

Upper Grand District School Board
Special Education Advisory Committee

Minutes

Wednesday, September 14, 2022

The Special Education Advisory Committee of the Upper Grand District School Board met on Wednesday, September 14, 2022 at 7:05 p.m. in the MS Teams virtual meeting platform and in the Boardroom at the Guelph Board Office.

The following Association Members were in attendance: Stacey Stevens, VOICE for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children; Shelley Marks, OPVIC/IEWS (Ontario Parents for Visually Impaired Children); Patricia Townson, Learning Disabilities Association of Wellington County (LDAWC); Laurie Whyte, FASworld Canada; Danielle Richer, FASworld Canada (Alternate); Denise Helm, Canadian Mental Health Association Wellington Waterloo

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

Trustees present: Jennifer Edwards

Regrets:

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); Denise Helm, Canadian Mental Health Association Wellington Waterloo; Robin Ross, Trustee
Laurie Whyte, Acting Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Approval of Agenda of September 14, 2022

Stacey Stevens moved that the agenda of September 14, 2022 be approved. Denise Helm seconded the motion.

The motion carried.

Approval of the Minutes of June 8, 2022

Stacey Stevens moved that the minutes of June 8, 2022 be approved. Denise Helm seconded the motion.

The motion carried.

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Action Items

Wendy Donaldson noted that there were two action items being transferred from the June SEAC meeting:

- SEAC Brochure – this will come to the October meeting and a plan will be formulated to decide on moving forward with edits etc.
- Recruitment of new members – this will be addressed in tonight's meeting

Correspondence

1. Letter dated June 22, 2022, addressed to the Honourable Christine Elliot, Minister of Health and to the Honourable Stephen Lecce, Minister of Education, from John McAllister, Chair of the Board, Upper Canada DSB and Michel LaBonte, Chair, UCDSB Special Education Advisory Committee, expressing their concern with the proposed amendments and a potential expansion in the types of controlled acts that can be delegated to non-regulated education workers. UCDSB is already in a position of not being able to provide service from non-regulated education workers with the current PPM 81 and do not support assuming the risk to students, staff and the board. They also listed additional concerns beyond concerns related to collective agreement barriers.
2. Resignation email from Carrie Proudfoot, Autism Society of Ontario
3. Resignation email from Jason Offer, Association for Bright Children of Ontario

Wendy Donaldson commented on the nursing shortage letter. Last year there were some proposals with the Ministry around changing the way in which nursing services were being provided. This was under review by the Ministry and there are concerns that continue to occur around nursing across the province. There are some situations in other boards where students are not able to attend school due to the nursing shortage. She noted that to our knowledge, we do not have any students in UGDSB that are not coming to school because of the shortage.

No action required for correspondence.

Open Forum – Best Practice and Good News

Stacey Stevens, VOICE for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children – VOICE is planning their annual conference for next year. It will be held on April 28 & 29th, 2023 at Centennial College in Scarborough. Professionals will be eligible to receive CEU credits at the conference on April 28th. More details will be available at a later date.

Patricia Townson, Learning Disabilities Association of Wellington County (LDAWC) – Patricia Townson asked if the results of the survey were in and if they would be shared with SEAC. Wendy Donaldson replied that the Student Census results

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are currently being launched within the system and sent out to families. She added that as soon as we receive them they will be brought to SEAC.

Denise Helm, Canadian Mental Health Association Wellington Waterloo – Youth forum went very well on September 13, 2022. Ongoing training events are listed on website <https://cmhaww.ca/>

Laurie Whyte, FasWorld – National FASD day was Friday, September 9, 2022. Approximately 60 people gathered in Market Square in Guelph including local politicians. The local paper published an article featuring a parent of children with FASD. Dufferin County declared a declaration for this day which was a great way to spread the information. Article to be shared with SEAC.

<https://www.therecord.com/local-guelph/news/2022/09/05/it-really-can-impact-anybody-guelph-event-to-mark-fetal-alcohol-spectrum-disorder-awareness-day.html>

Policy Review Update

There are no policies currently under review.

