



# Special Education Advisory Committee SEAC 20-04

Virtual MS Teams

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

## MINUTES

### SEAC Members

**Present:** Chair T. Waldschmidt, L. Boswell, P. Boutis, T. Buchanan, R. Colver, A. Csoff, L. DeJong, A. Detmar, M. Gatopoulos, K. Jones, W. Rose, L. Scott, J. Trovato, T. Wilson.

**Regrets:** C. Brady, B. Caers-Bruce, M. Carpenter, R. Winter.

### Resource Staff

**Present:** P. Bagchee, L. Boudreault, D. Martins, K. Mertins, J. White.

**Regrets:** S. Slaman, L. Thompson

**Recorder:** P. Curran.

**Guests:** W. Baker – Superintendent Safe Schools, J. Gemmill – ITS Staff. C. A. Sloat – Alternate Trustee.

**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.

He noted C. Brady is absent due to the loss of her husband and advised anyone wishing to send a card to contact the Recording Secretary for her address. He asked members to keep her in our thoughts.

Chair Waldschmidt also welcomed Superintendent Martins and thanked her for supporting SEAC in Superintendent Thompson’s absence.

L. Boudreault will monitor the chat.

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

i. Remove D-1 (a) OnSIS as admission dates were extended delaying the submission of data to the March meeting – J. White

Moved by: M. Gatopoulos

Seconded by: L. Boswell

**THAT** the SEAC 20-04 Agenda for Thursday, December 17, 2020 be approved as amended.

**CARRIED**



B-1

**Timed Items**

**T. Waldschmidt**

(a)

Suspension, Expulsion and Exclusion Report for Students  
with Special Education Needs 2019-20

W. Baker

Due to the closure of schools in March 2020, disciplinary measures involving suspension were greatly reduced which impacts accurate trend reporting.

Generally, approximately 95% of suspensions for all students including those with special needs are five or less days with academic support provided by the school. When the period exceeds five days, legislation requires boards to ensure academic support is available and at 11 days, counselling supports are added.

Although identified categories for special education students are a small sample size, the data matches overall outcomes.

Across grades and over time, suspensions are dominated by male students with about 56% of all suspensions being a single day duration. At the elementary level the ratio of suspension for boys to girls is 4:1 and at the secondary level the ratio reduces to 2:1.

Behaviour Management is critical to the reduction of suspensions and school principals play a huge role in helping students self regulate. This skill is integral to promote and ensure a safe and healthy environment.

The Education Act requires that mitigating circumstances are considered which can lead to different consequences for two students who exhibit the same behaviour. The student with special needs may not be able to understand the consequences of the behaviour they are about to commit or underlying medical conditions, e.g., Tourette’s Syndrome may explain aspects of behaviour.

From last year’s data, only two students were expelled, and neither were special needs students. The seven students who were excluded all were identified but their behaviour would have resulted in expulsion even without a special education designation.

**Expulsion** is addressed under Grand Erie policy SO7 Student Expulsion. School administrators can recommend expulsion, but the Student Discipline Committee has the authority to make the decision.

Legislation requires expelled students receive academic support.



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**Exclusion** is not considered disciplinary or a behavioural consequence. It is under the authority of the school administrator who may deem a student's behaviour as a risk to others.

Discussion:

Students do not have to be identified for mitigating circumstances to be considered, their IEP may provide information for consideration.

Ratio of boys to girls is a result of different developmental differences such as earlier oral language development by girls which is a skill that usually reduces aggressions. Boys behaviour is more often physical and impulsive at the elementary age. Verbal aggression is more common in all students in the secondary panel.

When students are having a bad day and parents are asked to pick them up early, the school would always make note of the information, but senior administration does not record this data. Formal suspensions are a minimum of one day and school administrators will always try to work collaboratively with students and parents. In certain circumstances, parents may choose to take the child home under a voluntary withdrawal rather than have a suspension imposed.

In response to members' questions about supports for teachers to help continue the reduction of suspensions they were told classroom composition has changed over the years with a view to balance the needs of the individual against the needs of the group.

