

SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, April 3, 2024, at 6:00pm
Hybrid Meeting:

In-Person: St. Francis Room (2nd Floor) Catholic Education Centre
Online: [Click here to join the meeting](#)

WCDSB Mission Statement

*As disciples of Christ,
we educate and nurture hope
in all learners
to realize their full potential
to transform God's world.*

CO-CHAIRS: Cindy Benedetti and Laura Shoemaker

MEMBERS

WCDSB Trustee - **Bob Sikora**
WCDSB Trustee – **Conrad Stanley**
Waterloo Regional Down Syndrome Society - **Kim Murphy**
Waterloo Regional Police - **Amanda Hennig**
Family and Children's Services of Waterloo Region - **Cindy Benedetti**
Waterloo Region Family Network - **Erin Sutherland**
Centre for ADHD Awareness - **Daina Colbourne**
International Dyslexia Association Ontario - **Laura Shoemaker**
Autism Ontario - **Monica Wenzlaff**
Member at Large - **Jeanne Gravelle**



**Waterloo Catholic
District School Board**
Quality, Inclusive, Faith Based Education

35 Weber St. W., Unit A
Kitchener, ON, Canada N2H 3Z1
519-578-3660
info@wcdsb.ca



SEAC Committee Meeting Agenda

Date& Time:	April 3, 2024, at 6:00 p.m.
Location (Hybrid):	In-Person: St. Francis Room (2 nd Floor), Catholic Education Centre Online: Via Teams Click here to join the meeting
Next Meeting:	May 15 th or 22 nd , 2024, @ 6:00 pm
Committee Members: Kim Murphy, Amanda Hennig, Cindy Benedetti, Erin Sutherland, Daina Colbourne, Laura Shoemaker, Jeanne Gravelle, Monica Wenzlaff, Bob Sikora, Conrad Stanley	
Administrative Officials: Gerald Foran, Erin Lemak	

1. Opening Prayer Welcome	Erin Lemak
2. Approval of Agenda Motion by: Seconded:	
3. Declared Pecuniary Interest N/A	
4. Approval of the March 6th minutes: Motion by: Seconded:	
5. School System Operational Business 5.1. Post Secondary Pathways Support: College and University <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Community Integration Through Co-operative Education (CICE) – Conestoga College ➤ Accessible Learning – Wilfred Laurier University (WLU) 	CICE& Accessible Learning WLU
6. Ministry Updates (10 min) 6.1. Durham Catholic District School Board letter to the Minister	G. Foran
7. SEAC Committee Functions 7.1. PAAC on SEAC (quiz) 7.2. April 23 rd Presentation by Dr. Parekh and Michal Jacques: updates	G. Foran E. Lemak
8. Policy Advice to the Board	
9. Updates	
10. Pending Items	



