



AGENDA – SEAC MEETING

SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, May 17, 2022 – 5:00 PM

Limestone Education Centre

220 Portsmouth Avenue, Kingston, ON

Virtual Meeting Link: <https://bit.ly/LDSBSEACMtgMay17>

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 – April 20, 2022** (Pages 3-11)
5. **BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES**
6. **EDUCATIONAL SERVICES UPDATE**
 - 6.1 **Presentation: Special Education Budget (2022-2023)** – Superintendent of Business Craig Young and Manager of Finance Paula Carson

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 Upper Grand District School Board – Letter to Deputy Minister of Education and Deputy Minister of Health regarding PPM 81, dated February 9, 2022.

(Pages 12-14)

7.2 Near North District School Board – Letter to Minister of Education regarding providing on-line learning resources and the platforms used to access these resources, dated April 13, 2022. (Page 15)

7.3 Superior-Greenstone District School Board – Letter to Minister of Education regarding making Regulation 632/20 a permanent amendment, dated April 29, 2022. (Pages 16-18)

8. ASSOCIATION UPDATES

9. OTHER BUSINESS - Administrative Report: Superintendent's Report (Pages 19-20)

9.1 Ministry Updates - Superintendent Scot Gillam

9.2 Educational Services Update – Superintendent Scot Gillam

10. NEXT MEETING DATE

June 8, 2022

11. ADJOURNMENT



SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

April 20, 2022

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>C. Norwich-Stevenson, Member-at-Large</p> <p>Regrets:</p> <p>C. Roberts, Easter Seals Ontario</p> <p>C. Carriere-Prill, Member-at-Large</p> <p>C. Tooley, Down Syndrome Association Kingston</p> <p>H. Simson, Learning Disabilities Association of Kingston</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. Bonham Carter, 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 – March 23, 2022

MOVED BY: Trustee Godkin that the March 23, 2022, SEAC Minutes be approved.

5. BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES

None at this time.

6. EDUCATION SERVICES UPDATE

6.1 Presentation: Supporting Mental Wellness Amongst Students with Special Education Needs

Laura Conboy, Mental Health Lead began by sharing the work that has been done during the school year to support student mental health and mental wellness, particularly with students with special education needs.

To build intentional connections to the work of our Educational Services staff, Principal Blackburn has provided time once a month at our Leadership Meetings to explore one area of focus and unpack all of the work that Educational Services is currently doing or would like to enhance in that area. This is allowing us to explore and collaboratively connect each

other's work to the strategy in a way that has not happened before. Not only does this create valuable sharing and learning opportunities, but it ensures that the work we are doing aligns with the Mental Health Substance Use (MHSU) Strategy and is applicable to all learners in LDSB.

The information is connected to our MHSU Strategy in a number of ways:

Student Focused

Creating a positive mentally healthy classroom environment that reduces stigma, includes culturally relevant learning, and integrates discussions about mental health is an important role for educators and promotes well-being for all learners. While mental health promotion is good for all students, it is even more essential for students with special education needs, and particularly those with a dual diagnosis. Students with Intellectual Disabilities (ID) often have lagging Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) skills and need extra support in this area. With explicit, intentional lessons and incorporating daily mental health practices into the school day, educators can help bolster skills for resiliency and success amongst all learners.

Taking a student-centered approach and listening to what students told us from the 2021 MHSU Strategy Survey, 50% of respondents ask a friend for mental health support; 13% of respondents feel like they cannot talk to anyone at school about their mental health; and 21% of respondents ask a teacher for mental health support. Some of the work highlighted in this presentation encourages classroom conversations, promotes valuable learning experiences, and included students in the development of some of these resources.

Foundational Pillars

Equity - Universal approaches do not yield universal outcomes. Students with developmental disabilities are at increased risk for developing mental health problems throughout their lives. Studies indicate that people with developmental disabilities are three to six times more likely to develop a mental health disorder than other people, and mood and anxiety disorders are particularly prevalent amongst students. Access to MH supports for these students are limited, but early intervention can be pivotal to their mental wellness.

Evidence - SMHO and the other professional organizations all deliver content and resources that contain evidence-based information and practices from experts in their respective fields.

Areas of Focus

- Mental Health & Substance Use Knowledge/Support for students and families (lesson plans, classroom programming and supplementary resources for caregivers).
- Equip and Support Staff (professional learning tailored to specific student needs and specific roles).
- Reinforce awareness of and access to LDSB referral processes and pathways, including circle of support.

