

Upper Grand District School Board
Special Education Advisory Committee

Minutes

Wednesday, April 13, 2022

The Special Education Advisory Committee of the Upper Grand District School Board met on Wednesday, April 13, 2022 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; 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; Patricia Townson, Learning Disabilities Association of Wellington County (LDAWC)

Present from staff were: Wendy Donaldson, Superintendent of Education; Jennifer Meeker, Principal of Special Education; Rochelle Murray-Cako, Elementary Principal; Brent Bloch, Secondary Principal; Special Education Consultant, Mark Howe

Trustees present: Jennifer Edwards, Robin Ross

Regrets: Carrie Proudfoot, Autism Ontario-Wellington County; Denise Helm, Canadian Mental Health Association Wellington Waterloo; Laurie Whyte, FASworld Canada

Absent: Mandi Naismith, Autism Ontario-Wellington County (Alternate); Michelle Barrett, OPVIC/IEWS (Ontario Parents for Visually Impaired Children) (Alternate); Kelsey Noseworthy, VOICE for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children (Alternate); Danielle Richer, FASworld Canada (Alternate)

Jason Offer, Vice-Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and read his land acknowledgement statement.

Approval of Agenda of April 13, 2022

Don Richardson moved that the agenda of April 13, 2022 be approved. Stacey Stevens seconded the motion.

The motion carried.

Approval of the Minutes of March 9, 2022

Don Richardson moved that the minutes of March 9, 2022 be approved. Stacey Stevens seconded the motion.

The motion carried.

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Action Items

Wendy Donaldson addressed SEAC and welcomed Jennifer Meeker, the new Principal of Special Education. She added that it has been an excellent transition and it's been great to have Jennifer Meeker as a member on the team as she brings a lot of great strengths in both the elementary and secondary panel.

- Parent Guide and SEAC Brochure – Jennifer Meeker has gathered SEAC's feedback and revised the Parent Guide. SEAC to review and provide feedback during May meeting in breakout groups. SEAC Brochure will come back in May.
- Template letter and list of organizations for SEAC recruitment – no update. Waiting for Chair
- Letter to Minister – signed and sent out. Action completed
- Equity Plan – Gerry Walker to provide update at May meeting

Open Forum – Best Practice and Good News

Don Richardson, Inclusion Action in Ontario – members of the public were invited to the Members meeting to celebrate the 25th anniversary of a key Supreme Court decision that affects the decisions on inclusion across Canada. It was an important milestone for the organization and over 100 people attended.

Policy Review Update

Wendy Donaldson commented that currently there are no policies out for public consultation.

Budget Information

Glen Regier, Executive Superintendent of Business Operations and Support Services provided a summary of the special education funding. He shared a comparison of last year's full year actuals, the current year budget and the draft projections. He explained each of the funding amounts and provided some background on the sources of funding, how they are calculated and the trends.

At the conclusion of his presentation, he noted that we are seeing a continued increase in special education funding, partially due to enrollment changes, some new sources of funding, and benchmark information. Budget numbers will be finalized at the beginning of June as part of the budget submissions.

Jason Offer thanked Glen Regier for his presentation.

Special Education Funding Summary document was uploaded to the SEAC folder on UGCloud.

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Roles – Specialized Support; Psychology & Social Work

Dr. Lynn Woodford, Supervisor, Psychology & Social Work thanked SEAC for the opportunity to share information regarding her department.

She began by explaining her role within the school board and the role of her staff. Within her role she supervises all the social work and psychology staff within the board as well as most of the specialized mental health team staff, which include the following: Secondary and Elementary Social Workers/Counselling and Attendance; Social Worker – Indigenous Focus; Social worker- Youth Options; Consultants – Psychology and Mental Health Services; Mental Health Secondary Support; Specialized Mental Health Interventionists; Itinerant Mental Health Clinicians; and Specialized Support Team.

She explained the process for accessing the various supports and the community partners that are involved in building these supports.

She added that support plans are structured for each student to be the most effective and supportive to the student to be successful at school and the community.

Jason Offer thanked Dr. Woodford for her presentation.

PowerPoint presentation was uploaded to the SEAC folder on UGCloud.

Special Education Plan Review

Jennifer Meeker, Principal of Special Education, addressed SEAC and noted that the Special Education Plan is reviewed each year. She added that the Plan has been edited significantly in the past and this year SEAC had decided not to focus on any specific role or section. The current revised draft Plan is in the folder with the changes highlighted in yellow. She asked SEAC to review the changes in the Plan in the next few weeks and email her with any changes or suggestions that they may have or would like to see. The revised Special Education Report will come back in May incorporating changes and all the work that has been done this year towards our system goals.