Classroom teachers and educational assistants are helping mitigate the behaviours that would previously have led to suspensions. Important to understand that students with visible needs will elicit assistance, rather than a student with a behaviour problem whose actions can be deemed as deliberate.

Members acknowledged the great work being done by classroom teachers, educational assistants, school administrators, special education staff and safe schools staff.

Links:

[Ministry of Education - Safe Schools Suspension Expulsion](#)

[Grand Erie DSB SO7 Student Expulsions](#)

[Education Act RSO 1990](#)

*Education Act RSO 1990 / Section 265 / Duties of a Principal  
access to school or class*

(m) "...subject to an appeal to the board, to refuse to admit to the school or classroom a person whose presence in the school or classroom would in the principal's judgment be detrimental to the physical or mental well-being of the pupils; ..."



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- (b) Shanker and Hopkins Self-Regulation Professional Development P. Bagchee

Self Regulation is not a program, but a framework for understanding stress and self regulation, which impacts us all. As well, some self regulate in maladaptive ways.

Key topics include Understanding the Triune Brain; Understanding the Difference Between Self Control and Self Regulation; Calm Begets Calm; Stress Behaviour vs Misbehaviour; the Five Domains; and The Five R's.

Once there is understanding of the five domains and stressors it is possible to move on to the application.

Ms. Bagchee explained she completed the Self Regulation Facilitator Course last year and that the Child and Youth Workers were trained in the MEHRIT course so will be taking the lead in introducing this to the 16 participating schools. Training includes discussion and review of the Shanker Hopkins Self Regulation material at each school staff meeting learning how to reframe children's behaviours. Supporting materials include videos and articles, as well as the "Self Regulation in Schools" handbooks which were purchased by the board.

The board is exploring more professional development in this area for use in classrooms with students who have learning difficulties. A key belief is that if you see a child differently, you will see a different child. There is also an excellent article on coregulation which really helps educators understand the topic at a much deeper level.

This is a strongly empathic way of viewing people.

All New Teachers will participate in a Shanker Hopkins Self Regulation workshop as part of their New Teacher Induction Program.

Discussion:

The applications can be utilized at any grade. There is specific course work for staff, parents/caregivers and seniors. Also, there is a built in Kindergarten section.

Participating schools were permitted to choose who wanted to use this framework, but in smaller schools all staff are using it. In the larger schools usually four to six staff plus the principal and the Learning Resource Teacher are participating.

Staff will investigate if parent / caregiver training can be made available.

Trustee Collver thanked Ms. Bagchee for introducing the framework to our schools and for making Mental Health resources available over the holidays.



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(c) SEAC Orientation Guide – Review for Members

J. White

With the election process approaching Superintendent Thompson suggested members and staff review the orientation handbook together to ensure a good understanding of the roles and responsibilities of SEAC and how the committee is structured under Ontario legislation.

The handbook will also provide guidance for anyone wishing to become more active in SEAC. Bylaw 8 includes Terms of Reference for SEAC which contains communication tips and guiding principles.

Community or agency representatives may bring motions forward for recommendations on improvements or changes to special education programs or services within our board. Members also participate in the annual review of the special education plan of selected standards, although questions on any of the standards may be brought to the committee and if appropriate placed on the agenda. SEAC also reviews special education funding and budget proposals.

Community members from the public may reach out to any SEAC member with questions or concerns by finding SEAC contact information on our website.

Ten meetings are required annually and are open to the public who are required to contact the Chair prior to attending. Meetings are usually held at the Education Centre but have been conducted via MS Teams since September 2020. Virtual meetings are live streamed for public viewing.

Additional SEAC references are available using the hyperlink provided in the handbook.

Ms. White wanted to highlight the piece on communication tips and guiding principles as she reflected on her own presentations at meetings where she tries to read the room to make the meeting experience comfortable for everyone. These guidelines apply to SEAC meetings as well to ensure we have an inclusive collaborative meeting that allows positive discussions and fosters an atmosphere where everyone feels they have a place.

