
SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Thursday, September 16, 2021

VIRTUAL

6:30 P.M. – 8:00 P.M.

Chairperson: Arlene Godby

Vice-chairperson: Melissa Gillespie

Members: Arlene Godby (Chair), Kelly Smigielski, Shawna Belcourt, Sandra Scott, Helen McCarthy, Clare Paterson, Emmanuel Pinto

Guests: Jennifer Angelo, Jeannie Armstrong, James Melon, Amanda Hamu

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

Recorder: Theresa Greavette

Absent (by motion): Melissa Gillespie

A. Call to Order:

1. Land Acknowledgment: Arlene Godby

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: Arlene Godby

3. Additions to the Agenda

None noted.

4. Approval of the Agenda

Moved by: Clare Paterson

Seconded by: Laura Di Ianni

That the agenda be approved as presented.

Carried

5. Declaration of Conflicts of Interest

None noted.

6. Motion for Excusal from Attendance

Moved by: Emmanuel Pinto

Seconded by: Helen McCarthy

That Melissa Gillespie be excused from attendance at the September 16, 2021 Special Education Advisory Committee meeting.

Carried

7. Motion for Approval of the Minutes of June 17, 2021 Meeting.

Moved by: Shawna Belcourt

Seconded by: Sandra Scott

That the minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee Minutes held on June 17, 2021 be approved as presented.

Carried

8. Business Arising from the Minutes:

None noted.

B. Recommended Actions/Presentations:

1. Remarks: Chair – Arlene Godby

After countless years on this committee, we are sad to be losing Kelly Smigielski.

Thank you to Kelly for her support and dedication.

SEAC met over the summer a few times to collaborate on a letter to the Trustees in responses to the pride flag decision.

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

Flowers were sent to Kelly on behalf of SEAC to express our gratitude for her many years of service and contributions to the committee.

A comprehensive update of this year's Return to School has been provided by our Director of Education and found on the [board website](#). It is an excellent overview of the operation of the schools while we move forward together.

We continue to hold weekly meetings with the three public health agencies:

Peterborough Public Health, HKPR Public Health, and Durham Public Health and other school boards. We must continue to report any confirmed cases to the Ministry and include that information on our website. The [Covid Advisory](#) page is available again on our website.

We have had a number of pop up immunization clinics at St. Martin CES, St. Joseph CES Douro, and St. Peter CSS. We have also had them at Holy Trinity CSS and St. Stephen CSS. More are planned for St. Mary CSS and St. Thomas Aquinas CSS on September 24 and 27.

Our Director is in the process of bringing forward to the board of trustees the new strategic priorities. They are intended to come to the board at the next board meeting and were the results of an extensive consultation. In the meantime, the board calendars will be published with our new pillars, subject to input from the trustees: Being Creative, Being Well and Being Community. Thank you to the Mental Health and Wellbeing team for their prominence and work.

Thank you to those staff who supported Continuity of Wellbeing, Special Education, and the Transitions program this summer, students benefited as a result of these programs.

3. Update from Trustees:

Both Trustee McCarthy and Trustee Pinto provided reports to SEAC on the recent June vote by the trustees regarding the pride flag, as well as what were identified as social justice flag poles. Both trustees took questions from SEAC connected to their decision making processes. Trustee Pinto responded to SEAC's request for an explanation of the Board decision to not allow the flying of the Pride Flag in PVNCCDSB stating that he supported the decision, noting "homosexuality represented an immoral lifestyle and that supporting sin was unacceptable." Trustee Pinto said that he was paraphrasing the Catechism of the Catholic Church item 23:57. Discussion followed regarding the steps SEAC could take to express their disagreement with the decision and their disagreement with the rationale for the decision. The letter written by SEAC will be brought forward to the Board of Trustees. Trustee McCarthy recommended committee members form a delegation and attend the October board meeting to voice their disapproval of the board decision, seen through the context of the moral compass of the Catholic Church being challenged internationally.

