



Special Education Advisory Committee SEAC 20-01

Virtual MS Teams

Thursday, September 17, 2020 – 6:00 p.m.

MINUTES

SEAC Members

Present: Chair T. Waldschmidt, L. Boswell, P. Boutis, T. Buchanan, R. Collver, L. DeJong, K. Jones, W. Rose, L. Scott, CA Sloat, C. Speers, T. Wilson.

Regrets: C. Brady, B. Caers, M. Carpenter, C. Clattenburg, N. Schuur, J. Trovato, R. Winter.

Resource Staff

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

Recorder: P. Curran.

Guests: J. Gemmill, ITS Staff

A-1 Opening **T. Waldschmidt**

(a) Welcome T. Waldschmidt

Chair Waldschmidt welcomed everyone, called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM and read the Land Acknowledgement Statement.

(b) Chair Waldschmidt conducted the roll call.

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

i. Move E-1 (c) to C-1 Business Arising from Minutes and/or Previous Meetings (c) SEAC Meetings 2020-2021 – Virtual vs. Face-to-Face – L. Thompson

ii. Add E-1 Other Business (c) SEAC Membership Update – L. Thompson

Moved by: L. DeJong
Seconded by: C. A. Sloat

“THAT the SEAC 20-01 Agenda for September 17, 2020 Meeting be approved as amended.”

CARRIED

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

(a) Update – Summer School Transition Program, SEA Summer Camps and Summer Support for Vulnerable Students and Families J. White / P. Bagchee

<https://youtu.be/TvqN23ecYXU>

i. Summer School Transition Program



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The Ministry of Education provided one-time funding which Grand Erie used to run 23 face-to-face programs in 16 schools for students from Kindergarten to grade 3.

Staff training occurred from August 17—21 and student participation in programs was from August 24 – 28.

Learning focused in the areas of Self Regulation, Behaviour Management and/or Social Skills and/or Social Interactions.

The summer “Super Self-Reg” program used during this camp is also being offered by CYWs in schools this fall and is currently running in 105 classrooms across Grand Erie.

One-time funding also allowed for a Social Worker to provide a continuation of mental health services over July and August. A total of 47 Wellness referrals were completed over the summer months.

Purpose of phone Wellness Checks:

- To discuss and provide strategies that support student mental health.
- To provide mental health support to students who are attending summer school and Camp Sail.
- To discuss in-home coping strategies and wellness.
- To assist students and families with connecting to community agencies, resources and support.
- Support students and families in transitioning back to school.

ii. Virtual Summer SEA Camp

The camp theme was “Find Your Own Superpowers”.

24 students participated in this camp from July 27-31 where they honed skills in various software programs and discovered accessibility and other features on their computers. They learned troubleshooting, problem-solving and sharing.

iii. Virtual Coding Camp

This camp was open to students in grades 4-10 and developed for students who fall within the autism spectrum and for those who have other special needs.

It was intended to help students transition back to school.

This program was offered at beginner and intermediate levels with the purpose of creating a structure and activities that help students engage with each other while developing useful transferable skills.



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Staff reported 100% of campers showed a positive increase in their confidence when navigating Google Meet and Microsoft Teams in a learning environment after conducting the 30-minute sessions.

Staff completed the Ministry required report but as the success of the program exceeded expectations, staff is also compiling more extensive data from teacher, student and family feedback to inform how to continually teach these methods.

SEAC would like staff to submit this more fulsome information in a letter to the Ministry of Education.

It is hoped that additional funding may be made available when the value of the programs is demonstrated.

C-1 Business Arising from Minutes and/or Previous Meetings T. Waldschmidt

- (a) Ratification of Minutes June 18, 2020 Meeting #1 T. Waldschmidt

Moved by: R. Collver

Seconded by: W. Rose

THAT the Minutes of SEAC 19-09 Meeting #1 held June 18, 2020 be approved as distributed.

CARRIED

- (b) Ratification of Minutes June 18, 2020 Meeting #2 T. Waldschmidt

Page 2 paragraph 5 will be amended to read, "Moving forward the funds will be allocated to schools to support student learning opportunities with a focus on high expectations for student achievement and success." per L. Thompson

Moved by: L. Boswell

Seconded by: C. A. Sloat

THAT the minutes of SEAC 19-10 Meeting #2 held June 18, 2020 be approved as amended.

