

Upper Grand District School Board
Special Education Advisory Committee

Minutes

Wednesday, September 8, 2021

The Special Education Advisory Committee of the Upper Grand District School Board met on Wednesday, September 8, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. in the MS Teams virtual meeting platform.

The following Association Members were in attendance: Jason Offer, Association for Bright Children-ABC; Michelle Barrett, OPVIC/IEWS (Ontario Parents for Visually Impaired Children) (Alternate); Kelsey Noseworthy, VOICE for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children (Alternate); Renná Bruce Paonne, Learning Disabilities Association of Wellington County;); Danielle Richer, FASworld Canada (Alternate); Laurie Whyte, FASworld Canada; Stacey Stevens, VOICE for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children; Shelley Marks, OPVIC/IEWS (Ontario Parents for Visually Impaired Children); Don Richardson; Inclusion Action in Ontario

Present from staff were: Tracey Lindsay, Superintendent of Program; Wendy Donaldson, Assistant to the Superintendent of Program; Peter Sovran, Director; Rochelle Murray-Cako, Elementary Principal; Brent Bloch, Secondary Principal;

Trustees present: Jennifer Edwards

Regrets: Carrie Proudfoot, Autism Ontario-Wellington County; Robin Ross, Trustee

Absent: Mandi Naismith, Autism Ontario-Wellington County (Alternate); Denise Helm, Canadian Mental Health Association Wellington Waterloo

Jason Office, Vice-Chair greeted the committee and gave the traditional greeting.

Tracey Lindsay, Superintendent of Program, welcomed Peter Sovran, the new Director, who started his new role on September 1. Peter Sovran thanked Tracey Lindsay and Jason Offer and commented that he was excited to be here now in his official capacity as Director.

Tracey Lindsay introduced Rochelle Murray-Cako, Elementary Principal, William C. Winegard P.S. and Brent Bloch, Secondary Principal, Wellington Heights S.S. who are the new principal representatives on SEAC this year.

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Approval of the Agenda of September 8, 2021

Laurie Whyte moved that the agenda of September 8, 2021 be approved. Stacey Stevens seconded the motion.

The motion carried.

Approval of the Minutes of June 9, 2021

Danielle Richer moved that the minutes of June 9, 2021 be approved. Laurie Whyte seconded the motion.

The motion carried.

Action Items

No action items pending from last year.

Tracey Lindsay welcomed everyone back to SEAC and commented that she was happy to see so many students going to school.

Correspondence

1. Letter dated March 30, 2021, addressed to the Honourable Stephen Lecce, Minister of Education, from Pat Mick, Chair, Special Education Advisory Committee, Algoma District School Board, expressing their support of the Durham District School Board SEAC's letter of February 9, 2021, in regard to On-Line Learning Supports and Universal Design for Learning in provincial on-line learning resources, and the platforms used to access these resources.
2. Letter dated June 16, 2021, addressed to the Honourable Stephen Lecce, Minister of Education, from B. Agnew, Chair and M. Lourenco, Vice-Chair of the Halton Catholic District School Board, asking the Ministry to acknowledge their support for Bill 172 which will help their students and educators experience success in their classrooms and improve their overall wellbeing.

Correspondence was discussed and no action is required at this time.

Open Forum – Best Practice and Good News

Don Richardson, Integration Action for Inclusion in Education and Community (Ontario) – Organization has a new name after 30 years – rebranded to Inclusion Action in Ontario. Their new website is: www.inclusionactionontario.ca which has more resources, media information, etc. Organization is actively recruiting members for involvement with SEACs across Ontario.

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Laurie Whyte, FASword Canada – tomorrow (September 9) is International Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Day which is celebrated across the world now. In Guelph, Wellington and Dufferin County, a number of information displays have been placed in offices, agencies, including UGDSB Board offices and small businesses. Everyone is encouraged to wear red and take pictures and post it on social media – #FASD or #DWGFASD (specific to our area). Anyone that posts will be eligible for a draw to win prizes. They have successfully had the City of Guelph turn Market Square red tomorrow. People are welcome to say hello, as this is not an official gathering, but a way to celebrate our community.