Draft Special Education Plan was uploaded to the SEAC folder on UGCloud.

SEISSC Monthly Update

No update.

Trustee Report

Jennifer Edwards –

- The Trustees are working on the multi year plan and input is still being gathered from stakeholders.

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- This past month the Trustee Climate Emergency Committee has been looking at greening options for the boardroom and office, to find ways we can lower our carbon footprint. The challenge we asked Trustees to take on this month was to do a week of boomerang lunches, which means to take home all the garbage from your lunch each day and then hopefully start using less.

Robin Ross –

The North Wellington Hub is an open forum discussion for anyone with any type of resources that want to connect with other people in Mapleton and Wellington North. The first meeting was held at Wellington Heights Secondary School on March 29th, with approximately 70 people participating. If SEAC has any type of opportunity that they would like to talk to people about, the next meeting is in June at Norwell District Secondary School. Information will be coming out in all the schools in the area. They are trying to link with the municipality and their services. E.g. School boards, county services and community groups all have services that may be accessed and we can build on this. They are trying to find ways to have more resources open to more people all the time. Robin Ross asked the SEAC associations if they are interested in having an opportunity to connect with more people in North Wellington to contact her and she will sign them up. These meetings can be done in person or virtually so there are no obstacles for people being able to join and share ideas.

Wendy Donaldson thanked Robin Ross and added that if there were any specific things that as a special education team could support the Hub, they could all meet to discuss their involvement with the Hub.

Robin Ross replied that she will connect with Jennifer Meeker to have her come and talk to the group and to provide more connections so people feel more supported.

Updates from the Superintendent of Education

Wendy Donaldson commented that the following item was not in the folder or on the agenda:

- The Ministry of Education has provided UGDSB and other boards across the province with tutoring funding. Carrie Conrad and Jonathan Walker, the two principals leading this work will come to the May SEAC meeting and provide an update on the funding and let you know the current work that's being done to support the tutoring programs. These funds are for May until August and also for September to December.

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Wendy Donaldson directed SEAC to the updates in the folder:

1. COVID UPDATE

While COVID restrictions have been lifted, we continue to stress the importance of encouraging mask wearing in our schools and offices (while optional we are acknowledging that health experts continue to strongly encourage the use of masks indoors) as well as stress the importance of daily screening and staying home if not well. These strategies alongside regular hand hygiene are important factors in supporting our students, staff and families. We also have continued to ensure that HEPA filter units are in good working order while encourage the opening of windows. These strategies will continue moving into the spring.

2. Wellness Works – Learning to be more authentic

In order for connection to happen, we have to allow ourselves to be seen, really seen.” – BRENÉ BROWN

Authenticity is so important, but not always easy! Learning to be authentic means:

- Speaking your truth in an honest and respectful way while remembering to also value that others have different opinions and that is okay
- Making decisions that align with your values, beliefs and lived experience while also being respectful and aware that your values, beliefs and lived experiences may not be the same as those around you
- Pursuing your passions
- Listening to the inner voice guiding you forward
- Allowing yourself to be vulnerable and open-hearted when it is safe to do so
- Speaking up for yourself and others with courage and kindness in a way that is safe for all. Sometimes one person’s truth can be another person’s ally

Did you know that studies have linked authenticity with increased levels of happiness, personal growth, improved self-esteem and better relationships? So, where do you start? Here are some ideas:

Value your child’s voice/opinion: A child that feels valued and heard is more likely to feel confident and safe in expressing their true self. You can encourage your child to share their opinion by providing options and choices whenever possible, for example, “Do you prefer milk or water with dinner?” Another tip is to remember that you can respect your child’s opinions and feelings and not agree with them.

Celebrate differences. Likely your child/ren will have some things they do or like that are different from your own likes and preferences. Make sure to celebrate the individualism of your child like that creative art project or the chosen outfit for

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photo day. These are expressions of self and by celebrating and acknowledging, you are accepting and also teaching acceptance of others.

<https://www.ugdsb.ca/blog/wellness-works-learning-to-be-more-authentic/>

3. April 13 is the International Day of Pink

Wednesday April 13 is the International Day of Pink.