School Mental Health Ontario (SMHO)

School Mental Health Ontario has made some movement in the area of hosting a series of virtual professional learning sessions for school support staff, including a session on Special Education Considerations in Mental Health Promotion. This opportunity was available for all Student Support Counselors (SSC) and Adolescent Care Workers (ACW) to attend.

SMHO has also produced two new Information Sheets - Mental Health Promotion at School: Classroom Considerations (which came out of the webinar) and Communication Strategies to Support the Mental Health of Students with Special Education Needs. Both resources have been shared with all Educational Services staff in our weekly updates produced by Vice Principal Jen Grasse. The latter of the two resources may be found on the SMHO website and focuses on key communication strategies to help promote inclusion in mentally healthy learning environments:

<https://smho-smso.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/MH-Promotion-at-School-Special-Education-Considerations.pdf>

Almost all SSCs (except for recent hires) have been trained in the delivery of *Kids Have Stress Too!* Curriculum for Grades 1-3 and 4-6, produced by Psychology Canada. This curriculum focuses on stress regulation and stress management skills and strategies. This can also be delivered or co-delivered by classroom teachers. SMHO has supported the training and delivery of this curriculum and developed a tip sheet for those delivering the programming which focuses on Special Education Considerations.

Sonderly Training – Foundations of Mental Health in the Classroom

The Foundations of Mental Health in the Classroom training through Sonderly is a 4-hour online course that offers an introduction to mental health in the classroom and provides practical ways to integrate evidence-based practices, such as social-emotional learning, mindfulness, meditation, and active listening into classrooms to facilitate mental well-being for both students and educators. This course provides a foundation for educators to better position themselves to understand their students' mental health challenges, and to empower themselves to provide compassion and supports using practical resources and techniques in their classroom. Two of our educators are taking advantage of this self-paced, voluntary learning opportunity, which is funded through LDSB.

Professional Learning with School to Community Educators

On April 7, Special Education Coordinator Hugh Box and Mental Health Lead Laura Conboy had the opportunity to bring together 10-15 School to Community teachers and support staff for a day of professional learning.

safeTalk – A 3-hour training with content produced by LivingWorks (based out of Calgary), focuses on learning on how to prevent suicide by recognizing signs, engaging someone, and connecting them to an intervention resource for further support. This training was delivered by one of our SSC/ACs and participants received certification.

MH LIT for Students: Student Mental Health in Action materials are available on the SMHO website. Students with learning disabilities may be at greater risk for mental health problems including ADHD, anxiety, mood disorders, and interpersonal problems. Good teaching practices and classroom accommodations to support students when they are presenting with feelings, thoughts, and behaviours that are interfering with learning can be an important protective factor and help bolster their skills toward success.

Student Mental Health in Action is a series of four 30-45-minute lessons focusing on mental health and mental illness, signs of mental health problems, strategies to support mental health and well-being, and how/where to access help for the student and their friends, when needed. The module provides additional supportive materials and extension activities. Supportive resources include: School Readiness Checklist, School Leaders Implementation Guide, Educator Preparation Suggestions, Parent/Caregiver Handouts. Seven educators expressed their interest in a potentially piloting this in their classrooms next year.

Developmental Disabilities Consulting Program (DDCP)

Meg McQueen, Clinical Director of Developmental Disabilities Consulting Program (DDCP) provided an overview of services for each of the respective agencies which are now housed under the same roof. Educators also had an opportunity for Q & A. This was an extremely well-received piece of the day.

Sexual Health Resources

Clinical Consultant Dr Petra McDowell and Special Education Coordinator Hugh Box shared information regarding sexual health education and resources for secondary students with IDs, including the importance of normalizing sexuality, particularly amongst our secondary School to Community Students, and the importance of consent being freely given, reversible, informed, enthusiastic, and specific. Dr McDowell and Hugh Box not only provided information, but they also shared online resources and Public Health teaching tools available for educators to access.

Brief Intervention for School Clinicians (BRISC) Training for Clinical Consultants

BRISC is a Tier 2 intervention for Grades 7-12 students, developed to fit the school context and align with the scope of School Mental Health Services. BRISC engages students and triages mental health needs through four individually focussed sessions. Most often used with students struggling with anxiety or mood. Five of our Registered Psychologists attended this training at the end of March and five Social Workers have also attended this training.

