



AGENDA – SEAC MEETING

SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, September 16, 2020 – 5:30 PM

Limestone Education Centre

220 Portsmouth Avenue, Kingston, ON

Virtual Meeting Link: <http://bit.ly/SEACSept162020>

Acknowledgement of Territory: “The Limestone District School Board is situated on the traditional territories of the Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee. We acknowledge their enduring presence on this land, as well as the presence of Métis, Inuit and other First Nations from across Turtle Island. We honour their cultures and celebrate their commitment to this land.”

1. WELCOME

2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

3. DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

4. BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES

5. EDUCATIONAL SERVICES UPDATE

5.1 Educational Services Return to School Supports and Services 2020-2021-

Principal Darlene Scarlett, Vice Principal Karen Leggett, Educational Services and Safe Schools Liaison Lynne Rousseau, Mental Health Lead Laura Conboy and Superintendent Alison McDonnell

Limestone District School Board

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

SEE YOURSELF IN LIMESTONE

6. CORRESPONDENCE

6.1 Hastings and Prince Edward District School Board – E-Learning and Class Size (Pages 3-4)

6.2 Halton Catholic District School Board – MACSE (Pages 5-6)

7. ASSOCIATION UPDATES

7.1 SEAC Report from Easter Seals Ontario (Page 7)

8. OTHER BUSINESS

8.1 Ministry Updates – Superintendent Alison McDonnell (Pages 8-9)

8.1.1 Priorities and Partnership Funding

8.1.2 Additional Funding Related to COVID-19

8.2 Reporting Progress: Building our Vision for the Future, Special Education Services in our District - Superintendent Alison McDonnell

8.3 Member at Large Vacancy - Chair Karen McGregor

8.4 Presentation Schedule - Chair Karen McGregor

9. NEXT MEETING DATE

Wednesday, October 21, 2020

10. ADJOURNMENT

Limestone District School Board

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

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Hastings and Prince Edward District School Board

Lucille Kyle, Chair of the Board
Sean Monteith, Director of Education

Possibilities
TODAY & TOMORROW

February 14, 2020

The Honourable Stephen Lecce
Minister of Education
438 University Avenue, 5th Floor
Toronto ON M7A 2A5

RECEIVED
Limestone District School Board
AUG 25 2020
Alison McDonnell

Dear Minister Lecce:

As representatives of the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) for Hastings and Prince Edward District School Board (HPEDSB), we are writing to express our support to concerns expressed in letters from Durham District School Board (dated June 3, 2019), Greater Essex County District School Board (dated July 5, 2019) and Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board (dated December 11, 2019) SEACs. Our group feels strongly that the concerns expressed in each of these letters will pose serious risks for our students, especially those with special needs and students who attend schools in rural areas and/or with declining enrolments.

Administrators in our district's smaller secondary schools have reported to us for many years that building timetables to meet the needs of all students, in all pathways, can be very challenging once they are faced with declining pupil populations. The proposed increases to average class sizes by our presiding government will decrease the availability of compulsory courses, and more specifically electives courses, that many of our students require or are interested in, to further their interests and help them gain employment advantages. As stated in previous letters submitted to you by other concerned districts, "An increase in average class size will only exacerbate the issue in smaller schools that are already challenged with decreased course selection." Reducing the number of caring adults in the lives of our youth stands to detract from our focus on creating successful outcomes for our future community leaders.

Further to increased class sizes, the introduction of mandatory online courses would not meet the needs of individuals with learning disabilities, developmental disabilities and other learning differences who require additional support from their educators. We agree with other school boards that the online format is simply not suitable for everyone and making them compulsory does not recognize the individual needs of students.

