



Special Education Advisory Committee SEAC 20-05

Virtual MS Teams

Thursday, January 21, 2021 – 6:00 p.m.

MINUTES

SEAC Members

Present: L. Boswell, P. Boutis, C. Brady, T. Buchanan, R. Collver, A. Csoff, L. DeJong, A. Detmar, M. Gatopoulos, K. Jones, W. Rose, T. Sault, J. Trovato, Chair T. Waldschmidt, T. Wilson.

Regrets: M. Carpenter, L. Scott, R. Winter.

Resource Staff

Present: P. Bagchee, L. Boudreault, D. Martins, K. Mertins, S. Slaman, L. Thompson, J. White.

Recorder: P. Curran.

Guests:

Present: J. Gemmill – ITS Staff, C. A. Sloat – Alternate Trustee, C. Smith – Manager Business Services.

A-1 Opening **T. Waldschmidt**

(a) Welcome T. Waldschmidt

Chair Waldschmidt welcomed everyone, called the meeting to order and read the Land Acknowledgement Statement.

L. Boudreault will monitor the chat.

(b) Agenda Additions / Deletions / Approvals T. Waldschmidt

i. Add C-1 Business Arising (b) Self-Contained Classrooms – R. Collver

ii. Add H-1 Community Updates (a) Woodview – A. Detmar

Moved by: M. Gatopoulos

Seconded by: C. Brady

THAT the SEAC 20-05 Agenda for Thursday, January 21, 2021 be approved as amended.

CARRIED

B-1 Timed Items **T. Waldschmidt**

(a) Election - SEAC Chair and Vice-Chair L. Thompson / P. Curran

Superintendent Thompson conducted the election in accordance with Grand Erie DSB Bylaw 8 SEAC Committee Terms of Reference.



Special Education Advisory Committee SEAC 20-05

Virtual MS Teams

Thursday, January 21, 2021 – 6:00 p.m.

i. SEAC Chair

Nominations from the floor for the position of SEAC Chair were called for three times.

W. Rose requested her name be accepted for nomination from the floor.

As no other candidates were forthcoming W. Rose was declared SEAC Chair for the 2021 calendar year.

ii. SEAC Vice-Chair

Nominations from the floor for the position of SEAC Vice-Chair were called for three times.

P. Boutis requested her name be accepted for nomination from the floor.

As no other nominations were forthcoming, P. Boutis was declared the SEAC Vice-Chair for the 2021 calendar year.

Superintendent Thompson congratulated both members and thanked them for their willingness to participate in leadership positions of the Committee. She thanked Trustee Waldschmidt for his demonstrated leadership during the past year.

W. Rose assumed the duties of Chair for the remainder of the meeting.

(b) Financial Update – Special Education Funding, Grants, Expenditures and Reserves 2020-21 C. Smith, Manager
Manager Business Services

Ms. Smith shared a budget review document and explained the different types of funding available to support students with special needs.

i. Grants for Special Education

Provides school boards with additional funding to support students who need special programs, services and/or equipment.

It may only be used for special education and any unspent funding must be treated as deferred revenue.

Funding is generated using enrolment. It is application based using board demographics and actual costs.

ii. Available Funding Sources

- Differentiated Special Education Needs Amount (DSENA) Allocation \$20.2 M
- Special Equipment Amount (SEA) Allocation \$1.0 M
- Special Incidence Portion (SIP) Allocation \$0.3 M
- Care, Special Education Per Pupil Amount (SEPPA) Allocation \$16.0 M
- Mental Health and Well-Being Grant \$0.0868 M



Special Education Advisory Committee SEAC 20-05

Virtual MS Teams

Thursday, January 21, 2021 – 6:00 p.m.

- Treatment, Custody and Correctional Amount (CTCC Amount) Allocation \$0.5 M
- Behaviour Expertise Amount (BEA) Allocation \$0.4 M

iii. Priorities and Partnerships Fund (PPFs)

Details for amounts and requirements for spending are usually outlined in a transfer payment agreement and are generally short term.