The BRISC Training includes the following:

- Compliments Brief Intervention model.
- Tier 2 intervention that engages secondary students and triages mental health needs through four individually focused sessions.
- Clinicians and students assess, identify, and address difficulties that cause students distress and impact their academic, behavioural/social, and overall function.
- Students learn how to resolve challenges they have control over and identify ways to cope with challenges outside their control.

Chair McGregor called upon SEAC Members for questions regarding Supporting Mental Wellness Amongst Students with Special Education Needs.

7. CORRESPONDENCE

7.1 York Catholic District School Board – Letter to Minister of Education and Minister of Health regarding the nursing shortage, dated April 5, 2022. Provided for information.

7.2 York Catholic District School Board – Letter to Minister of Education regarding the Special Incident Portion Claim Funding, dated April 5, 2022. Provided for information.

8. ASSOCIATION UPDATES

Easter Seals Ontario Scholarship Program for 2022

The Easter Seals Ontario Scholarship Program for 2022 is now open and accepting applications until April 29, 2022. Easter Seals Ontario is a 100-year-old charitable organization that provides life-changing programs and services to children, youth, and young adults with physical disabilities in Ontario.

Each year we offer a number of scholarships to help students with physical disabilities achieve their dreams of post-secondary education. The full list of scholarships offered through our Scholarship Program can be viewed at the website provided below. Please note that, to be considered eligible, applicants must have a physical disability that impacts their mobility. More information can be found in the attached letter and at: <https://services.easterseals.org/other-programs/scholarships/>.

As our goal is to make our scholarships available to as many students as possible, we would greatly appreciate your help in circulating this information to any students or parents in your network who may benefit from this program. Please consider sharing the information in the attached letter.

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

9.1 Ministry Updates:

Ministry of Education Update

The Ontario government is supporting students with special education needs, along with their parents, through new investments and partnerships that will help them succeed in the classroom. The investments are part of the government’s overall plan to support learning recovery and renewal and address the impacts of learning disruptions during the COVID-19 pandemic.

As part of the government’s Priorities and Partnerships Funding (PPF) COVID-19 Equity Supports, Ontario’s new investments in special education include:

- \$150,000 to [Down Syndrome Association of Ontario](#) (DSAO) to create digital and print content that supports parents, guardians and caregivers as their child with Down syndrome transitions through the school system
- \$100,000 to [Child Development Institute](#) (CDI) to implement the Stop Now And Plan (SNAP) Program and the Early Assessment Risk List (EARL) framework for children with behavioural issues, and in support of their families. SNAP teaches children effective emotion regulation, self-control and problem-solving skills, and techniques
- \$25,000 to [Children at Risk](#) for programs for children with autism to help develop their behavioural, communications and social skills.

9.2 Educational Services SEAC Update:

World Autism Day

While World Autism Day took place on Saturday, April 2, 2022, many classrooms across Limestone celebrated Autism Day throughout the week following this Saturday. The ABC class at JG Simcoe created tie-dye shirts and had an amazing outdoor performance and students in Rob Kay’s DAC shared how they made their classroom and school inclusive and neurodiverse. Many other classrooms across the district, both in elementary and secondary, also provided examples of celebrating Autism Day in their Twitter feeds.

Life Beyond High School

Life Beyond School is a wonderful information sharing meeting that has been held for many years, organized by Donna Abbink, LDSB Transition Coordinator. Life Beyond School is open to our wider Limestone Community, especially for graduating students and families of students who are contemplating graduation from high school or who are about to graduate.

SST/LPS Course

There were 27 participants who completed this year's SST/LPS course. This included nine participants who were new to the role. We also had four Secondary participants, including one from Secondary Virtual School, as well as the Elementary Virtual School SST. This course is instrumental in providing the knowledge and skills to successfully support special education at both the elementary and secondary level. A huge thanks to Cheryl Snider and the rest of the team at Educational Services for supporting this invaluable professional development.

Trauma-Informed Training

Trauma-informed training took place with ESL Instructors on March 24 and April 21. There was also a half-day meeting with Student Success Staff and ESL Instructors, focusing on students with a presenting mental health issue. Eleven staff and two teacher candidates were present.