CARRIED

- (c) SEAC Schedule of Meetings 2020-21

It was shared that the schedule has a conflict with the March 11, 2021 GEPIC Meeting which Director Roberto has agreed to change as SEAC changed its meeting to prevent a conflict last year.

- (d) SEAC Meetings 2020-21 – Virtual vs. Face-to-Face



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The Board received expectations outlined by the Brant Medical Officer of Health for meetings held in the Board room. Acknowledging that some members may be uncomfortable attending face-to face we would continue to offer virtual access, with anyone attending in person requiring electronic access and a headset.

Meeting dates and times were shared with all members.

Reviewed the requirements to conduct face-to-face SEAC meetings in the Board Room of the Education Centre. Noted that SEAC meetings conducted in a face-to-face model will continue to be live-streamed through YouTube to allow for public viewing.

Reviewed the protocol for accessing the Education Centre for SEAC members.

Discussed the health and safety protocols required for SEAC meetings to continue in a face-to-face manner in the Board Room of the Education Centre.

Following discussion, members agreed to change the October meeting to a virtual format and to revisit the situation at each meeting to determine when it may be recommended safe to resume physical meetings.

The item will be added as a regular topic on upcoming agendas until no longer required.

D-1 New Business

T. Waldschmidt

(a) Special Education Funding for COVID-19 Supports

L. Thompson

A total of \$568 625.00 was provided to Grand Erie through provincial and federal funding to offset the costs of programs, supports and services for students with special education and mental health needs. 10% of the provincial mental health funding (in Grand Erie approximately \$27,000.00) is to be used to support students at risk of being suspended in JK to Grade 3. As of September 1, 2020, the Ministry has removed the authority of school principals to be able to invoke discretionary suspensions for students in JK to Grade 3 as per Regulation 440/20 of the Education Act - Suspension of Elementary School Pupils. Mandatory suspensions can still be invoked.

Reviewed the programs, supports and services to which these funds were allocated.

<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/r20440>



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Within the area of Mental Health, funds will be used to hire 2 additional Child and Youth Workers and 1.5 additional Social Workers. Staff will receive training, so they can support both in-person and virtual learning.

An additional Social Worker will be hired to support Indigenous and Supervised Alternative Learning (SAL) students.

Social Workers will work with school Resource Teams to help identify at-risk or vulnerable students who may need in-person or on-line support.

(b) Special Education and Grand Erie's Virtual Academy

More than 5,000 students are currently registered in the Virtual Academy.

Reviewed the model of delivery of program for students with special education needs in regular and self-contained programs who have opted for virtual learning.

The current model for students in regular class with special education needs includes programming from a teacher in the virtual academy in collaboration with the home school learning resource teacher. Individual Education Plans will be developed and supported by the learning resource teacher in the home school. Collaboration between the virtual classroom teacher and the home school learning resource teacher will be ongoing.

The current virtual learning model for students in self-contained classrooms includes the teacher and educational assistant(s) supporting students taking part in both online learning and in-class instruction.

Classroom teams consist of a teacher and educational assistant(s). They provide programming to students and connect with families virtually using Microsoft Teams. Contact and program delivery is also offered via teleconference for those learning from home, based on individual student needs.

Classroom educators know their students and families best and are able to use informed and reliable professional judgement to provide program continuity for the students in their programs. Students with special education needs often require consistency of supports through times of transition, challenge and change. This model provides this consistency for our students during COVID-19.

Families may opt back into in-class instruction during the 2020-21 school year. This model allows for a seamless transition for students when they return to school.

(c) Consultation – SO31 Accessibility



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This policy is grounded in the Ontarians with Disability Act. The Board has met the standards for our website and the expectation for digital format in school libraries have been met. The only firm deadlines left are accessible buildings. SEAC is provided with updates to buildings from both new and retrofit perspectives.

Members felt the reference to guide dogs is redundant in SO31 as it is included in SO 33 Animals in Schools, Including Student Use of Guide Dogs and Service Animals.

Members also questioned placing the onus on a person with disabilities to ask for accommodation, rather than using a universal design for all our resources accessible from the start.