Allocations for 2020-21 are as listed below:

COVID Special Education	\$215,620
COVID Mental Health	\$218,199
COVID Mental Health II	\$134,806
After School Skills Development	\$80,710
Promote Well Being	\$19,637

iv. 2020-21 Budget and Related Challenges

Elementary \$27 M
Secondary \$12.8 M

The total budget of \$39.8 M represents a \$0.6 M deficit of the special education funding of \$39.2 M.

The outbreak of the Corona Virus, COVID-19 has created many challenges for educators and school board staff.

While educators pivot to meet student needs, school boards follow government directions that will help keep students and staff safe and engaged.

Technological access for remote learning is required as well as updating and refreshing aging school technology.

Testing, quarantines and treatment for COVID-19 symptoms leads to increased absenteeism and put a strain on administration and teaching staff.

Other challenges include controlling staffing costs, WSIB claims, containing the cost of utilities, and litigation involving staff and other grievances often as a result of legislative changes.

(c) 2021-22 Special Education Budget Process

A budget survey will be released in February. SEAC members are encouraged to submit their ideas for additions / deletions / changes to the Recording Secretary for compilation.

Members would like a more detailed discussion as a timed item at the February meeting.

Ms. Smith will create a glossary of terms for SEAC.



Special Education Advisory Committee SEAC 20-05

Virtual MS Teams

Thursday, January 21, 2021 – 6:00 p.m.

- (d) Member Re-Introductions W. Rose

Each member introduced themselves and spoke a little about their interest in Special Education or their agency's services.

C-1 Business Arising from Minutes and/or Previous Meetings W. Rose

- (a) Ratification of Minutes December 17, 2020

The Education Act excerpt at the bottom of page three needs to be closed.

Moved by: K. Jones

Seconded by: L. Boswell

THAT the minutes for SEAC 20-04 be approved as amended.

CARRIED

- (b) Allocation of Self-Contained Classrooms for 2021-22 J. White

Ms. White presented highlights from an updated report that was provided to the Board of Trustees on January 11. She noted staff continues to ensure a focus on universal design and differentiated instruction are present in the regular classroom and that all Tier 1 supports have been exhausted before considering self-contained placement.

Staff works hard to minimize the number of changes students experience, but natural grade and/or age progression and other factors influence essential change.

When planning for the upcoming year, recommended changes were put into two groups, Renaming / Refocusing and New Classes / Closures.

- i. Renaming and Refocusing of Self- Contained Classrooms

- a) Rename "Russell Reid Elementary Autism Class" to "Strategy Class for Autism".

The goal of this classroom is to learn through Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) strategies and to eventually generalize skills and transition to a self-contained environment that better supports their growing independence. The class capacity would increase to 8.

- b) Rename "Elementary and Secondary self-contained classrooms for Multi-Handicap and Autism" to "Intensive Support Classrooms".

Renaming reflects students' learning needs and program pathway rather than exceptionality. Alternative programming in these classrooms is driven by individual student need, with adults facilitating independence and life skills where possible.

- ii. Classroom Closures and New Classrooms

- a) Collapse both Elementary self-contained "Classes for Gifted Learners" into one centrally located class.



Special Education Advisory Committee SEAC 20-05

Virtual MS Teams

Thursday, January 21, 2021 – 6:00 p.m.

Given the projected enrolment for 2021-22 school year, it is recommended that both Jarvis Public and Centennial Grand Woodlands Gifted Classes collapse into one. The relocation of the collapsed class to a more central area of the school board needs to occur to ensure continued opportunities for support in the self-contained setting when gifted learners demonstrate needs and an exceptionally high performance that make intervention in the regular class difficult.

Increased focus on the development of an expanded model of support for gifted students in regular programs will be explored during the Spring of 2021, with a goal of a pilot project in this area for the 2021-22 school year.