Introduction of New Supervisors

Wendy Donaldson began her presentation by explaining that two new positions were created when Dr. Lynn Woodford retired in June.

The Ministry had provided additional funding to increase the area of specialized teams which increased the social work part of the department. This enabled the department to consider the role moving forward and to look at how best to serve the teams and students and decided to split the role into a full-time position for Social Work and a part time position for Psychology.

Wendy Donaldson welcomed Becky Mantynen, Supervisor of Social Work and Specialized Teams, and Dr. Josh Boden, Supervisor of Psychology. Becky Mantynen has left the Halton Board to join our team at UGDSB. Josh Boden was previously an UGDSB psychological consultant and now moves into the supervisory role. She added that the Board Certified Behavioural Analysts (BCBA) will now move from the Special Education department into the Psychology department under Dr. Boden.

Wendy Donaldson welcomed back Jenny Marino, Mental Health and Addictions Lead, MaryAnn Schouten, Supervisor, Communication, Language and Speech Services and Jennifer Meeker, Principal of Special Education. These five senior staff work alongside Wendy Donaldson to support Student Support Services.

PowerPoint presentation was uploaded to the SEAC folder on UGCloud.

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Mentally Healthy Return to School

Jenny Marino, Mental Health and Addictions Lead, greeted SEAC and provided a brief outline of the work happening at the UGDSB around a mentally healthy return to school. She added that the Ministry of Education and School Mental Health Ontario recognize that there continues to be increased mental health needs amongst students in our communities.

Wellness Works continues to be in action this year and there are monthly themes that include best practice ready to use materials, teacher, reflection tools, books and videos embedded in culturally responsive pedagogy and aligned with other school boards and system wide initiatives.

In addition to Wellness Works, the UGDSB is implementing school mental health with First 10 Days and Beyond. This is an outline which supports educators in doing this important work in a structured and timely manner in the context of each of their unique classroom student populations in their buildings.

All of this information is available on the central hub for staff as well as the parent website.

Jenny Marino developed a staff meeting slide deck for Principals based on the School Mental Health Ontario Resources. There are a variety of themes that can support them and the work they are doing in a structured way if they choose, with their staff in staff meetings without taking up an entire staff meeting. She noted that all of this work directly connects to the Multi-Year Plan in championing health and well-being.

PowerPoint presentation was uploaded to the SEAC folder on UGCloud.

Introduction of New Clinical Teams

Jenny Marino, Mental Health and Addictions Lead presented the new supports for Student Mental Health & Wellbeing. These are permanent increases and new positions:

1.7 – fulltime Child and Youth Counsellors in schools

1.0 – fulltime Early Years Social Worker/Clinician

KIT team – Kindergarten to Grade 3 Intervention Team (Pilot and temporary addition to staff)

- 1.0 – Child and Youth Counsellor
- 1.0 – Special Education Itinerant Consultant
- 0.4 – Speech Language Pathologist
- 0.2 – Early Years Social Worker (from above allocation)

1.0 – fulltime Elementary Social Worker

1.0 – Special Education Itinerant Consultant for Specialized Teams

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Laurie Whyte asked how the intake for the new program was working. Jenny Marino replied that they are just at the beginning of the implementation stage. She added that they are working in collaboration with Wendy Donaldson and Jennifer Meeker around identifying student needs in particular schools and then parents and students will be involved in the onboard.

Laurie questioned if there was a role for parents within the program or if it was just for helping the students.

Jenny Marino replied that parents are partners in this work. Being aware of what we're hoping to achieve within the context of the classroom and the school and coming alongside us and understanding that and supporting in the ways they can.

PowerPoint presentation uploaded to the SEAC folder on UGCloud.

Reading Intervention Program Tier III & Empower

Jennifer Meeker, Principal of Special Education addressed SEAC and noted that the early intervention programs are a collaboration between the Special Education department and the Communication, Speech and Language department following the lead of the Early Reading Teachers that started in the spring through Carrie Conrad, Principal of Program responsible for Literacy K-12.