Transition to Kindergarten (T2K) Update

K-12 Special Education Program Coordinator, Transition to Kindergarten Lead, Cheryl Snider, began the T2K Update stating that the T2K Transition Team is beginning to reach out to families and schools to prepare and welcome all our youngest learners to kindergarten.

The goal of this presentation is to provide a general overview of the Transition to Kindergarten process and timeline, and to communicate specific information regarding the number of transitions for 2022 and highlight the key priorities.

The Transition to Kindergarten process is a partnership between Algonquin and Lakeshore Catholic District School Board, KidsInclusive, Community Living Kingston, Early Expressions, and Maltby Centre.

The Transition to Kindergarten is a year-long process; the timeline is outlined below:

- **October-November:** Committee Members meet to review the T2K process and parent/family feedback.
- **December:** Review the T2K Website and invite feedback and contributions; confirm presentations and parent panel for the Parent & Family Workshop in March.
- **January:** Review and update feedback survey
- **February:** Final preparations for the Parent & Family Workshop.
- **March:** Parent & Family Workshop; begin receiving student information forms; master list is compiled, and general transition information communicated to schools.
- **April:** Specific student information is communicated to schools. LDSB Team begins reaching out to families, community partners, and schools.
- **April-June:** Transition Meetings.

Transitions 2022

- Board Level Transitions: 43
- School Level Transitions: 27
- Total: 70

A Board Level Transition means that a member of our community partners indicated on the transition form that it might be a more complex need involved with the student and it would be beneficial for a member of our team to be part of the transition meeting. In these cases, our team takes the lead on the transition meeting.

A School Level Transition means that a member of our community partners indicated on the transition form that a school level transition meeting would be sufficient. This meeting would involve members from the school team and any community partners listed on the form.

Key Priorities

- The importance/value of transitions
- Lead assigned (coordination, facilitation, documentation, communication)
- Student centered – everyone at table
- Parent and family voice (first point of contact)
- Inclusion of community partner voices and advocates
- Using the transition profile form and 6Fs Framework (Function, Family, Fun, Friends, Future) for gathering information
- Formulating a plan that includes the transfer of information back to the school team

Chair McGregor called upon SEAC Members for questions.

10. NEXT MEETING DATE

Tuesday, May 17, 2022

Prior to calling for a motion to adjourn, Chair McGregor shared that Nadine Carson from Epilepsy South Eastern Ontario has resigned from her position on SEAC. SEAC would like to thank Nadine for her many years of service and advocacy on behalf of all students with exceptionalities in LDSB. Nadine's expertise will be missed.

11. ADJOURNMENT

MOVED BY: Trustee Godkin that the meeting adjourn.

The meeting adjourned at 6:24 pm.



UPPER GRAND DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Carrie Proudfoot

Chair, Special Education Advisory Committee

Board Office: 500 Victoria Road N. Guelph, ON N1E 6K2

Email: SEAC@ugdsb.on.ca

February 9, 2022

Ms. Nancy Naylor
Deputy Minister of Education
5th Floor, 438 University Ave, Toronto, ON
M7A 2A5
EDU.DMO@ontario.ca

Dr. Catherine Zahn
Deputy Minister of Health
College Park 5th Floor, 777 Bay St,
Toronto, ON
M7A 2J3
Catherine.Zahn@ontario.ca

Ms. Denise Cole
Deputy Minister of Children, Community and Social Services
7th Floor, 438 University Ave, Toronto, ON M5G 2K8
denise.a.cole@ontario.ca

RE: Policy/Program Memorandum No. 81, Provision of Health Support Services in School Settings in 2021-22: New Expectations

Dear Deputy Ministers,

The Upper Grand District School Board (UGDSB) Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) was pleased to learn of the memorandum sent October 29, 2021 to Directors of Education announcing the joint review of PPM 81. In particular, the unification of speech and language services is of interest to parents within our school board. As you mentioned in the memorandum, school boards (staff and parents) have long identified the division of these services as detrimental to the support and development of our children.

As parents, we feel we are important stakeholders in this process. We encourage you to ensure parents from SEACs across the province are included in the consultation process as this review moves forward. At the UGDSB, we support the goal of integrated delivery of speech and language services for Ontario school children under the direction and leadership of district school boards.

