



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.