A big thanks to all involved from the Educational Services leadership team.

Neurodiversity Celebration Week – March 18-22, 2024

The Limestone District School Board is committed to supporting, affirming and the celebration of our neurodivergent community during the week of March 18-22nd 2024 in support of Neurodiversity Celebration Week. Neurodiversity refers to the natural diversity of human minds. It is a biological fact that we are diverse in our minds just like we are in our ethnicity, gender, sexuality etc. In LDSB, we look to celebrate and affirm that no two minds are alike!

For the duration of the week, schools will have the opportunity to explore curated materials, resources to expand knowledge, understanding and celebration through learning. LDSB social media will highlight LDSB Neuro Vibes posters that have been shared and posted in many LDSB schools (and other community agencies).

March is Easter Seals Month

March is Easter Seals Month and LDSB will be reaching out to staff and families to help support a campaign to send students to camp in the LDSB area starting on March 18th. Information on how to support Easter Seals will be sent to all staff and on social media. We highlight that all funds raised in the KFL&A area, remain in this area to support Easter Seals Camp and the provision of accessible equipment for children and families of Limestone.

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