Members were invited to ask questions if anything in the handbook or Terms of Reference caught their attention.



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

(a) Ratification of Minutes November 19, 2020

Moved by: R. Collver  
Seconded by: W. Rose

THAT the Minutes of SEAC 20-03 held November 19, 2020 be approved as distributed.

**CARRIED**

**D-1 New Business T. Waldschmidt**

(a) Special Education Self-Contained Planning 2021-2022 J. White

The annual process for planning self-contained classrooms begins with special education teachers, L. Boudreault and herself to review the students who may need special placements in the coming year.

Self contained classrooms are provided in a variety of locations to allow alternative options for students who are most successful in an environment with a smaller ratio of students.

The overall goal is to minimize the number of changes for students during the school year as well as during their academic career but capacity will be impacted by students entering Grand Erie from another board, students moving from elementary to secondary, graduating from or leaving secondary and the influx of students from alternative programs, students from Six Nations Grand River and students from Mississauga of the Credit Nation.

The current plan is in draft form with numbers projected for September 2021 and the information contained within is confidential.

Members expressed concern that the removal of the enrichment programs caused the gifted numbers to fall below capacity and believe there is a responsibility to provide programming for these students.

Ms. White explained the numbers were declining before the renewed model was developed in which enrichment is delivered in the classroom rather than through a withdrawal model. Staff is currently reviewing programs to support enrichment.

Many families indicated they don't want the gifted designation as they believe it places unreasonable expectations on their children. The board's vast geography also creates challenges in transporting children to gifted programs.



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Ms. White also explained the Canadian Cognitive Abilities Test (CCAT) is often used as a tool that draws educators' attention to the fact a student may need more support, but its initial intent was to focus closer on the gifted population. Ms. Backus-Kelly, Teacher Consultant – Gifted is currently having discussions with schools and families to ensure they know the program is available.

Designations for enrichment come from a student's CCAT results and are initiated through parent or teacher consultant request.

Members questioned if locally developed curriculum was an option for students not in a life skills course if parents did not want their child in a self-contained class.

Superintendent Martins explained in grade 9 and 10 there are three pathways. Locally Developed Courses traditionally takes students to the workplace or college. Applied Level Courses take students to college level or university study. The Academic Level Courses typically takes students to a university pathway.

Ms. White indicated any self-contained is K or not for credit but last year they focused on expanding options for students in self-contained to encourage movement.

The Life Skills is fully contained program where students work in an alternative program toward a certificate of accomplishment but not OSSD, they do not earn credits. Vocational Skills students are in workplace skills periods for most of day but have options for integration in a credit course. The Bridge Program students work between modified programming, alternative programming and integrated programming. Students in the Bridge Program would be placed following identification through the IPRC (Identification, Placement, Review Committee).

One member requested clarification between the Strategies Class and the Transition Class.

Ms. White explained the strategies class was initially meant to be a short-term intervention to help students learn self-regulation and behaviour strategies so they could transition back to their home school classroom. Staff discovered over the years many students tended to remain in the strategies class as they continued to struggle with their behaviour which delayed or prevented their return to a regular classroom. Currently they are now placing upper junior and intermediate students who despite all the interventions in a regular class still require more support and smaller class ratios before they transition to secondary school.

The transition class is for grades 7 and 8 (intermediate) students with a focus on their successful transition to grade 9 and to ensure their



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placement in secondary is correct. The transition self contained class also provides more focus on students who may require some form of modified program.

Transition happens naturally as students are placed in age appropriate settings. Where a self-contained class is not available, students will be accommodated in a light filled class or in their home school classroom.

Secondary data is presented in the same format as elementary and Ms. White noted they will require some additional spaces for next year. In Haldimand particularly where the number of students with complex needs in Autism is increasing and the two group homes for adults will be sending students to the Cayuga Secondary School Life Skills program.

Staff began renaming the programs last year to indicate the purpose rather than identify the exceptionality but have found parents and some staff have not yet adapted to this process. Staff will continue to inform families and will also continue to update names.