The UGDSB, like many Ontario District School Boards, has a long history of delivering speech-language pathology services to promote student well-being and achievement. Our UGDSB employed speech-language pathologists work alongside parents and educators to support the development of communication skills for students with diverse needs. The work of the UGDSB SLPs is responsive to the needs of school communities and aligned with system priorities. The UGDSB has invested in supporting

...2

Upper Grand District School Board

- | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------|------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| • Linda Busuttill; Chair | • Mark Bailey | • Jolly Bedi | • Gail Campbell | • Jen Edwards |
| • Barbara Lustgarten Evoy; Vice-Chair | • Mike Foley | • Martha MacNeil | • Robin Ross | • Lynn Topping |

a tiered model of speech-language pathology services and we have seen the benefit of educator-SLP collaborations for children and families with special needs. SLPs employed by the UGDSB are able to build relationships with school staff and families in a way that SLPs at external agencies cannot.

The UGDSB SEAC supports a comprehensive mandate for school board SLPs to deliver the full range of communication services for children with diverse needs, and their families, from kindergarten entry to school exit. In addition to existing assessment, consultation and intervention for oral language, augmentative and alternative communication, literacy, and social communication, school board employed SLPs should acquire responsibility for the provision of speech services. School board employed SLPs are uniquely and best positioned to deliver unified services integrated within educational frameworks including Learning For All and School Board Equity and Improvement Plans. The proposed expansion of speech-language pathology services within district school boards will require contemporary funding structures. Fortunately, the existing infrastructure of speech-language pathology departments within school boards will offset the current expense of managing two community agency speech and language departments, ErinOakKids and KidsAbility Childrens Treatment Centres, and Communication, Language and Speech Services at the UGDSB. Historically, there has been no alignment between ministries in funding for speech-language pathology services. For example, it is noted that at our Board, our local Children's Treatment Centres ErinOakKids and KidsAbility, recently changed their discharge criteria for their preschool speech and language program such that they no longer provide services to students in year 1 kindergarten, yet no funding was transferred to the school board who has had to expand their services to accommodate additional children needing support.

Overall, we request consideration of the following recommendations:

- Include SEAC representatives during the consultation process both provincially and during the development of local solutions required.
- Consolidate funding for the delivery of speech-language pathology services to school-age children under the direction of the Ministry of Education. A single funder will promote more equitable and inclusive services, with greater access for all children with diverse needs. It will reduce service fragmentation, eliminate gaps and duplications, and create seamless transition points. It will also permit more coherent goal setting for participation at school, home and in the community. Moreover, a single funder will facilitate more transparent and accountable processes and service efficiencies.
- Maintain the current investment by Ontario District School Boards in the delivery of speech-language pathology services. Encourage school boards to continue to use Grants for Student Needs and Special Education Grants to fund existing services with flexibility to respond to local student, community and system needs.
- Flow additional funding directly to the Ontario District School Boards to enhance SLP services, unifying delivery of speech and language interventions. Within the funding transfer, acknowledge the gap created when Preschool Speech and Language Services for kindergarten-age children were discontinued and school boards absorbed the abandoned speech and language caseload.

Upper Grand District School Board

• Linda Busuttil; Chair
• Barbara Lustgarten Evoy; Vice-Chair

• Mark Bailey
• Mike Foley

• Jolly Bedi
• Martha MacNeil

• Gail Campbell
• Robin Ross

• Jen Edwards
• Lynn Topping

- Create an accountability tool to capture detailed data about the delivery of services to children and families, stratified by tier, using frameworks that are appropriate to the education context. Use the accountability tool to refine service delivery targets and amend funding and infrastructure processes as necessary.

With sincere gratitude for your continued support of our children during their school years.

Carrie Proudfoot

Carrie Proudfoot, Chair
SEAC, UGDSB

cc: Chair of Special Education Advisory Committees
Supervisory Officers (Special Education)
Executive Director, Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association (OCSTA)
Executive Director, Council of Ontario Directors of Education (CODE)
General Secretary, Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association (OECTA)
Co-ordinator, Canadian Union of Public Employees – Ontario (CUPE-ON)
Executive Director, Catholic Principals' Council of Ontario (CPCO)
Chair, Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education
President, Association of Professional Student Service Professionals (APSSP)
President, Ontario Association for Families of Children with Communication Disorders

