

SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

November 6, 2024

Public Meeting

Roll Call:

Trustees:	Members:
T. Lloyd K. McGregor	<p>Present:</p> <p>H. Clark, Autism Ontario E. Clow, Member-at-Large A. Martin, Member-at-Large (Queen’s University) Z. Rogers, Community Living Kingston J. Barker, Lennox & Addington Resources for Children L. Clouthier, Easter Seals Ontario C. Lord, Epilepsy South Eastern Ontario K. Hill, Member-at-Large</p> <p>Regrets:</p> <p>H. Simson, Learning Disabilities Association of Kingston</p>
Invitees:	Staff:
	<p>Present:</p> <p>A. McDonnell, Superintendent of Curriculum and Program Services M. Blackburn, Principal of Educational Services C. Snider, Special Education Program Coordinator M. Aylsworth, Special Education Program Coordinator M. West, Special Education Program Coordinator L. Conboy, Mental Health Lead W. Fisher, Educational Services and Safe Schools Coordinator J. Lalonde, Special Education Program Coordinator N. Dillard, Vice-Principal of Educational Services T. Bonham-Carter, Special Education Program Coordinator</p> <p>Regrets:</p> <p>S. Gillam, Superintendent of Education, Learning for All</p>
Guests:	Recorder:
None at this time.	J. Senior, Administrative Assistant

Limestone District School Board

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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 Lloyd that the agenda be approved. Carried.

3. DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None at this time.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOVED BY: Erin Clow that the October 16, 2024, IEC Minutes be approved. Carried.

5. BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES

5.1 SEAC Letter to the Ontario College of Teachers – A motion was brought forth at the October 16, 2024, SEAC Meeting: That SEAC send a letter to the Ontario College of Teachers, with copies to the Minister of Education and the Minister of Colleges and Universities, requesting an update to the curriculum in Ontario’s Teacher’s Colleges to better meet the diverse needs of students with special education requirements. This motion was moved by all SEAC Members. The letter was written and included in the November 16, 2024, Meeting Agenda Package for review by SEAC Members. It was reviewed, and the word “standardized” was asked to be removed. The Committee approved this removal. The letter will be revised and sent out to the College of Teachers, and carbon copied to all Ontario School Board SEAC Committees and OPSBA, in addition to the Minister of Education and the Minister of Colleges and Universities.

6. EDUCATION SERVICES UPDATE

6.1 Intensive Support Teacher (IST) Role and Restructuring Update – Principal Michael Blackburn, Vice Principal Nicola Dillard, Educational Services Special Education Coordinators: Jessi Lalonde, Melissa West, Matt Aylsworth, Cheryl Snider, and Taggett Bonham-Carter delivered a comprehensive presentation on the Intensive Support Teacher (IST) Role and Restructuring Update. The key points of the presentation are summarized below.

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Special Education Delivery Model Update – The Role of the Intensive Support Teacher (IST)

- Flexible, Responsive, and Inclusive:
 - 28 Intensive Support Teachers (ISTs) across 24 schools in the LDSB.
 - ISTs support students with complex special education needs, including social, emotional, self-regulation, and learning needs.
 - They work within a tiered service delivery model to support student inclusion and success in regular classrooms.
 - ISTs provide direct support, programming, intervention, and consultation, collaborating with classroom teams (Teachers, Educational Assistants, Early Childhood Educators).

Collective Vision

We aim to create a safe, inclusive, and barrier-free community where everyone feels empowered and connected. Our responsive and accessible space fosters collaboration and inclusion. We provide flexible supports and work with educators to ensure student success through strength-based programming.

Development of Supportive and Inclusive Spaces

The initiative began in June with a collaborative effort to design and map out supportive and inclusive spaces across the system. This involved understanding the needs of students and identifying universal supports that would benefit all students, particularly those requiring regulation support, sensory time, or focused learning time.

