

**Limestone District School Board**  
***Special Education Advisory Committee***

***SEAC Meeting***

**Wednesday, May 15, 2019**

**Algonquin & Lakeshore Catholic District School Board Education Centre  
151 Dairy Ave, Napanee  
5:00 pm**

**AGENDA**

- 1. Welcome**
- 2. Approval of Agenda**
- 3. Declaration of Conflict of Interest**
- 4. Business Arising From the Minutes**
  - Start time for 2019-2020
- 5. Budget Presentation - Superintendent Craig Young**
- 6. Educational Services Update - Principal Darlene Scarlett**
- 7. Correspondence (attached)**
  - Bluewater District School Board-FASD
  - Durham Catholic District School Board-Class Size and E-Learning
  - Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board-Noah and Gregory's Law
  - Durham District School Board-Ontario Autism Program Funding
  - Toronto District School Board-Exclusions
- 8. Association Updates (Attached)**
- 9. Other Business**
  - i) Ministry Updates – Associate Superintendent Alison McDonnell
  - ii) Ontario Autism Consultations - Associate Superintendent Alison McDonnell

**10. Next Meeting Date**

June 12, 2019 at 6 p.m.

**11. Adjournment**



## **Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)**

April 21, 2019

Honourable Lisa M. Thompson, Minister of Education

Ministry of Education

Mowat Block, Queen's Park

Toronto, Ontario

M7A 1L2

### **RE: Exclusion of Students with Disabilities from School**

Dear Minister Thompson,

I am writing on behalf of the Toronto District School Board's (TDSB) Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC). Our SEAC includes 8 Community Representatives and eleven Associations whose responsibility is to provide advice on how Ontario's education system can better meet the needs of over 46,000 students with special education needs at TDSB.

We write to you today about a deeply concerning issue that affects students with disabilities across the province – namely, their exclusion from school. Currently, too many families contact our associations telling us they have been told that their child not attend school at all, or has been permitted to attend school for only part of the school day. This burden falls disproportionately on students with disabilities and often has the effect of denying them a meaningful opportunity to access a fulsome education.

As you know, students can find themselves excluded from school, outside the discipline process. A principal may formally tell them they are refusing to admit them under s. 265(1)(m) of the Education Act. A school may tell them they are directed to only attend part of the day as a modified school day under Ontario regulations. A principal may just informally tell the family to pick up their child and keep them home. School Boards are not provided with clear direction on how to track such situations consistently and transparently. As a result, there is no provincial data that tracks how much school students with disabilities miss on a regular basis. This is in part because the provincial attendance and registration guidelines provide no structure or direction; therefore this process is left with individual school boards to manage. This results in lack of cohesion and consistency provincially. TDSB staff, in consultation with SEAC, is working on the documentation of such absences, but this practice should not be left to the advocacy efforts of individual SEACs and Board staff.

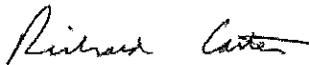
We at TDSB SEAC would like to see this situation changed. To this end, we appreciate the recent announcement by the Ministry that it would begin a consultation process on exclusions and modified school days. Prior to the beginning of this process, we would further like to encourage the Ministry to:

- 1) Ensure that provincial directives related to tracking attendance, in all 72 school boards, include a mechanism to identify those occasions where students with disabilities are excluded or unable to attend school as a result of a lack of appropriate support or care. To be clear, this mechanism would not capture those occasions where parents voluntarily kept their child out of school; and
- 2) Issue a policy direction to school boards, imposing restrictions on when and how a principal may exclude a student from school for all or part of a school day.

With respect to our recommendation, the Minister may be interested in the motion passed by our SEAC last year [\[link\]](#), as well as work of the Board of Trustees, on the issue of exclusion. Our policy recommendation contains a number of key provisions designed to minimize the problems associated with exclusion from school and promote meaningful access to education for students with disabilities.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Yours Truly,



Richard Carter, P.Eng.