Upper Grand District School Board

• Linda Busuttil; Chair
• Barbara Lustgarten Evoy; Vice-Chair

• Mark Bailey
• Mike Foley

• Jolly Bedi
• Martha MacNeil

• Gail Campbell
• Robin Ross

• Jen Edwards
• Lynn Topping

April 13, 2022

Honorable Stephen Lecce
Minister of Education
Mowat Block, 900 Bay Street
Toronto, ON M7A 1L2

RECEIVED
Limestone District School Board

APR 28 2022

Scot Gillam

Dear Minister Lecce,

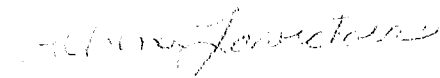
The Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) of Near North District School Board (NNDSB) would like to send this letter of support for the concerns expressed by the Algoma District School Board, Durham District School Board, Waterloo District School Board and Renfrew County Catholic District School Board regarding providing on-line learning resources and the platforms used to access these resources.

The NNDSB SEAC members are committed to the equity and well-being of all students and therefore wish to express similar concerns as expressed by the above-named boards to ensure equitable access to these resources. As was noted by Renfrew County, many students in more rural settings do not have convenient access to wireless connections so would need all online courses, platforms and links to related resources be enabled, consistently maintained and meet accessibility standards.

All resources both in-person and on-line should adhere to the concept of universal design and equitable access in order to meet the needs of all students, especially students with special education needs.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this matter,

Sincerely,



Albina Lavictoire

Chair, Special Education Advisory Committee
Near North District School Board

CC: Board Chair Aspin, NNDSB Board of Trustees
Chairs of all Ontario Special Education Advisory Committees



Small Schools Make a Difference

April 29, 2022

Honourable Stephen Lecce
Minister of Education
Mowat Block, 900 Bay Street
Toronto, ON M7A 1L2
Stephen.lecce@pc.ola.org

Dear Minister Lecce,

The Special Education Advisory Committee of the Superior-Greenstone District School Board would like to sincerely thank you for the leadership that has been provided to ensure the safety of all students in the province of Ontario, during the COVID-19 pandemic. We recognize the challenge that resulted from this pandemic but also the opportunities to enhance our current practices based upon our learning. One area in particular that we would like to draw your attention to are the benefits that have been realized, for our committee, based upon the regulatory amendment made to Regulation 463/97: Electronic Meetings and Meeting Attendance.

SGDSB is one of the largest school boards in Ontario geographically, as it is comprised of 15 schools dispersed throughout 45,100 square kms. SEAC meetings have been completely virtual for the past two years, without challenge. The transition to purely virtual meetings was a smooth one, due to the experience with some hybrid meetings in the past.

During the global pandemic, our committee has recognized that engagement in SEAC meetings has increased. Additional members have been recruited, attributed to the fact that travel was not required to participate fully. The rate of quorum achievement has improved from an average of five meetings per year to eight meetings per year. ***The SEAC is consequently requesting that consideration be given to making Regulation 632/20 a permanent amendment, and continuing to allow all meetings to occur virtually and to eliminate the requirement for the Director of Education/designate and the Chair to be physically present in the same room for all meeting, regardless of distance, weather, or health.***

In addition to the information mentioned above, SEAC would like to highlight that requiring our members to be physically present (or any number of meetings) in the designated meeting room, including our Director of Education and the Chair of the committee, is a barrier to involvement, and is deemed to be an issue of equity.

The foundations of this equity issue are contextual in nature resulting from the unique nature of infrastructure in Northwestern Ontario. SGDSB is one of the largest school boards geographically in the province, a fact that we are proud of.

Regulation 463/97, in its entirety, presents the following barriers to membership:

1. Travel – Travel over 144 000 sq. kilometers, via 4 secondary highways and primarily single/undivided highways increases the risks associated with travel. These highways are heavily populated by transports. Winter travel begins in late October and does not end until May. Public transportation does not exist in/between any communities; thus, the regulation requires members to have a vehicle and license.
2. Distance – Participants, but notably the Director of Education/designate and the Chair, are expected to travel significant distances (up to 314 kms via Highway 17 and 266 kms via Highway 11, that can take up to four hours one way, assuming that the designated meeting location and the home community of the member are not at opposite ends of the school board) for at least half of all meetings.
3. Work Commitments – For volunteer committee members, the additional time off work for travel, in many cases, the day prior and the day following a meeting, would negatively impact their ability to earn a living, in addition to the quality of their family life.