MaryAnn Schouten, Supervisor, Communication, Speech and Language, began by explaining the five recommendations that came out of the Ontario Human Rights Right to Read Inquiry. These recommendations are the foundation of the reading intervention programs. She also shared the points that UGDSB will focus on for their Early Reading Plan, K-3.

She explained the Multi-Tier System of Supports that the Ontario Human Rights Commission had recommended for literacy instruction. Carrie Conrad, UGDSB Principal of Program responsible for Literacy K-12 work was in Tier I and Tier II.

Tier II and Tier III is where the Special Education Resource Teacher (SERT) becomes involved. This ensures that at each level of instruction there is evidence-based instruction with systematic phonics. In Grade 1-3, when an Elementary Reading Teacher is providing Tier II support then the SERT provides Tier III support. If there is not an Elementary Reading Teacher at the school, then the SERT provides Tier II and III literary support.

The SERTs focus on students in Grades 1-3 providing cycles of individual or small group daily literacy instruction and monitoring student progress to determine intervention goals and intensity of support. They are supported in their learning through professional development, in literacy assessment, goal setting and instruction. This

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training includes the UGDSB developed resources that are being used by the Early Reading teachers and the coaching and consultation through the Student Support Services literacy team which includes Special Education Consultants and the Speech and Language Pathologist. There is also participation in a book study on Science of Reading.

Their SERT resources include an enhancement to their library of decodable books and access to the updated 'Phonemes to Phonics' Scope and Sequence.

UGDSB is also engaging in a Proof of Concept: Empower for Grades 4-6 which is also in Tier III. There are 4 SERTs in schools across the board by region: Montgomery Village PS, John Black PS, Waverley PS and Minto Clifford, trained in Empower. Empower is an evidence-based approach to literacy and is put on by the Hospital for Sick Kids. They have done more than four decades of research which has resulted in this program. UGDSB's is taking this opportunity to see how it affects the daily instruction with their students. A small targeted group of students participate in daily literacy with the SERT for the entire year. MaryAnn Schouten added that they are very excited about both projects as they move forward this year in the interventions in literacy.

Jennifer Edwards, Trustee, asked what level of reading was to be achieved in Grade 1 to be considered reading. Wendy Donaldson replied that we look at the standards associated with the Grade 1 student as they relate to the Ontario guidelines around students achieving reading in Grade 1. She added that at the end of Grade 1 we would expect that a student would be able to decode simple words and begin to decode words with multiple syllables and to read them in words and connected text with understanding. We expect that our future implementation of the Science of Reading, will include screening tools to identify students who are readers or non-readers.

A question was asked if an example of what a text might be that a child would be expected to read could be brought to SEAC in the future. Wendy Donaldson replied that we can ask.

Laurie Whyte thanked the presenters for their information.

PowerPoint presentation was uploaded to the SEAC folder on UGCloud.

SEAC Recruitment

Wendy Donaldson commented that SEAC Recruitment has been on the Action Items chart for some time. Both Chair and Vice Chair have resigned as they move on from SEAC, it is time to think about organizations that are not represented at the SEAC table.

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She directed SEAC to the chart in the folder showing the list of suggested groups within the province of Ontario that might sit on the SEAC committee. Included in this chart were surrounding boards with their list of SEAC members.

She asked Laurie Whyte (Acting Chair) if SEAC would like to review the list and discuss on how to actively move to recruit more members at the next meeting.

Laurie Whyte agreed and commented that she has had conversations with other people over the summer. She added that we could try to send out recruitment letters either before the election or after. Wendy Donaldson replied that a draft letter was formulated last year and suggested that it be sent out to SEAC as a reminder to think about new recruits.

SEAC Association chart was uploaded to the SEAC folder on UGCloud.

SEISSC Monthly Update

Laurie Whyte commented that a meeting is scheduled for next month. She added that SEISSC has increased the frequency of their meetings from four times a year to six based on feedback from community members. They felt they needed more connection and time to share and receive feedback based on the speed at which things were developing within the board and the community.

