

SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Thursday, October 19, 2023
Catholic Education Centre - BoardRoom
1:00 P.M. – 2:30 P.M.

Chairperson: Shawna Belcourt

Vice-Chairperson: Clare Paterson

**TRUSTEES/MEMBERS WHO ARE UNABLE TO ATTEND THE MEETING ARE
ASKED TO PLEASE NOTIFY ASHLEIGH FAULKNER (705) 748-4861 EXT. 1226**

A. Call to Order:

1. Land Acknowledgment: Jonathan Di Ianni
As we continue to learn together, I (we) would like to acknowledge, as we do at school, that this land on which we live and learn daily, is the traditional territory of the Michi Saagig (Mississauga) Anishnaabe. All of the PVNC Catholic District School Board lies within the Williams Treaty territory and we are all Treaty people. We offer our gratitude to the First Peoples of this land who continue to care for, and share their teachings about, our earth and our relations. May we honour those teachings.
2. Opening Prayer: Tiffany Thickson
3. Motion to Approve Agenda
4. Declarations of Conflicts of Interest
5. Motion for Approval of the Minutes of the September 28, 2023 Meeting
6. Business Arising from the Minutes:

B. Remarks /Presentations:

1. Social Work Service Delivery Presentation
2. Remarks: Chairperson, Shawna Belcourt

3. Remarks: Superintendent of Learning: Special Education Services/ Mental Health & Well-being/ Safe and Caring Schools, Jonathan Di Ianni
4. Update from Trustee: Kathleen Tanguay
5. Board Budget

From the presentations:

- i. What are the key learnings from the presentation?
- ii. What do parents need to know?
- iii. What options exist to get this information to parents?
- iv. How can SEAC support parents in this process?
- v. What can your associations/organizations add specifically to the learning today if any?
- vi. What should be sent out to families in the DID YOU KNOW from SEAC?

D. Correspondence Items:

1. Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board - Retention of Educational Assistants
2. Minister's Advisory Council Feedback
3. SEAC Communication Letter

E. Information Items:

1. PVNCCDSB Board of Trustee Minutes and Agendas
<https://www.pvnccdsb.on.ca/our-board/board-meetings/>

F. Old Business:

G. New Business:

1. Tentative Meeting topics for 2023-2024 Special Education Advisory Committee:

Date	Topic
October 19, 2023	2023 Board Budget, Social Work
November 16, 2023	Staff Census
January 18, 2024 (virtual)	UDL/Executive Functioning, The Third Path
February 15, 2024 (virtual)	Equity & Inclusive Education

March 21, 2024	Community Connections - Funding for Families
April 25, 2024	IEPs & IPRC Processes for Families
May 16, 2024	Budget for 2024-2025, CBIPSAW
June 13, 2024	Special Education Plan, PAaC on SEAC

2. Putting forward recommended action to the PVNCCDSB Board of Trustees to add one new member to the Special Education Advisory Committee.
 - a. R.A. that Kylee Baker from the Alternatives Building Bridges Program, be approved as a member of the Special Education Advisory Committee for the remaining term of November 15, 2022 to November 14, 2026.

H. Next Meeting:

1. Selection of Members for Territorial Recognition, Opening and Closing Prayers

I. Conclusion:

1. Closing Prayer: Kathleen Tanguay
2. Motion for Adjournment

July 11, 2023

Hon. Stephen Lecce, Minister of Education
Ministry of Education
15th Floor, 438 University Ave.
Toronto, Ontario M5G 2K8

Dear Minister Lecce,

We write this letter on behalf of the members of the Dufferin Peel Catholic District School Board (DPCDSB) Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC), regarding the recruitment and retention of staff serving in the capacity of Educational Resource Worker (Educational Assistants). All Boards within Ontario employ some version of this job classification which supports our most vulnerable students with complex and diverse learning needs.

The function of staffing Educational Resource Workers has seen a steady decline in qualified candidates to work within our board. Over the past ten years, the post-secondary institutions offering programs of qualification for Educational Assistants have produced fewer graduates and as a result, a shortfall is felt, not only at our school board but throughout Ontario. Unfortunately, as the numbers of candidates for Educational Resource Workers decrease, the number of students requiring their invaluable support has increased. There simply aren't enough Educational Resource Workers to match the demands of our diverse learners.

Educational Resource Workers provide an invaluable resource to our students. They facilitate teaching and accommodating the needs of our diverse learners within an integrated and inclusive classroom. They help in the building of necessary life skills, assist with developing self-regulation and independence within the planning for independence classrooms. Teachers may teach the lessons; however, it's the indispensable hands-on teaching by our Educational Resource Workers who truly make a positive impact to our diverse learners. Some of our most vulnerable students even require personal care throughout the day, whether it's to eat, drink or use the washroom. All the while, the educational resource workers are tirelessly helping our diverse learners with special needs to be safe in all they do.

To add to their many duties, Educational Resource Workers also facilitate our diverse learners with their specialized equipment and technology to access their learning environment, whether it's in a classroom or gymnasium. Our Educational Resource Workers are right there helping our diverse learners manage their hearing aids, specialized technology, laptops, chrome books, iPads, sophisticated augmentative communication devices, eye gaze devices and switches. The school board itinerate teachers travel from school to school to help their diverse learners; physiotherapists,

occupational therapists, speech language pathologists, child youth workers, visit our diverse learners at school throughout the year also. As much as the teacher is informed of these specialized professional visits, it's the Educational Resource Worker who carries on with the prescribed recommendations for their diverse learners, ensuring their needs are met.

It's clear to see how critically important our Educational Resource Workers are to our diverse learners. Although the classroom teacher is ultimately responsible for all their students, it is the Educational Resource Workers' comprehensive duties and responsibilities that make or break a student's day. When there is a lack of Educational Resource Workers, our diverse learners are the ones who do not get their complete educational needs met.

Minister Lecce, Are the diverse learners' needs as important as those of the average student? Today, where equity, accessibility and inclusion are paramount, where are the Educational Resource Workers our diverse learners need? The shortfall of Educational Resource Workers in Ontario is a major problem in our education system.

Without intervention by the Government of Ontario to engage in a concerted effort to support post-secondary institutions in attracting more candidates to these programs, the supply and demand problem will continue to compound. There is precedent for this type of intervention as the province recently committed to spending up to \$200 million to train up to 16,200 additional Personal Support Workers through publicly assisted colleges, private career colleges and district school boards in the 2021-2022 school year.

We would ask that the Ministry of Education collaborate with the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development, to develop a strategy in collaboration with post-secondary institutions to support the recruitment, retention, and training of Educational Resource Workers in the province of Ontario.

We thank you, in advance, for your serious consideration of our request, and we look forward to your proactive response to this educational crisis.

Sincerely,



Bruno Iannicca, SEAC Chair, Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board (DPCDSB) Trustee Mississauga Ward 6 and 11	Dely Farrace, SEAC Vice Chair, DPCDSB SEAC Association Representative for Brampton Caledon Community Living
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cc: DPCDSB Trustees

MPPs of Dufferin-Peel

Chairs of Special Education Advisory Committees