Chair of SEAC

Toronto District School Board

cc: Honourable Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario

Ms. Nancy Naylor, Deputy Minister of Education for Ontario

Dr. John Malloy, Director of Education for the Toronto District School Board

Board of Trustees for the Toronto District School Board

All SEAC Chairs in the Province of Ontario



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[www.ddsbs.ca](http://www.ddsbs.ca)

April 26, 2019

The Honourable Lisa Thompson  
Minister of Education  
Mowat Block, 22<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
900 Bay Street  
Toronto, ON M7A 1L2

The Honourable Christine Elliott  
Deputy Premier and  
Minister of Health and Long-Term Care  
Hepburn Block, 10th Floor  
80 Grosvenor St.  
Toronto, ON M7A 1E9

The Honourable Lisa MacLeod  
Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services  
438 University Avenue, 7th floor  
Toronto, ON M7A 1N3

Dear Ministers:

**Re: Proposed Changes to the Ontario Autism Program Funding**

The Durham District School Board's Special Education Advisory Committee writes this letter to express its concerns with respect to the proposed changes to the provincial funding model for the Ontario Autism Program ("OAP"), and the impacts those changes will have on children, families and school boards.

Should the changes to the OAP go ahead as proposed, many children will be entering the school system who have significant needs, requiring specialized programming, care and supports far beyond what is able to be provided in a traditional classroom. Integration of these extremely vulnerable children will require significant pre-planning, involving a multi-disciplinary team to ensure that their needs, and the needs of all students in the classroom, are being met. In order to ensure these needs are met, school boards will need to be provided with specific details of the changes that will occur and provided with enough lead time to ensure that the proper programming and supports can be put in place prior to the student entering the classroom.

We are also concerned that the funding models, as they currently exist, for special education are insufficient to cover the true costs of providing the level of support that these students will require. We ask if the Ministry will commit adjusting the funding models for special education to the current-day enrolment of students who are identified to ensure that all students will have adequate access to the supports they need to be successful.



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In order to provide an inclusive, welcoming and supportive environment for all students, it is important that any changes to the OAP take into consideration how school boards will be supported in providing for the needs of these exceptional children. Given the ripple-effects of the decisions of these ministries, it is imperative that the ministries work together to consider how changes being made within their respective portfolios affect the others.

In conclusion, we ask that each ministry take the necessary time required to allow for proper consultation, planning and transitioning to ensure that decisions made do not negatively impact the needs of any of our students.

Yours truly,



Eva Kyriakides  
SEAC Chair  
Durham District School Board

cc: Chairs of Ontario Special Education Advisory Committees  
Lisa Millar, Director of Education, DDSB  
Andrea McAuley, Superintendent, Inclusive Student Services  
Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy, MPP  
Lorne Coe, MPP  
Jennifer French, MPP  
Lindsay Park, MPP  
Hon. Rod Phillips, MPP  
Hon. Laurie Scott, MPP





SIMCOE MUSKOKA CATHOLIC  
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board  
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April 26, 2019

COPY

Honorable Lisa M. Thompson  
Minister of Education  
22<sup>nd</sup> Floor Mowat Block  
900 Bay Street  
Toronto, ON  
M7A 1L2

Dear Minister Thompson,

The Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) of the Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board is writing in support of Bill 64, *Noah and Gregory's Law, Transition to Adult Developmental Services and Supports*. The Act recently passed its second reading and has been referred to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills.

Students with developmental disabilities, along with their families, already face many challenges regarding crucial services and the cessation of these supports at age 18 causes increased and undue pressures. We support and encourage the implementation of Bill 64 to improve their transition to adult services.

We believe that continuity of services guaranteed through Bill 64 is paramount to the successful, integrated transition to adulthood for those with developmental disabilities. We ask that you strongly and actively support this Bill to ensure its passage to a third reading as soon as possible.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Theresa Sanders, Chair  
Special Education Advisory Committee  
Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board

Copy   Chairs of Ontario Special Education Advisory Committees  
Eric Rennie, Committee Clerk, Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills  
MPP Andrea Khanjin  
MPP Doug Downey  
MPP Jill Dunlop  
MPP Norman Miller  
MPP Caroline Mulroney

*Our Mission: Our inclusive Catholic learning community is dedicated to excellence. We give witness to the teachings of Jesus Christ, as we journey in faith and learning, to develop the God-given abilities of each person.*



**DURHAM CATHOLIC  
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD**  
*Learning and Living in Faith*



RECEIVED  
Limestone District School Board

APR 17 2019

Scot Gillam

Tuesday April 9, 2019

Dear Minister Lisa Thompson  
Minister of Education  
Mowat Block 22<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
900 Bay Street  
Toronto, ON M7A 1L2

I am writing today, on behalf of the Durham Catholic District School Board Special Education Advisory Committee to express our concern about the recent changes to the provincial funding model for class size averages and mandatory e-learning courses.