Shelley Marks, OPVIC/VIEWS (Ontario Parents of Visually Impaired Children) - September 15th - 8 p.m. - CNIB/OPVIC Parent Resource Zoom Meeting - YELL! CNIB Youth Advocacy

Policy Review Update

Tracey Lindsay noted that there are two policies currently under review and out for public consultation:

Policy 205 – School Volunteers and Policy 508 - Educational Field Trips and Off-site Activities

<https://www.ugdsb.ca/board/policy/policy-205-volunteers/>

<https://www.ugdsb.ca/board/policy/policy-508-educational-field-trips/>

The deadline is October 14, 2021. Please provide your feedback on the Board website.

School Re-Opening Update

Tracey Lindsay introduced all the presenters (Denise Heaslip, Superintendent of Education; Dee Pyke, Human Resources Executive Officer; Nancy Culham, Manager of Health and Safety; Carlo Zen, Superintendent of Operations; Glen Regier, Superintendent of Finance; Brent McDonald, Executive Superintendent; Pat Hamilton, Superintendent of Education) that collaborated with this large presentation. She added that SEAC will have an opportunity to ask questions after each section.

Denise Heaslip, Superintendent of Education greeted SEAC and added that everyone is excited to be heading back to the new school year. In-person learning is something that many staff, students and families have really been waiting for and looking forward to. Being in-person is quite important and valuable for many of our students.

This presentation was shared with Trustees at the Board meeting last week.

The Re-Opening Guide that was shared a few weeks ago is posted on the board website for reference about details or questions of operational things within schools. The report tonight covers three main topics; Case Management and Vaccinations

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(related to Public Health and their processes); Ventilation in schools and School Operations.

Denise Heaslip began her presentation by explaining the Guiding Principles for Return to School. She explained the daily screening requirements for COVID-19 symptoms and the protocols for symptomatic students and confirmed positive cases.

Vaccinations are the responsibility of the local public health departments. School boards are required to provide spaces for Public Health to host vaccination clinics.

Deidre Pyke, Human Resources Executive Officer, explained the COVID-19 Immunization Disclosure Policy and Testing Requirements with the specific deadline dates.

Nancy Culham, Manager of Health and Safety, provided details of the safety protocols for school sites regarding hygiene and cleaning.

Carlo Zen, Superintendent of Operations, explained the various ventilation measures that are being done throughout schools. Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) Testing will be done on a regular basis throughout the year to measure CO₂ levels.

The Ministry is launching a standardized ventilation measures report for the 2021-2022 school year. The report for public posting will include information related to: school board ventilation strategy; school board ventilation investments; and school-level ventilation and filtration measures.

Tracey Lindsay, Superintendent of Program, on behalf of Glen Regier, Superintendent of Finance, provided an update to the Transportation safety protocols for school purpose vehicles. These include the parent/guardian responsibilities for self-assessing and following public health protocols. Parents/guardians are encouraged to sign up for the STWDST notification system to monitor service disruptions and transportation updates.

Brent McDonald, Executive Superintendent, explained the school day operations of what measures are new and which ones are staying the same. The reopening model for the elementary online and remote school was also explained.

Pat Hamilton, Superintendent of Education, provided details of the secondary model for in-person and remote school learning.

Tracey Lindsay, Superintendent of Program, detailed the steps taken on developing mentally healthy and equitable classrooms. This information encompassed the curriculum focus of 'high yield strategies and assessment practices' and supports available in special education. Staff was provided with professional development on August 31 – September 2, 2021.

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Tracey Lindsay thanked all of the presenters for their contributions tonight. If SEAC has any questions, please email Tracey Lindsay.

PowerPoint presentation was uploaded to the September SEAC folder on UGCloud.

Summer Report

Wendy Donaldson greeted SEAC and shared updates regarding the summer programs and transitional supports that were offered to support students in the late part of spring, summer and fall. Summer programs that were offered included: Reading Tutor support for Grade 2 and 3; Camp Discovery for Grade 1 and 2; Literacy and Numeracy Courses for Grades 6, 7 and 8; summer school for secondary students earning or upgrading credits; courses for English Language learners in Grades 6, 7 and 8; summer learning for students with autism for elementary and secondary as well as transition supports for students during the last two weeks of August.

Jenny Marino, Mental Health and Addictions Lead provided details of the various summer mental health programs that were offered. These included Stress Busters Summer Camp (age 8-12); Living Life to the Full (a skill building program for Grade 8 – 12+ at UGDSB and WCDSB); and a Parent/Caregiver Support for caregivers to talk about experiences, challenges and provide support to each other. ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training) and SafeTALK (Suicide Intervention Skills) training was offered for staff and educators.

