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## SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Thursday, April 29, 2021

VIRTUAL

Google Meet Link: [meet.google.com/jsc-iwpy-nmh](https://meet.google.com/jsc-iwpy-nmh)

6:30 P.M. – 8:00 P.M.

Chairperson: Arlene Godby

Vice-chairperson: Melissa Gillespie

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**Members:** Melissa Gillespie (Vice-chairperson), Shawna Belcourt, Kelly Smigielski, Sandra Scott, Clare Paterson, Helen McCarthy, Emmanuel Pinto, David Bernier

**Guests:** Jennifer Angelo, Mandy Hamu, Leeann Gifford, Christine Haffie

**Administration:** Laurie Corrigan, Cynthia Chan Reynolds, Laura Di Ianni,

**Recorder:** Vicki Blakely

**Absent (by motion):** Arlene Godby

**A. Call to Order:**

1. Land Acknowledgment: Emmanuel Pinto  
As we continue to learn together in these exceptional circumstances, 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 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: Emmanuel Pinto

3. Approval of the Agenda

Moved by: Kelly Smigielski  
Seconded by: Clare Paterson  
That the agenda be approved as presented.

Carried

4. Declaration of Conflicts of Interest

None noted.

5. Motion for Excusal from Attendance

Moved by: Shawna Belcourt

Seconded by: Kelly Smigielski

That Arlene Godby be excused from attendance at the April 29, 2021 Special Education Advisory Committee meeting.

Carried

6. Motion for Approval of the Minutes of March 25, 2021 Meeting.

Moved by: Helen McCarthy

Seconded by: Shawna Belcourt

That the minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee Minutes held on March 25, 2021 be approved as presented.

Carried

7. Business Arising from the Minutes:

PAAC Survey Results

SEAC members are asked to review and prioritize the PAAC Survey Results for the next meeting. Think of strategies for recruitment and what the membership looks like. Review the Handbook and what sections the committee would like to focus on. A copy/link to the Handbook will be sent out to members. Members are asked to submit areas of focus from the PAAC Survey to the Chair, Vice-Chair and Administrative Assistant prior to the meeting.

**B. Recommended Actions/Presentations:**

1. Remarks: Vice-Chairperson – Melissa Gillespie

Thanked the members for their increased participation in discussions at meetings and encouraged this engagement to continue. Appreciated the opportunity for the committee to speak with the Director of Education, Joan Carragher in regards to the Strategic Priorities and Strategic Plan Renewal.

Asked members to keep in mind at the June meeting SEAC will discuss goal setting and topics for next year's meetings.

2. Remarks: Superintendent of Learning/Special Education Services – Laurie Corrigan

The board website continues to be an excellent source for current information as changes occur at PVNCCDSB.

PVNCCDSB moved to virtual learning April 19, 2021 due to the provincial order. As needed by families, technology and wifi was distributed to support virtual learning. Updates were made to the Parent Guide to Blended Learning and it was redistributed to parents. Professional learning was implemented with the participation of Special Education Consultants and the SESS Facilitator. A tech support telephone line has been provided to parents. Similar to the last closure, special education students who cannot be accommodated to learn virtually from home are attending in-person at 30 schools.

Staff supporting special education students have received vaccination eligibility letters as per the direction of the Ministry. At PVNCCDSB, 700 staff were sent letters, and although we do not know how many have received their vaccines, there is much discussion that some are vaccinated already and many others have appointments booked.

Asymptomatic testing for staff and students at our schools continues. Holy Trinity, CSS, St. Thomas Aquinas CSS, Holy Cross CSS and St. Mary CSS have all hosted testing. May 1 and 8, testing will be held at St. Stephen CSS.

In keeping with the request of families, PVNCCDSB will continue to plan virtual school for next year. There are currently 2500 students in virtual school, with 500 students registered to attend for the 2021-2022 school year.

A beautiful Easter Mass was shared at PVNCCDSB; coordinated by Father Paul and celebrated with Bishop Miehm.

May 2 – 7 is Catholic Education week, the theme this year is Nurturing Hope. As a part of Catholic Education Week, the annual Catholic Leadership Awards will take place virtually on Wednesday, May 5. Thursday, May 6 PVNCCDSB celebrates special education support staff.

