

# YORK CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

*Guided by Gospel Values and Catholic Virtues, in partnership with home and Church, we educate and inspire all students to reach their full potential in a safe and caring environment.*

## MINUTES of the SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

A regular meeting was held in a hybrid format in person at CEC, 320 Bloomington Rd. W and virtually over Google Meet on **March 4, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.**

### PRESENT:

Committee Members:	N. Byrne*, C. Chen, A. Connolly*, J. Gamboa*, A. Grella, D. Legris,* R. Liscio* J. Man*, J. Wigston*, M. Xue, Y. Zhou*
Association Representatives:	J. Akleh*, E. Di Falco*, C. Sandig*
Administration:	D. Candido, L. Lausic*, E. Strano
Regrets:	S. Gatti, N. Lai, N. Welch
Recording:	C. Mong*
Guests:	T. Jewell, <i>Subject Matter Expert, Autism Ontario</i> M. Leadbetter, <i>SHH Parent, YCDSB</i> M. Liberatore, <i>Itinerant Work Experience Teacher, Student Services</i> S. Lynn, <i>EIS</i> A. Miraglia, <i>Itinerant Work Experience Teacher, Student Services</i> F. Puma, <i>Parent, YCDSB</i>

\*Denotes virtual attendance

### 1.0 CALL TO ORDER

### 2.0 Prayer and Land Acknowledgement

### 3.1 Roll Call

### 3.2 Approval of New Material

Nil – No New Material

### 4.0 Moment of Inspiration

*Celebrating Valentine's Day with secondary students across YCDSB's Best Buddies program. This event was a huge success due to the generous support of the Senior Team, Trustees and OECA. Everyone deserves a friend.*

### 5.0 Approval of Agenda March 4, 2024

**Motion**– Agenda approved (Xue / Byrne)

### 6.0 Approval of the Minutes February 12, 2024

**Motion** - Minutes approved (Zhou / Xue)

### 7.0 SEAC Report to Board

Report 2023:04 – February 2024

### 8.0 Information Items

#### 8.1 Board Meeting Date

The date of the next Board Meeting is April 30, 2024

#### 8.2 Student Services Department Inservices

Inservices the Student Services Department hosted from December 2023- February 2024

#### 8.3 Response to Query: SEAC Questions Form

Superintendent Candido provided information to the query posed.

**9.0 Correspondence**

**Items 7.0-8.3 Received on block (Zhou / Xue)**

**10.0 Presentations / Discussions**

10.1 Autism Ontario Presentation

- This presentation highlighted Autism Ontario CARE values and the programs and services the organization provides

10.2 Association for Bright Children Presentation

- This presentation provided information about the history of Association for Bright Children Ontario and highlighted parent support tools.

10.3 World Down Syndrome Day – March 21st

- This presentation highlighted how World Down Syndrome Day is observed globally, this year's theme is "End the Stereotypes".

10.4 Travel Training with YRT

- This presentation highlighted the transit training in PEP Program where students have access to the training and materials which support travel independence. A chartered bus was provided to ensure a supported opportunity for learning and travel.

10.5 Student Services Department updates

- Superintendent Candido presented a recap of programs and services delivered by the Student Services department over the last month. Additional information found on page 3-4.

**11.0 Business Arising**

Nil

**12.0 Action Items**

YCDSB Named as a supporter for future Rare Disease Day - Deferred

**13.0 Association Reports**

Autism ON: Celebrate the Spectrum School Giving Challenge

LDAYS: Tutoring programs

**14.0 Items for Future Agendas**

- Family of Schools Recap
- Play Day PA Day
- Removing Barriers for Students with Disabilities

**15.0 Next Meeting: Monday April 8, 2024 @ 7:00 p.m. in a hybrid format over Google Meet and at CEC Board office, 320 Bloomington Rd W Aurora ON**

**16.0 Motion to adjourn at 8:42 p.m.**

Meeting adjourned (Legris / Byrne)

## 10.5 Student Services Updates (March)

### **Elementary Special Education**

**Family Of Schools** - On Feb. 21 and 22 we hosted 140 of our Special Education Teachers for a full day of Professional development. Teachers spent ½ the day learning about our new remediation program for Math which is grounded in evidence based strategies, such as Differentiated Instruction, Universal Design for Learning, as well as neuroscience. The strategies that were shared with special education teachers focused on adopting a multisensory experience when learning mathematics. We want students to learn to use as many senses as possible - and engage different areas in the brain - to not only learn new math concepts but store them in their long term memory so that it can be retrieved when needed. The second half of the day was spent reviewing upgraded tools within Google Read and Write and their potential for helping students who struggle with reading and writing as well as Executive Functioning.

In between the sessions, we set up a Gallery walk in our foyer, where members from all of the different Student Services teams shared resources, answered questions and familiarized teachers with ways in which they can access team members for support.

A presentation will be shared at the next SEAC meeting in April.

**Early Facilitation:** In early February We held a virtual information meeting for parents registering a child with special needs for school in September. So far there are 101 families considering registration with YCDSB through our EF process. Consultants are currently booking meetings that will include School teams, MDTs, parents and Early Interventionists to take place in April, so that Action Plans can be developed for these students before they begin school.

**PACE** - The second phase of our screening process is almost complete and the number of gifted students entering the program is also growing. We will officially be closing the St Paul PACE centre in June but that means we will have grades 5-8 in September at Father Henri Nouwen which opened this year, and St. Julia Billiard which also opened this year, will have 1 grade 5, and 1 grade 6 class in September.

### **Secondary Special Education**

On February 28th, our secondary team delivered the second part of a 2 part series of Pathways to EmployABILITY inservices for secondary Special Education Teachers and Education Workers who support students in the workplace as part of our project called ***Empowering and Supporting Students in the Pathways to EmployABILITY Program (PEP) Through Staff Education and Ally Partnership.*** We will be presenting a fulsome report and presentation on this initiative in the spring, as it comes to a conclusion.

Our elementary and secondary Administrators and Special Education staff are actively preparing our students with learning needs who are currently in grade 8 and grade 6 students heading to St. Katharine and Our Lady of the Lake, for the transition to high school. Transition meetings and visits to the high school are well underway to ensure that the transition in September is as successful as possible.

On February 22, we arranged for a group of Special Education Teachers, senior level students with ASD and some of their parents to attend a Transition Workshop at York University intended for Autistic students transitioning from high school to post-secondary education. Students and parents learned critical information about the supports and services available in college and university and how to access them. The critical importance of students developing self-

advocacy skills was highlighted throughout the day and is therefore one of the greatest takeaways from the session.

**Mental Health-** Our intermediate HPE teachers are implementing the mandated mh lessons and the mh team is supporting educators with after school virtual support sessions. The MH lead teacher continues to visit school providing teacher consults and lunch n learns. The mhw continue to support students 1:1 and in groups. MHW's have attended training in supporting students with school refusal, DBT in suicide risk assessment and management and in culturally adapted cognitive behaviour therapy.

In an ongoing effort to ensure that equitable and optimal learning opportunities and supports continue to be provided to YCDSB students diagnosed with learning needs, students with a diagnosis of ADHD only, who require accommodations for learning will be eligible to receive accommodations on an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) instead of a Policy 208 Accommodation Plan, as of September 2024. We look forward to providing additional teacher training to ensure that student needs are effectively identified and supported.