She added that UGDSB staff worked on revising the Umbrella Project. After hearing comments throughout the year, they learned that more equity was needed to be built into the project. Alignment is important in education and with COVID and the commitment to de-streaming, anti-oppressive and anti-racist education, it's only heightened that importance. Students need to be seen and heard to be well and need to be well to do well. The team worked to embed suggestions and learnings that support engaging students in a very standardized way. She added that she's very excited about the monthly themes this year. The parent newsletters will continue this year and she hopes they will be translated into the five languages just the same as last year.

The summer mental health phone line for students and parents to call received 18 calls and 77 students were supported by staff.

Jason Offer thanked Wendy Donaldson and Jenny Marino for their presentation.

PowerPoint presentation was uploaded to the September SEAC folder on UGCloud.

Mental Health Updates

Jenny Marino thanked SEAC for the opportunity to present. She noted that the UGDSB has a strong commitment to enhance and protect the mental health of students as they

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return to school. Students can only feel ready to engage when they are feeling mentally well and are warmly welcomed back to a safe space. Above all they need to feel safe, confident, included and cared for whether they attend school in-person or remotely in the coming months. She added that from all of our organizational structures, from the Director, the Superintendents, and through our administrative leaders and beyond, we have such a strong commitment to this. She commented that she felt very honoured to be a Mental Health Lead for this board.

Jenny Marino reviewed all the disruptions and changes from the past school year. Data collected about child and youth mental health during the pandemic suggests that many young people had heightened feelings of distress associated with health concerns, pandemic restrictions, a sense of isolation and disruption. The data is still evolving and the impacts of the pandemic on child and youth mental health will not be known for some time.

She shared key messages for back to school that prioritize mental health and well-being. This is a shared responsibility with schools, families and our communities.

Jenny Marino explained key points that were discussed for professional development for staff and resources to support work and learning. The educator site for student well-being includes ready to use videos, lesson plans, and more; Mental Health Literacy on-line modules for educators; wellness works – monthly themes, plans and newsletter etc.

In addition, the ministry mandated training on Anti-Human Sex Trafficking was provided for administrators. The Ministry has a four-year strategy framework along with a new PPM. Work is happening at our board at the senior level to develop policy. This work began on the PD Day and will continue.

She concluded her presentation by saying that the intersection between learning, equity, and mental health has never been more important.

She shared a short video made by School Mental Health Ontario of students saying thank you to all their educators. The longer version on YouTube was shared with all educators during their PD.

Jason Offer thanked Jenny Marino for all her work in this area.

PowerPoint presentation was uploaded to the September SEAC folder on UGCloud.

Planning for the Year

Tracey Lindsay commented that much information was shared tonight. She noted that as we start the school year, parents have many questions and concerns. We wanted to give you as much information as possible to share with your organizations and any

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parents that may approach you. The information will be posted on the board website but if there are specific questions, please direct them to Tracey Lindsay.

She added that some items will be deferred to the October agenda. We'll be reviewing the Special Education Plan again. It is posted on the board website along with the Goals that were developed in collaboration with SEAC.

In the folder, there are two documents. One is the Annual Calendar and SEAC Business. If there are any items you would like to see, these will be tracked here. At the bottom of each month, there is a spot for Association to sign up for presentations. If your association has not done a presentation, in the last year or two, and if you would like to bring something to SEAC, you can sign up. The other document is for any agenda items you'd like to come to SEAC meeting; any topics of interests, concerns or questions, or information, can be added here. Time will be set aside next month for these items along with SEAC training for any new members, reviewing the norms and recruitment of agencies not represented on SEAC and how to accomplish this.

Planning documents have been uploaded to the SEAC folder on UGCloud.

SEISSC Monthly Update

Laurie Whyte reported that the committee has not met this year. No update.

Trustee Report

Jennifer Edwards –

- Trustees are very grateful for all the reopening work that has been done by staff and schools.
- Trustees passed a motion for Disclosure of Vaccinations for staff, trustees and visitors on August 31, 2021. Deadline for disclosure was September 7, 2021. The second motion was for sharing of the information regarding disclosure.

Updates from the Superintendent of Program

All updates were included in the School Re-Opening updates.

Meeting Summary, Recommendations(s), Motion(s) and Action(s)

No actions or recommendations from this meeting.

Other

Adjournment

Laurie Whyte motioned for adjournment of the meeting at 8:55 p.m. Stacey Stevens seconded the motion.