The process for decisions on self contained classrooms includes a responsibility to stay within the prescribed budget. The opening of an additional class requires the closing of another. When there are strong feelings about opening or closing classes, it is important to keep the budget restrictions in mind.

One member noted a school board who had closed all special education classes other than the Transition class which was being phased out and suggested it may be helpful to review the success of removing self contained classes. Ms. Boudreault explained special education staff previously took a delegation to Avon Maitland DSB to view their inclusive model. AMDSB staff shared they had to increase the additional support to sustain the shift. This is something that must be considered.

One agency representative mentioned she counsels parents to look at the whole picture and to make sure they understand their child will not always stay in the self-contained class but is evaluated regularly along the way and moved based on the child's skills.

Ms. White closed by informing members this report is going to the Board on January 11 which is much earlier this year so that grade 8 students could be informed of their school and class for September at the same time as their cohorts.





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### E-1 Other Business

T. Waldschmidt

#### (a) SEAC Chair and Vice-Chair Election Process -January 2021

P. Curran

This year will look different as we will conduct the election virtually. Beginning with the Superintendent calling for nominations for Chair from the floor. She will ask three times before closing the nomination.

If one candidate was nominated the candidate will be asked if they accept and agree to stand; if so, there is no vote required, the candidate is acclaimed. If the candidate does not wish to stand, the Superintendent will call again for nominations.

If more than one candidate is nominated, we will move to a vote via MS Forms. I will have the forms prepared and will email to each of you for a confidential vote.

Once the Chair is elected, the same process follows for Vice-Chair.

Members are allowed to self nominate if interested in either position.

Trustees may hold only one of the positions, either Chair or Vice-Chair, but both positions may not be held by trustees.

K. Mertins and the Recording Secretary will act as scrutineers, if necessary.

### F-1 Standing Items

T. Waldschmidt

#### (a) Policy/Procedures Out for Comment

J. White

Members are advised to check the board's website <https://www.granderie.ca/board/about/bylaws-policies-procedures-protocols> to determine how to provide input, the timeframe, and to know which documents are currently available for comment.

January 8, 2021 is the deadline for comments on the following policies.

- [FT11 Community Planning and Facility Partnership](#)
- [SO2 School Councils](#)
- [SO4 Distribution of Materials in Schools](#)

### G-1 Information Items

T. Waldschmidt

#### (a) Lansdowne Children's Centre – L. DeJong Shared their Autism Services Newsletter

J. White



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- (b) Community Living Ontario – T. Buchanan J. White  
Provided a Children’s Contest ‘Together, We’re Better’  
Special Education sent this to school resource teachers.
- (c) Woodview MH & Autism Services – A. Detmar J. White  
Announced Autism Services coming to Brantford 2021
- H-1 Community Updates T. Waldschmidt**
- (a) None
- I-1 Correspondence T. Waldschmidt**
- (a) None
- J-1 Future Agenda Items and SEAC Committee Planning T. Waldschmidt**
- (a) SEAC Chair and Vice Chair Election January 21, 2021– P. Curran
- (b) Special Education Budget for January 2021 – R. Collver
- K-1 Next Meeting T. Waldschmidt**
- (a) Thursday, January 21, 2021 | MS Teams | 6:00 p.m.
- L-1 Adjournment T. Waldschmidt**

Chair Waldschmidt thanked J. White and P. Bagchee for their hard work at tonight’s meeting. He thanked Superintendents Martins and Baker for attending and sharing their wisdom, for W. Rose for being ready to fill in during his internet drop and he thanked L. Boudreault for running the chat room.

He also asked that we please keep Superintendent Thompson and C. Brady in our thoughts and prayers over the holiday season.

He wished all SEAC members a wonderful holiday a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year on behalf of himself and his wife Nancy.

Moved by: J. Trovato

Seconded By: K. Jones

“THAT the SEAC 20-04 meeting of December 17, 2020 meeting be adjourned at 8:05 p.m.”

**CARRIED**