The design process included providing a menu of possible items for these spaces, considering what could be achieved without financial barriers. Assistance with purchasing was also provided to help set up these spaces.

As students and teachers began using these spaces, they evolved based on the needs and feedback from the school community. This included adding new equipment, moving items around, and continuously adapting to meet the needs of students. The goal is to create dynamic and responsive environments that reflect the vision of supportive and inclusive spaces.

Professional Learning and Capacity Building

One of the key components of supporting changes in service delivery is the acknowledgment that capacity building is necessary across the entire system. This year, the focus has been on enabling the skills and capacity of intensive support teachers and other special education team members to impact classroom practice and school communities.

The journey of learning, collaboration, and capacity building began in June with the development of a vision and philosophy for ISTs. Monthly meetings have been held to share knowledge, successful approaches, and strategies for supporting students. These meetings also address barriers encountered in implementing the new model and develop collaborative strategies to overcome them.

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Professional learning sessions have covered various topics, including communication supports for students, alternative curriculum development, technology, executive functions, and relationship-based approaches. Feedback from ISTs drives the professional learning plan, ensuring it is centered on student needs.

Special Education Coordinators provide ongoing support and coaching to ISTs, attending school meetings and offering advice. The Intensive Support Team has been actively supporting classroom spaces, providing knowledge through Student Support Counselors, Board Certified Behaviour Analysts, and Speech-language Pathologists.

Targeted Context

During our October meeting, groups of ISTs worked on identifying the Tiers of Support in their buildings and pinpointing any gaps. They engaged in activities to determine who they were supporting, how it fit into the tiered model, and areas that needed further exploration or implementation. The goal was to ensure support at all three tiers for students in the school.

One of the resources explored was focused on intentional inclusion planning called the Place Alignment Planner. ISTs identified students and explored spaces for successful integration, aiming for purposeful planning to ensure students' success in regular classrooms.

To support these initiatives, significant resources and funding were allocated to create inclusive and supportive environments in schools. This included providing funding to all schools to start up and develop these environments.

Resources and Funding

To support the changes and ongoing implementation of the new model, significant resources and funding were allocated. Funding was provided to all schools to create inclusive and supportive environments, with a flexible budget to work within. Schools were also allocated funds to purchase universally accessible equipment to support students, which could be used by ISTs and all students within the school.

A bulk purchase of sensory equipment was made to meet the needs of students, including sensory pathways and various fidgets. The board committed a significant amount of time and resources, with 28 staff members meeting for a full day regularly. Resources were also purchased for teachers, such as the Third Path resource for relationship-based approaches and technology supports like LessonPix and Book Creator. These resources are shared with regular classroom teachers and the greater school team, ensuring the prioritization of resources and funding is crucial for the restructuring process.

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Monitoring: Impact, Successes and Barriers

The Monitoring Plan includes gathering both qualitative and quantitative data to assess the impact of the new model. Special Education Teachers and ISTs are provided time to collect information on who is being served, their exceptionalities, and the type of support provided. This data is collated periodically to get a comprehensive view of the support being offered and the grades of the students involved.

Each meeting includes a Barriers and Strategies Protocol, where educators identify and discuss the biggest barriers they face and develop collaborative strategies to overcome them. This feedback is crucial for understanding challenges and refining the support plan.

Teachers are also asked to provide feedback on what they need to learn more about and what areas they would like to explore further. This feedback helps shape the Professional Learning Plan and ensures it is aligned with the needs of the students and educators.

7. CORRESPONDENCE

None at this time.

8. ASSOCIATION UPDATES

None at this time.

9. OTHER BUSINESS

9.1 Administrative Report: Superintendent's Report – Superintendent Alison McDonnell reviewed the Superintendent's Report that was included in the Agenda Package.

10. NEXT MEETING DATE

December 11, 2024

11. ADJOURNMENT

MOVED BY: Trustee Lloyd, that the meeting adjourn. Carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:21 pm.