Trustee Report

Jennifer Edwards –

- The volunteer policy (Policy 501) has now been decided. The debate was around who would require the vulnerable sector checks to volunteer. It was approved with low risk activities only needing one if the principal requested it, but medium and higher risk activities would require a VSC. The board staff will operationalize this and decide what is considered low, medium or high risk.
- Trustee Foley has resigned as he is running as Trustee in a new area
- Trustees received news from Guelph Council of approval of the next step towards the construction of a new high school in South Guelph

Updates from the Superintendent of Education

Wendy Donaldson noted that we've had an incredible start in the information that's coming to us from a variety of different ways. Our Student Support Services teams have been in schools working alongside the students who are transitioning from one school to another, from one class to another as well as from other parts of Ontario into our school board. The tradition in the last two to three years is that all of our staff within Student Support Services are alongside students in the classroom with teachers. She added that she is very proud of the work that the team does and appreciates that we are focused on classroom strategies and our students and their success. She formally

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thanked the school board staff and the board staff for the work they have done and their commitment alongside families and students.

Wendy Donaldson provided the following updates:

1. **The UGDSB's Mental Health and Well-Being initiative, Wellness Works**, will be back in action this year as we collectively work, once again, to ensure not only a mentally healthy return to school but an on-going emphasis on wellness throughout UGDSB classrooms, lessons and school buildings.

Our focus for our first month back is **welcome, connection and belonging**. All UGDSB schools will be implementing the First 10 Days and Beyond materials to support this vital focus. The Upper Grand District School Board is continuing with the Wellness Works monthly themes across all grades in the 2022-2023 school year. For September we are once again bringing our collective focus to the theme of: **WELCOME, CONNECTION and BELONGING**.

We remain committed, in partnership with you, to ensuring a mentally healthy return to school and an on-going emphasis on wellness throughout the year. Every month, you will receive our newsletter outlining the theme that we are focusing on, as well as some activities and conversation starters that you may choose to use to engage in with your child/ren outside of school time around the theme of the month.

<https://www.ugdsb.ca/blog/wellness-works-welcome-back/>

Resources, materials and information continue to be available to our families/caregivers/guardians on the [UGDSB Website for Children and Youth Mental Health](#).

2. **DREAM Dufferin** to showcase career options in the trades at demo event ORANGEVILLE, Ont. – DREAM Dufferin in partnership with the Upper Grand District School Board is putting on a free interactive trades event to showcase the multitude of options in a trades career path.

The showcase event is being held today, September 14, from 1-4 PM and again from 6-8 PM at the Tony Rose Memorial Sports Centre in Orangeville. The event will feature, hands on demos, local skilled tradespeople, a presentation from keynote speaker, Jamie McMillan, from KickAss Careers, and so much more. This event will show students, parents/guardians and second-career seekers some of the exciting, in-demand, well-paying career trades options in the Dufferin area.

<https://www.ugdsb.ca/blog/dream-dufferin-to-showcase-career-options-in-the-trades-at-demo-event/>

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3. September 9 was International FASD Day

The Upper Grand District School Board (UGDSB) recognized that September 9 is Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder (FASD) Day all around the world.

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder is a lifelong disability that affects the brain and body of people who were exposed to alcohol in the womb. Its effects can include physical, mental, behavioural and learning disabilities. These effects can vary from mild to severe.

This year's theme is 'Building Strength and Abilities.' Historically, a lot of the research that focuses on those living with FASD or those who've consumed alcohol while pregnant, have mainly focused on the challenges, barriers and stigmas of these individuals.

This year's theme wants to move the conversation onto the unique talents, abilities and interests of those living with FASD. When we fail to explore the multi-faceted layers of who these individuals are, we fail to realize their potential for success.

<https://www.ugdsb.ca/blog/september-9-is-international-fasd-day/>

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

Action Steps

- SEAC Brochure will be coming to October meeting
- Recruitment letter for SEAC organizations – Laurie Whyte
- Collaboration work with Jennifer Meeker and MaryAnn Schouten regarding 'what it means to be an effect leader in Grade 1, 2 & 3.

Adjournment

Stacey Stevens motioned for adjournment of the meeting at 8:00 p.m. Denise Helm seconded the motion.