Members were provided with a consultation question, “As adults who visit Grand Erie sites for a variety of reasons, what do you see or experience that tells you we are earnest about our responsibility to accessibility?”

- The lack of personal experience makes it difficult to know what might be missing or not working.
- Critical to distinguishing between physical accessibility and other less obvious forms of disabilities.
- Location of and direction to accessible washrooms and elevators
- Signage in fonts and colours that are difficult to read
- Accessible entry doors from fields and playgrounds, etc.

Feedback on this topic at this stage is valuable as often staff only hears when someone feels their needs are not being met or have encountered a barrier.

COVID information on schools is in the board’s green and blue colours and included graphics. It was planned to be simple and easy to follow.

This item will be added to the October agenda.

Members may send additional comments to the recording secretary.

(d) Learner Intervention Tracking for Excellence (LITE)

Reviewed the LITE data for the 2019-20 school year.

Acknowledged the unprecedented operational impacts of the year which included labour unrest and a global pandemic.



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Overall, in all disciplines, referrals for support or assessment either decreased or remained static other than referrals for Behaviour/Safety plans.

E-1 Other Business T. Waldschmidt

- (a) SEAC Representative to Grand Erie Parent Involvement Committee L. Thompson

The meeting schedule was shared with SEAC.

Chair Waldschmidt called for other volunteers and seeing none agreed to continue as the GEPIC representative from SEAC.

- (b) Public Consultation for Grand Erie's Special Education Plan L. Thompson

In accordance with Ministry of Education requirements, the Board provides a mechanism for public feedback.

Consultation questions are always available on the Grand Erie website and the public is prompted to respond to a survey when accessing the Special Education Plan standards on the website.

Previously there were only occasional responses, but since the COVID 19 pandemic struck, there has been an increase in responses.

Members also asked if that Learning Resource Teachers could remind parents where the special education plan and survey is located, during meetings.

- (c) SEAC Membership Update L. Thompson

M. Gatopoulos contacted the Recording Secretary for meeting dates and membership information on Sept 14th and submitted a note indicating his interest in SEAC membership.

L. Thompson noted there is space for an additional member, and she will take a recommendation to the Board for approval.



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F-1 Standing Items T. Waldschmidt

(a) Policy/Procedures Out for Comment

i. FT105 – Playground Equipment L. Thompson

Members will be advised of any policies or procedures relevant to Special Education.

The Recording Secretary will share policies and procedures when they go out for comment.

SEAC members should remember to identify yourself as a SEAC member when submitting comments.

G-1 Information Items T. Waldschmidt

(a) None.

H-1 Community Updates T. Waldschmidt

(a) None.

I-1 Correspondence T. Waldschmidt

(a) LDAO SEAC Circular – not available.

(b) Ltr – CSC Nouvelon re Current Status of MACSE June 10, 2020

W. Rose reminded members we had previously decided to send a letter in response.

T. Waldschmidt asked the Recording Secretary to make a note regarding this matter.

(c) Ltr – HPEDSB re Class Sizes and Online Options Feb 14, 2020

No comment.

J-1 Future Agenda Items and SEAC Committee Planning T. Waldschmidt

(a) Indigenous Representative to SEAC – P. Boutis

Noticed a long-standing vacancy and wondering if we could reach out to Board committees or Superintendent for a suggestion.

Contact will be made with Grand Erie's Indigenous Education Advisory Committee to seek out volunteer(s) for this vacancy.

(b) Engaging with Parents as a Community Representative – P. Boutis



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In her previous board she attended ward meetings but wondering how to effectively engage with parents and share information in Grand Erie.

(c) SEAC Information Online – P. Boutis

Meeting agendas and minutes including streamed meetings are not on our website.

C. A. Sloat reminded members that anything on our website is legal required to be available for seven years.

The SEAC page on the website will be reviewed to include meeting agendas and minutes.

K-1 Next Meeting

T. Waldschmidt

(a) Thursday, October 13, 2020 | MS Teams | 6:00 p.m.

L-1 Adjournment

T. Waldschmidt

Moved by: K. Jones

Seconded By: W. Rose

“THAT the SEAC 20-01 meeting of September 17, 2020 meeting be adjourned at 7:58 p.m.”

CARRIED