Discrimination takes many shapes, whether it's based on race, age, disabilities, gender or sexuality. The 2SLGBTQIA+ community is no stranger to the bullying and violence that stems from hateful beliefs. While progress has been made towards removing these social barriers from our society, discrimination still persists. So, every year, on the second Wednesday of April, folks around the world are urged to put on a pink shirt and stand in solidarity with the 2SLGBTQIA+ community to continue fighting for equality and acceptance. International Day of Pink has one purpose, to create a more inclusive and diverse world, by encouraging young people to challenge social norms, ask more of their educators, and stand up against bullying towards their 2SLGBTQIA+ peers.

Over the years International Day of Pink has worked with countless educators, politicians and organizations around Canada to spread this message and create young activists for this mission. [Learn more here](#) and share how you are marking the International Day of Pink on social media using hashtag #DayOfPink.

<https://www.ugdsb.ca/blog/april-13-is-the-international-day-of-pink/>

4. Abundance of Keynote Speakers for the 2022 H2Awesome! Conference

Students from both Upper Grand District School Board and Wellington Catholic District School Board will be able to enjoy presentations virtually for the 2022 H2Awesome! "Water is..." Conference from World Water Day to Earth Day.

An annually event developing from the traditional one-day conference at the University of Guelph campus, H2Awesome! will allow grade 7 and 8 students to learn about the importance of water and water conservation through twelve events held over a five-week period beginning on March 22, 2022.

"H2Awesome! is an annual event for our intermediate students which celebrates the gift of water. This year's theme, "Water is...", invites us to ponder the various roles water plays in our everyday lives," shared Peter Glaab, H2Awesome! Organizer and Healthy Active Living Resource Teacher at WCDSB. "Local, national, and international leaders, artists, and advocates will share their connections to water through virtual presentations."

This year's schedule brings together well-known keynote speakers Isaac Murdoch, Maude Barlow, Joël Forget et Anna Lissa Altidor from Parks Canada,

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Royal City Science, Emily De Sousa, Martin Tamlyn, Jeremy Shute, Michael Cywink, City of Guelph, Peter Cameron and Jan Sherman. The UGDSB will also be offering two French speaking presenters for UGDSB students.

“Our theme this year is “Water is....” and the speakers at H2Awesome! 2022 will be helping students to consider all the things that water is. Students are learning about climate change and many are investigating the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in their classrooms,” said UGDSB Curriculum Lead, Heather Walker. “Water connects to many of the SDGs and our speakers will be highlighting these connections. Some of our goals in bringing such a diverse group of speakers to students is to help them to recognize their own role in water conservation, climate change mitigation and achievement of the SDGs. It is important that students see themselves as part of the solution and as innovators.”

For students, H2Awesome! intends to create a lifelong connection to water.

“For water to be cared for as a basic human right, our actions need to break away from a mentality of capital consumption and adopt conservation and sustainability. Our presenters understand and live out this relationship of care in a variety of different ways,” said Glaab.

Teachers can sign up their classes to participate in any of the virtual H2Awesome! presentations World Water Day, March 22, to Earth Day, April 22, through the following registration links:

- WCDSB: <https://forms.gle/iyuG1rB5ckG1hmEQ8>
- UGDSB: <http://ow.ly/TiXg50lo4hT>
<https://www.ugdsb.ca/blog/abundance-of-keynote-speakers-for-the-2022-h2awesome-conference/>

5. UGDSB and PIC host virtual parent event – ‘A Parent’s Role in Supporting Equity and Indigenous Education’

The Upper Grand District School Board and the Parent Involvement Committee present ‘A Parent’s Role in Supporting Equity and Indigenous Education’ – a virtual presentation.

The presentation will be held Wednesday, May 4 at 5:45 PM and it will be hosted by the UGDSB’s Coordinating Principal of Equity & Indigenous Education, Gerry Walker, as well as the UGDSB’s Curriculum Lead for First Nation, Métis and Inuit Education, Colinda Clyne.

The presentation will include leading transformational change to integrate anti-colonial, anti-racist, anti-oppressive and equity principles into policies, programs and practices to eliminate systemic inequities in UGDSB. Parents and guardians can register for the presentation [here](#).

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<https://www.ugdsb.ca/blog/ugdsb-and-pic-host-virtual-parent-event-a-parents-role-in-supporting-equity-and-indigenous-education/>

6. Celebration of Life for Martha Rogers

<https://www.ugdsb.ca/blog/celebration-of-life-for-martha-rogers/>

Jason Offer asked if the Celebration of Life would have a virtual option. Wendy Donaldson replied that at this time it did not. If there are any changes, she would let SEAC know.

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

No new action items.

Other

Adjournment

Stacey Stevens motioned for adjournment of the meeting at 7:45 p.m. Don Richardson seconded the motion.