Consultation with stakeholders continues until June as the Director of Education, Joan Carragher, continues the planning of the Strategic Priorities. Data will be reviewed over the summer and the Strategic Priorities plan will be received by Trustees in the fall for approval and implementation. Families, students, and staff can access and complete ThoughtExchange through the PVNCCDSB.

The Catholic Parent Engagement Committee's final meeting will feature speaker Dr. Joti Samra on Wednesday, May 19 at 6:45 p.m. in support of Children's Mental Health Recognizing Signs and Symptoms and Enhancing Effective Parenting Strategies. The online event is free.

### 3. Update from Trustees:

Emmanuel Pinto

Congratulated Laurie Corrigan, Superintendent of Learning/Special Education Services and team that worked on the five policies that were recently passed at the Policy Committee meeting to improve AODA. in regards to Employment, Information and Communication, Transportation, Public Spaces, and Customer Service.

Excited for Catholic Education Week, May 2-7, 2021.

Helen McCarthy

Would like to review what went well at the meetings this year including the possibility of renewing any goals from last year at the June meeting.

**C. Discussion Items:**

**A. SEAC Meeting Presentations**

1. Role of EA Facilitator – Leeann Gifford, SESS Facilitator and Laura Di Ianni, Vice Principal of Special Education Services

The presentation discussed the multidisciplinary role of the EA facilitator in the PVNCCDB environment. The EA facilitator works collaboratively with school administration, special education consultants, offering modeling, best practices, mentorship and coaching to special education support staff. The role provides support both in school and through professional development. The organization, development, tracking and training of BMS is facilitated through this role, which included adapting training and materials to the virtual setting due to the pandemic. In order to assist the virtual school and school closures, support to special education support staff was provided through professional development, adapting accommodations through the virtual lens, adapting resources and interventions, and working collaboratively with Learning Technologies and SEA trainers. The facilitator brings an important lens to the needs and voices of special education support staff providing resources and learning opportunities through Google Classroom. The SESS Facilitator professional development was essential in supporting the staff and ensuring they knew they had someone to turn help.

Discussion Items from the presentation:

The committee discussed the key learnings from the presentation, including the importance of the SESS Facilitator role. How students are supported and what that looks like virtually was examined. Virtual support varies from student to student, but the facilitator has worked with staff to provide a variety of innovative practices to assist students.

**B. Correspondence Items:**

1. DDSB – Proposed Transit Mall, Town of Whitby Accessibility Concerns for Students of Durham District School Board was received for information and filing.

**C. Information Items:**

1. Information items/updates were received by the following organizations as per the attachments to the March 25, 2021 Agenda Package:
  - i. Holy Trinity CSS CASA – Autism Awareness Day (April 6) video was shared with the committee and well received by members.
  - ii. Ontario College of Teachers – Thoughtexchange link was sent to SEAC members to participate by May 3, 2021.

- iii. Autism Ontario – Update
- iv. Community Living Trent Highlands – Letter to Friends and Families
- v. Community Living Trent Highlands – Spring Break with CLTH 2021 Flyer
- vi. Down Syndrome Association of Peterborough – Update
- vii. Grandview Kids – Update
- viii. Northumberland Child Development Centre - Update

D. Old Business:

- 1. Did You Know?
  - i. The committee decided it would be beneficial in the next Did You Know? to include information for parents on transitions.

E. New Business:

None noted.

**D. Next Meeting:**

**1. 2020-2021 Meeting Dates:**

Thursday, May 27, 2021 – Teacher of the Blind

Thursday, June 17, 2021 – Role of the Special Education Consultant

Budget & Spec. Ed. Staffing, and Special Education Plan Review

10<sup>th</sup> Meeting PD/TBD

Location: Virtually

Time: 6:30 – 8:00 p.m.

**2. Selection of Members for Territorial Recognition, Opening and Closing Prayers:**

- a. Territorial Recognition and Opening Prayer: Laurie Corrigan
- b. Closing Prayer: Laurie Corrigan

**E. Conclusion:**

- 1. Closing Prayer: Emmanuel Pinto
- 2. Adjournment

Moved by: Emmanuel Pinto

Seconded by: Kelly Smigielski

That the meeting held on April 29, 2021 be adjourned at 7:27 p.m.

Carried