We urge the Ministry of Education to review its position and revise the plan for education based on the recommendations of relevant stakeholders, including parents and community experts. We also hope that the Ministry will investigate and implement the suggestions outlined by the Durham District School Board, specifically:

1. Provide e-learning opportunities to students across the Province as an option, but not make it mandatory for all students.
2. Encourage professional learning for staff, and e-learning exposure for students in Learning Strategies courses to allow for specific opportunities to explore the D2L platform and gain direct experiences with digital learning with the support of their special education teachers. This will allow students to self-assess their confidence and suitability to this learning delivery method.



Hastings and Prince Edward
District School Board

Lucille Kyle, Chair of the Board
Sean Monteith, Director of Education

Possibilities
TODAY & TOMORROW

3. Allow students access to all pathways (community living, workplace, college, university) online, should they wish, including during alternative school times, to encourage students to explore other opportunities (e.g., summer courses).
4. Slow down changes to class size and establish clear guidelines to measure and monitor the impact on students, particularly those with special needs.
5. Provide further transparency about students' pathways and monitor how changes are impacting pathways, including students earning a Certificate of Achievement and Certificate of Accomplishment.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Kelly Allan

Kelly Allan,
SEAC Chair

Lisa Anne Chatten

Lisa Anne Chatten,
SEAC Vice-chair

c.c. Lucille Kyle, Chair of the Board
Ken Dostaler, Superintendent of Education – Student Services
Todd Smith, MPP Bay of Quinte
Daryl Kramp, MPP Hastings-Lennox & Addington
Chairs of Ontario Special Education Advisory Committees

File

June 8, 2020

The Honourable Stephen Lecce
Minister of Education
Mowat Block, 900 Bay Street
Toronto, ON M7A 1L2

Dear Minister Lecce,

I am writing on behalf of the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) for the Halton Catholic District School Board (HCDSB), to follow up on concerns expressed by our SEAC colleagues at Durham District School Board and the Greater Essex County District School Board, regarding the Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education (MACSE).

The HCDSB SEAC appreciates and values the work of MACSE in providing feedback and making recommendations to the Minister on programming and supports for students with exceptional needs in publicly-funded schools across Ontario. This work is more important now than ever, as students everywhere face unprecedented and unexpected challenges in the current pandemic crisis - challenges which are exacerbated for students with special education needs.

It is for these reasons that we are deeply concerned about the number of vacancies on MACSE, the lack of connection of some MACSE members to the communities they represent, the absence of reporting regarding MACSE's activities, and the lack of response from MACSE to interested parties who have applied to fill the vacancies.

As you are no doubt aware, 11 of the 21 MACSE positions are currently vacant - including 5 of the 9 exceptionality seats, with another 5 expiring before the end of the calendar year - including 2 of the exceptionality seats. In addition, the term of the Chair has expired. We note that MACSE has been operating with a large number of vacancies for quite some time.

The current crisis highlights the importance of preparedness, and we are concerned about the current and ongoing gaps in MACSE representation. We are deeply concerned about MACSE's ability to fulfill its mandate with so many exceptionalities, representing a significant proportion of special needs students in Ontario not represented, whose voices are not being heard. We strongly encourage the Ministry to expedite the appointment process, to fill the vacant positions as quickly as possible, and, going forward, to proactively replace members as their terms expire.

Parent associations across the province representing students with special education needs appoint members to school board SEACs, as well as to the Provincial Parent Association Advisory Committee (PAAC) on SEAC. These members are accountable to their associations, have lived experience with the exceptionalities they represent, and provide a

parent perspective. SEAC members are also well versed in the special education challenges of both students and school boards and can offer a unique perspective and valuable insight to MACSE. As such, we support the recommendations of the Durham DSB and the Greater Essex County DSB to consider SEAC members and the perspective they can provide in the appointment process, by considering SEAC membership as a factor in the appointment process or cross-appointing members to represent school board SEACs. PAAC on SEAC regularly collaborates with members from a number of associations and school boards, and is therefore well equipped to provide a provincial perspective. As such, in addition, or in the alternative, we also support the establishment of a PAAC on SEAC seat on MACSE.