- b) Closure of Elementary Strategies - Behaviour Class at Bellview School in Brantford

Following the introduction of the Complex Behaviour Intervention Team (CBIT) in 2018-19, increased capacity of CBIT to work with more students has resulted in the projected lower enrolment for the Strategies – Behaviour Elementary level in Brantford.

- c) Closure of one Secondary Bridge Classroom in Haldimand

Currently the projected need for students requiring a Bridge partially contained placement in Haldimand does not support the need for two classes at Cayuga Secondary.

- d) Open one Secondary Life Skills Classroom in Brantford.

Currently the projected need for students requiring a Life Skills self-contained placement at the secondary level in Brantford exceeds the number of spaces available.

- e) Open one Secondary Intensive Support Classroom – Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in Haldimand.

Currently the projected need for students requiring an Intensive Support – ASD self-contained placement at the secondary level in Haldimand exceeds the number of spaces available.

Summary

Staff have been in contact with education partners on Six Nations of the Grand River and Mississauga's of the Credit regarding several students who will require special education placements in Grand Erie secondary schools in September 2021.

Staff whose schools will be impacted by the changes will be notified by the Principal Leader for Special Education. All changes are subject to final budget approval by the board.

Members would like to remain informed on the board's plan to ensure gifted students receive the support they need for their particular learning styles.

The Recording Secretary will share the full board report with SEAC.



Special Education Advisory Committee SEAC 20-05

Virtual MS Teams

Thursday, January 21, 2021 – 6:00 p.m.

D-1 New Business

W. Rose

- (a) Standard 10 – Individual Education Plans including Appendix G – IEP L. Boudreault

Ms. Boudreault explained this standard is a summary to provide a description on how IEP are developed and to demonstrate compliance to the Ministry requirements while keeping parents informed.

She spoke about the proposed text and asked for questions from members.

The complete Ministry standards can be found in:

[Appendix E-1 Standards for Individual Education Plans \(IEPs\)](#)

Discussion:

R. Collver prefers the brief two-page original design and asked if the reference to the Appendix could include a link to the brochure (Parents' Guide to Special Education – IEP).

W. Rose asked that the phrase “as applicable” be added to the identification statement.

W. Rose also asked if steps could be included to demonstrate how parents could instigate an IEP.

K. Jones asked if parents seeking to develop an IEP could be referred to the Roadmap as it has a lot of good information.

L. DeJong asked if the top section could be made less wordy and more parent friendly?

L. Boswell asked if more definition could be provided to parents on how to initiate the steps for dispute resolution, e.g., how do they request a meeting.

P. Boutis commented the flow chart is not a typical dispute resolution process which usually involves one process. This seems rather a ‘how to’ escalate a concern until resolution is achieved. May be more appropriate to rename it as a progressive dispute resolution process.

Ms. Boudreault will take the suggestions under consideration and provide a revised document.

- (b) Accessibility Awareness Month Update K. Mertins / L. Boudreault

The Rick Hanson Foundation (RHF) provided 12 ambassadors from across the country who presented three 30 to 45-minute virtual sessions to students in one of the four grade levels K-2; 3-5, 6-8 and 9-12.

Sessions were offered to teachers through MS Teams, but added one Zoom meeting as virtual teachers could not be in two Team meetings at a time.



Special Education Advisory Committee SEAC 20-05

Virtual MS Teams

Thursday, January 21, 2021 – 6:00 p.m.

Speakers shared their lived experience and positive messages about accessibility and inclusion. Students were then invited to pose questions or comments through a moderated chat session.

Classroom teachers were provided with pre- and post- presentation activities from RHF.

Ms. Boudreault noted 132 teachers registered for the sessions but knows some teachers shared and some teachers returned to a second or third session.

There was something special about the way the schools across our board connected. The level of participation in the sessions including the quality of the questions posed by students to the presenters and the resulting rich discussions about accessibility and inclusion were impressive.