We are very concerned about the impact these changes are going to have on students with special education needs and our students who are at-risk for a variety of social, emotional and academic reasons. These most recent changes will have a detrimental impact on their education. The proposed class-size average of 28 is not in the best interest of any student, especially students for whom individual attention, additional support, and a differentiated program is essential for their success. Relationships with teachers are critical for this group of students. The research is very clear; children and youth develop resiliency when they have strong connections with one or more caring adults. Students who are not connected at school and are struggling as a result are not likely to develop the connections with teachers when they are in classes of 30 or more.

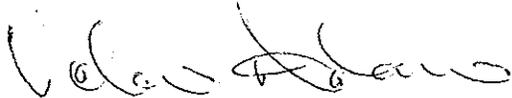
Students with special education needs or students who are at risk require significant support to have meaningful and equitable access to education. This drastic increase in the class-size averages is the opposite of such support. When secondary schools begin timetabling to meet your proposed class average, fewer teachers will mean a reduction in course options or sections. The negative impact will be multifaceted.

- Fewer courses mean fewer teachers to support our students in terms of their well-being.
- Fewer courses mean fewer electives; electives are often the glue that keep students connected to school.
- Fewer courses means specialized classes that support students with learning needs (e.g., Learning Strategies (GLEs)) will disappear because they typically have lower enrolment.
- Fewer courses means that students' options will be limited which will in turn limit the pathway choices of our students.

The proposed change requiring all students to take four mandatory e-learning credits is equally as concerning for this particular group of students. Besides the obvious issue of inequitable access to technology and Wi-Fi across the province, e-learning will simply not benefit all students. Individual learning styles are varied and not all students have the independence, problem-solving skills or resiliency to be successful in e-learning platforms. This includes, but is not limited to students with special education needs or students who are already at-risk for learning difficulties. Four mandatory courses will further erode choice from students who need to have the opportunity for as much choice as possible.

We strongly encourage you to reconsider the proposed changes to secondary education. We ask that you consider the impact that these changes are going to have on all students, but especially those with special education needs and/or students at-risk because of social, emotional and academic concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Valerie Adamo". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Valerie" and last name "Adamo" clearly distinguishable.

Valerie Adamo  
Chair, Special Education Advisory Committee  
Durham Catholic District School Board

cc: Chairs, District School Board Special Education Committees



# Bluewater District School Board

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January 28, 2019

The Honourable  
Lisa Thompson, M.P.P.  
Minister of Education  
22<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Mowat Block  
900 Bay Street  
Toronto ON M7A 1L2

Dear Minister Lisa Thompson:

Bluewater District School Board's Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) would like to acknowledge and support Upper Grand District School Board's (SEAC) letter regarding the support of Bill 44 to amend the Education Act to bring awareness and understanding of pupils who may have Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD).

Sincerely,

Tracy Lynn Atkinson  
Special Education Advisory Committee Chair

cc: Chairs of Ontario Special Education Advisory Committees



We're Putting Wellness First



We're Turning Innovation into Action



We're Committed to Collaboration

## Special Education Advisory Committee

### ASSOCIATE SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

MAY 15, 2019

#### i) Ministry Updates

Ministry updates to be addressed under Superintendent Craig Young's budget presentation.

#### ii) Ontario Autism Consultations

The Ministry of Education is now beginning a public consultation on how children and youth with Autism who have complex needs can be better supported. You may participate in the consultations through an online survey and/or a series of telephone town halls in order to provide insight on:

- How Ontario Autism Program services and supports help families and children's learning and development;
- How families would use any additional funding based on need;
- Recommendations for the Ontario Autism Program;
- The role the education system should play in supporting students with autism to achieve their learning goals and;
- How health and social supports for children with autism can be better integrated.

More information can be found on the consultations web page: [ontario.ca/autism](http://ontario.ca/autism) or by calling the dedicated Autism Service Ontario Toll-Free number: 1 888 284 8340.

**This consultation will be open during the month of May 2019.**

Report Prepared By: Alison McDonnell, Associate Superintendent of Education, Learning for All

*Limestone District School Board is situated on traditional territories of the Anishinaabe & Haudenosaunee.*

SEE YOURSELF IN LIMESTONE