We are encouraged to learn that, after more than a year pause, MACSE resumed regular meetings and has continued to meet through the current crisis, notwithstanding the significant gaps in membership. However, we are concerned that the lack of reporting by MACSE gives the appearance that the committee is inactive and, in any event, limits the potential impact of the valuable work being done, or the opportunity for stakeholders to provide input to the process. While an Annual Report is part of MACSE's mandate, the most recent Annual Report posted online is for the 2014-2015 school year, the most recent Special Education Update is dated 2016, and there are no meeting minutes or meeting highlights posted online.

In summary, MACSE plays an essential role in the ability of Ontario school boards to meet the needs of our most vulnerable students. The viability of MACSE is dependent on a full and diverse membership, representation that reflects a lived experience, is connected to the communities it represents, and is cognizant of current issues. Furthermore, MACSE's impact would be much more visible and significant, with regular, up to date and current reporting of its activities.

We encourage the Minister to consider our recommendations along with those of the Durham DSB and the Greater Essex County DSB, for the benefit of all of our students, and ultimately, our future.

Sincerely,

Brenda Agnew
Chair of the SEAC

cc: N. Naylor, Deputy Minister of Education
C. Munroe, Director, Special Education/Success for all Branches
Chairs of Ontario Special Education Advisory Committees

Association Updates

In terms of a SEAC report from Easter Seals Ontario, here are some key messages:

- COVID-19 has resulted in a significant decline in revenues for Easter Seals Ontario as events are not possible with current restrictions
 - Summer camp sessions were cancelled at Camp Woodeden and Camp Merrywood (Perth) as directed by the government
 - A virtual camp experience with regular activities at home, weekly sharing and Sunday campfires was delivered to provide an opportunity for social interaction with friends and camp staff
 - The program to help families with the cost of essential mobility and accessibility equipment has been maintained but is unable to help all of the families who have applied
 - Many children and youth with physical disabilities have compromised health and some will remain at home for remote learning as schools resume
 - Families are concerned about the social isolation at home and hope efforts will be made to keep them connected to their friends and peers in the home school
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- The Board of Directors approved an additional \$200,000 to fund pending equipment requests to fund pending equipment requests.
 - The Camp to Camp initiative raised approximately \$41,000 and Camp E-aster Seals, the first ever online camp experience, appears to have been successful. Camp registrations for the 2021 season have been moved to January 5, 2021. As you may know, Barb Gray, long-time recreation director will retire this month after 34 years of service to Easter Seals. She will be missed!
 - The region's online auction raised just over \$2,000.
 - The Celebrity Hockey Classic event, scheduled to take place in Belleville on November 27, will be postponed to the 2021.
 - Stay tuned for more information about a 24-hour swim relay this fall and the Breakfast with Santa event, both in Kingston.
 - Early in 2021 we anticipate hosting a curling event, also in Kingston.

With A Smile,
Candice Roberts



ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT: SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

September 16, 2020

i) Ministry Updates

Priorities and Partnership Funding

- Well-Being and Mental Health Bundle
- After School Skills Development Program
- Transition Pilot for Students with Developmental Disabilities

Additional Funding Related to CoVid

- Mental Health and Wellness
- Special Education

ii) Reporting Progress: Building our Vision for the Future Special Education Services in our District

Due to re-entry planning priorities, updates to this document for the 2020-2021 school year will be shared at the October SEAC meeting.

iii) Member at Large Vacancy

LDSB SEAC has a member at large vacancy. A committee will review the applications and make a recommendation for approval to the Board of Trustees on Sept. 25, 2020. The new member at large will begin in October 2020.

iv) Presentation Schedules

SEAC members should please consider the following in advance for discussion/decision at SEAC:

- Monthly SEAC organization presentations and;
- Monthly Educational Services presentation suggestions

Prepared by: Alison McDonnell, Superintendent of Education, Learning for All