Potential candidates may refrain from submitting their names for the committee due to safety concerns associated with travel or inability to travel, conflicts with current employment, family responsibilities, requirement to be away from home overnight due to distances, etc. The requirements to be in the same room may inhibit candidates from running for the position of chair, and result in additional costs to public taxpayers. It must be remembered that, while our geography is vast, our population is fewer than 15 000 people throughout the board, thus significantly reducing the number of potential candidates.

We would strongly encourage the Minister to consider making the virtual meeting requirements reflected in Regulatory Amendment 632/20 permanent. In addition to the equity considerations made above, we encourage the Minister to consider the environmental impact of this regulation, and to not dismiss the advances made to using technology as a communication tool, which is at the core of our operations. All team members regularly utilize technology to connect and collaborate. Technology

is how we stay connected, build relationships and ensure belonging, over vast distances.

We would be happy to meet with you or a member of your ministry to expand on any aspects of this letter. Thank you for your consideration and we look forward to hearing from you.

Yours in education,

Original Signed by

Brandy Brake-Weldon
Chair, SEAC

Sheila Zappitelli
Vice-Chair, SEAC

cc. Nicole Morden Cormier, Director of Education
Pinky McRae, Chair, SGDSB
Ontario District School Boards SEAC



ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT: SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

05/17/2022

9.1 Ministry Updates

Ministry of Education Update:

Ministry updates covered under Superintendent Young and Financial Services Manager Paula Carson's budget presentation.

In anticipation of the June election, we expect no further communication from the Ministry.

9.2 Educational Services SEAC Update:

Special Education Co-ordinator Updates

First and foremost, we would like to thank and wish Hugh Box all the best in his retirement. Hugh has served students with special education needs for his entire career and most recently as the Special Education Coordinator for both the School to Community Team and the Autism Team. We wish Hugh all the best in the next chapter of his life. The successful candidate for Hugh's position as Coordinator – Autism Team was Tagget Bonham-Carter who has been filling this position while Hugh was supporting the School to Community team. Tagget will be on leave for the 2022/23 school year and Ash Ward will be filling this position for the year. We are also very pleased to welcome back Tiiu to her role as Special Education Coordinator – School to Community team in September.

Mental Health Week (May 2-6, 2022)

During May 2-8, 2022, Limestone recognized the Canadian Mental Health Association's Mental Health Week. As in years past, a package of materials was sent to Limestone schools to support teachers and support staff during the week. This year's themes included:

- Monday - Physical Self-Care
- Tuesday - Emotional Self-Care
- Wednesday - Social Self-Care
- Thursday - Spiritual Self-Care
- Friday - Helping a friend

A big thanks to Laura Conboy, Mental Health Lead, Educational Services Leadership and the Committee for supporting such an important week.

Entry to School Program and Partnership

The Ministry of Education has provided funding to support the entry to school process for students with ASD. This is a partnership with a lead agency in our area (ACT Learning/Stride Academy). The Entry to School program provides six months of support to students through small group sessions at Stride Academy prior to school, and then six months of follow-up support and consultation with in-school teams when the student begins school.

Lexia Pilot Project

During the 2021-22 school year Educational Services has supported a pilot project focused on an on-line reading intervention program - Lexia. The pilot targeted students in our District programs (DLC, DAC, LD and ECPP) who have experienced reading fluency challenges. The implementation team is meeting with all program teachers at the end of May to gather feedback, explore future opportunities for implementation and to examine data related to program efficacy.

EA Allocation process

The EA allocation process has begun for the 2022-23 school. All elementary and secondary schools have been informed of their base EA allocation for next year and are in the process of meeting with their in-school teams to reflect on student needs and develop support plans for next year. Schools have developed a Special Education School Profile to inform and monitor this important work. This year we increased our base EA allocation from 317.5 to 325.

Special Education Support Teacher - De-streaming and UDL

Our Special Education Support Teacher (Lisa Rose-Hartwick) has been very busy working alongside secondary LPS and Grade 9 teachers in the areas of de-streaming supports and Universal Design for Learning. Within a coaching model Lisa is supporting educators to gather diagnostic data, examine student profiles, and explore instructional and assessment approaches. This work has occurred at NDSS, LaSalle and KLC and is now beginning at BSS and NAEC. We will learn a great deal from this collaborative work and look forward to sharing with LPS and grade 9 teachers next Fall and key learning with SEAC.

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