The virtual presentations allowed rich discussions as kids were not self conscious or less worried about censorship when asking questions. They seemed to gain a sense of safety from the virtual presentation that enabled them to ask hard questions. Some questions were very personal, and ambassadors were incredible at handling them and giving students honest answers.

One student asked a man from Nova Scotia how he got into bed as he was in wheelchair. He was able to pick up his laptop and showed students how his room and his washroom were organized.

One student asked the presenter if she liked having a disability which caught the presenter off guard. She paused and said, "I've always had a disability and I like who I am so I can't imagine my life with out it". Emotions were overwhelming at this very powerful moment.

One teacher shared that as they were closing down the presentation, many students put their comments in chat and told the presenter how inspiring she was; she told them she is not an inspiration until they (students) go out and do something that changes something.

It was a very magical experience. Would recommend a virtual experience again for this type of presentation. This is one of the unexpected benefits we have gleaned from coping with COVID.

RHF is providing usage data for inclusion in the mid-year board report and they are also writing an impact article about Grand Erie's work to raise accessibility awareness. Some teachers have already booked additional presentations.

(c) Update with Respect to Special Education During Further School Closures J. White

March to June 2020, saw staff in crisis learning and preparing to pivot to distance learning, if required.



Special Education Advisory Committee SEAC 20-05

Virtual MS Teams

Thursday, January 21, 2021 – 6:00 p.m.

The new format ensured Educational Assistants were provided with technology for use at home and given training links, instructions and resources on what type of support they could provide.

System staff continue to support through virtual platforms, and adjustments have been made where necessary to limit any interruption of service during the school closure period.

In accordance with Ministry direction, most students with special education needs will receive virtual education. In some instances, students may need the opportunity to return to in person learning during the school closure period.

Several stories showing how staff are supporting virtual learning were shared. In one instance, the Complex Behaviour Team helped create duplicates of the types of things they will do online so parents would have the material at home to better assist their child to participate in the learning.

Staff have received several examples of success in virtual environments and have discovered that some students are able to better participate virtually in speech and language supports provided by Communication Disorders Assistants.

E-1 Other Business W. Rose

(a) None

F-1 Standing Items W. Rose

(a) Policy/Procedures Out for Comment L. Thompson

Every effort will be made to provide updated policy and procedures that are available for input, but members are reminded they are always posted on the board's website <https://www.granderie.ca/board/about/bylaws-policies-procedures-protocols> with timelines and instructions for commenting.

G-1 Information Items W. Rose

(a) PAAC on SEAC Survey Results and Advice W. Rose

This is a good resource. The Chair and Vice-Chair will review and bring suggestions back to the committee members.

Superintendent Thompson advised she wanted to ensure members know the annual events created for our committee was based on the PAAC on SEAC suggestions with the addition of specific Grand Erie items.

Superintendent Thompson also reminded members we are at the beginning of the budget process, so this suggestion is very timely, but cautioned that there are finite resources available and the addition of any service or program usually translates to the reduction or elimination of another.



Special Education Advisory Committee SEAC 20-05

Virtual MS Teams

Thursday, January 21, 2021 – 6:00 p.m.

H-1 Community Updates W. Rose

- (a) Woodview Mental Health and Autism Services A. Detmar

Ms. Detmar provided a follow up on their new Autism Services which is now up and running in Brantford.

The organization has obtained space on Bell Lane at Brantwood Community Services and there is not much of a wait list for services.

I-1 Correspondence W. Rose

- (a) None

J-1 Future Agenda Items and SEAC Committee Planning W. Rose

- (a) Budget Priorities and best method for discussion.

K-1 Next Meeting W. Rose

- (a) Thursday, February 18, 2021 | MS Teams | 6:00 p.m.

L-1 Adjournment W. Rose

Moved by: J. Jones

Seconded By: P. Boutis

"THAT the SEAC 20-05 meeting of January 21, 2021 meeting be adjourned at 8:07 p.m."

CARRIED