4. Return to School 2021 - Summer Learning Program 2021 - Laurie Corrigan and Jennifer Angelo

PVNCCDSB was able to offer several special education summer learning programs this summer to assist our students:

- After School Skills Development Program (online)
- Summer Learning Online and Credit Recovery
- Continuity of Wellbeing (virtual/online)
- Transitions (in person)

Received positive feedback from parents: good problem solving strategies for students, great opportunity to be in schools with PPE.

Staff feedback was also positive - collaboration between disciplines.
[Summer Transitions 2021 Video .mov](#)

5. Equity Census - Jeannie Armstrong, Superintendent of Education

A steering committee has been established, comprised of elementary and secondary principals, consultants, communications, the equity advisor and the Director of Education. The purpose is to administer a voluntary student census in Grades 1-12, from September 27 to October 8, to advance the use of demographic data to promote inclusive and equitable learning environments for all students.

The equity advisor was hired for this project and will be involved in community consultation, interpretation of data collected and the and the writing of an equity action plan. The equity advisory will be running community engagement sessions in the Clarington region, and other staff will be running the sessions in the other regions.

The goal of this project is to ensure consultation with all stakeholders and ensure all students feel a sense of belonging in our schools.

A full report and the equity action plan is anticipated to be released in January or February.

C. Discussion Items:

1. SEAC Meeting Presentations:

- i. The committee was asked to reflect on the key learnings from the presentation and how SEAC can support parents in this process.

2. Correspondence Items:

- i. Letter from Assistant Deputy Minister of Education - Claudine Munroe

SEAC has received correspondence from ADM in consultation with Super of Business, while the funding is acknowledged, it does not represent an increase in funding that would support Special Education.

PVNCCDSB is projected to receive 2.8% more funding over last year, which includes the multi-disciplinary support amount; this does not represent a significant increase in funding.

- ii. SEAC Letter to Board of Trustees

Moved by: Sandra Scott

Seconded by: Clare Paterson

That the letter from the Special Education Advisory Committee regarding the pride flag be submitted to the Board of Trustees.

Carried

SEAC will deliberate about next steps regarding this motion.

3. Information Items:

i. Autism Ontario:

- [Supporting Students with Autism: 10 Ideas for Inclusive Classrooms](#) by Paula Kluth.
- Webinar – September 30, 2021 – 12-1230 pm - Caregiver Burnout (Register using [this link](#)).
- Webinar – October 7, 2021 – 7-8pm - Money talks: Accessing Financial resources for your Child with a Disability (Register using [this link](#)).
- [Return to School: Findings from the 2020 Autism Ontario Education Survey](#).

ii. Down Syndrome Association:

The Down Syndrome Association is now hosting in person groups for all ages. Please visit our [website](#) to see what is being offered.

4. Old Business:

- i. Topics for next Year - Return to School, Transitions, PAAC Survey, Mental Health and Wellbeing

5. New Business:

i. Other Topics for Consideration:

It was agreed that the Mental Health Lead would bring the renewal of the be-well strategy to this committee for input before it goes to the board.

The committee will receive an update regarding the equity census in February.

Updates from the social worker department was considered as another potential topic. Anyone with ideas for topics are asked to forward them to the committee chair.

D. Next Meeting: Thursday, October 21, 2021

2021-2022 Meeting Dates:

- Thursday, October 21, 2021
- Thursday, November 18, 2021
- Thursday, January 20, 2022
- Thursday, February 17, 2022
- Thursday, March 24, 2022

Thursday, April 21, 2022
Thursday, May 19, 2022
Thursday, June 16, 2022
10th Meeting TBD
Location: TBD
Time: 6:30 – 8:00 p.m.

E. Conclusion:

1. Closing Prayer: Arlene Godby
2. Adjournment

Moved by: Shawna Belcourt

Seconded by: Helen McCarthy

That the meeting held on September 16, 2021 be adjourned at 7:57 p.m.

Carried