11. Adjournment Motion by: Seconded:	
12. Action Items Place Holder	



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning transferable skills • One student that attended, and another that is currently attending the Project Search program shared experiences and achievements they acquired through the program. <p>Q&A</p>	
<p>6. Ministry Updates (10 min) Grant for student needs is again available for this summer. Special education team is exploring programs that were offered in the past and looking for new suggestions for the upcoming summer programs.</p>	G. Foran
<p>7. SEAC Committee Functions 7.1. PAAC on SEAC – quiz moved to the next meeting. 7.2. April 23rd Presentation by Dr. Parekh and Michal Jacques Remaining ProGrant funds to be used for Sacramental Packages for students with special needs.</p>	All
<p>8. Policy Advice to the Board N/A</p>	
<p>9. Updates 9.1. Trustee Updates • Chair Sikora updated SEAC on February events. 9.2. Agency Updates • WWDSS ➤ World Down Syndrome Day (WSDS) is almost here! WSDS, March 21st, is a global awareness day which has been officially observed by the United Nations since 2012. The date for WSDS being the 21st day of the 3rd month, was selected to signify the uniqueness of the triplication (trisomy) of the 21st chromosome which causes Down syndrome. These three strands of chromosomes look like socks- people from around the globe wear bright, colourful, mismatched socks on WSDS to celebrate how beautifully unique we all are! We would really love it if WCDSB would celebrate World Down Syndrome Day with us! We encourage the schools and classes to wear mismatched socks or host a blue and yellow spirit day (these colours are designated as the colours of Down syndrome awareness) March 21st. Explore the google slide with your class! Many of the items in the virtual classroom have links for you to discover with your class - here a few you don't want to miss: https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1qjDRel0FsbaMYXbLZHriZEauS5u3v9Y2IBdMMpjeerQ/edit#slide=id.p1 Rock Your Socks! Click on the record player and dance in your socks! Pizza Party Contest! Click on the pizza slice. How to win a pizza party for your class: Take a picture of your class rocking their colourful socks on or the week before March 21st and tag WWDSS on social media for a chance to win a pizza party (to serve up to 30 people). Winners will be selected by random draw. There will be one winner for each city (and their surrounding areas): Kitchener, Waterloo, Cambridge, and Guelph. Please include your school/group name in your post so we know what city you are from. The contest is open to any class/program/team that would like to enter (the group does not require a member with Down syndrome to join the challenge). Each class will get one entry for every platform the picture is shared to (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter), keep in mind, each group can only win once.</p>	



You must tag WWDSS social media and #WWDSSrockyoursocks to be entered into the draw.

Twitter & Instagram: @wwdss_wwdss

Facebook: @WaterlooWellingtonDSS

WWDSS will reach out to the winners after World Down Syndrome Day to coordinate a pizza party for the class/group/team.

Play the Computer game! Click on the computer to play an interactive game with your class!

WDSO Celebration! Click on the disco ball find out how to register for the Waterloo Wellington Down Syndrome Society's party! Don't stop now- keep clicking!

[Rock your Socks World Down Syndrome Day Poster](#)

[March 21 World Down Syndrome Day](#)

- **WRFN**

- WRFN Evening of Elegance:

<https://wrfn.info/> scroll down to E of

E. https://wrfn.info/events/event.cfm?ww_event_eventID=0A7EFE1E-F9EA-46D3-926C-B6D0A7082343

- [Kaleidoscope Kids Flyer](#)

- [ASE Flyer 2024](#)

- **CADHA**

- [CADDAC – ADHD Newsletter – February 2024](#)

- **AUTISM**

- April 2nd is Celebrate the Spectrum for World Autism Day

[School Giving Challenge - Celebrate the Spectrum](#)

- Ausome Moms

Join us each month to meet with other moms, female caregivers, and transgender/nonbinary folks. This casual setting allows you to socialize, share your experiences, or simply sit back and listen.

Date: March 21, 2024

Time: 7:30 PM – 8:00 PM

Link: <https://www.autismontario.com/civicrm/event/info?id=9130&res>

- Webinar. Autism Ontario Presents: Exploring Autism

This webinar aims to introduce autism and neurodiversity. We will discuss autism and neurodiversity, the features of autism, and provide information on how autistic people may perceive and interact with their environment. We will also discuss how you can be an autistic ally, offering practical tips and strategies on how to create an inclusive environment and support autistic people in your home, school, or community.

Date: March 25, 2024

Time: 12:00 PM – 1:00 PM

Link: <https://www.autismontario.com/civicrm/event/info?id=9192&reset=1>

- Rad Dads



<p>Join us monthly to meet with other dads, male caregivers, and transgender/non-binary folks. This casual setting allows you to socialize, share your experiences, or sit back and listen. Date: March 25, 2024 Time: 7:30 PM – 9:00 PM Link: https://www.autismontario.com/civicrm/event/info?id=9143&reset=1</p>	
<p>10. Pending Items N/A</p>	
<p>11. Adjournment Motion by: Jeanne Gravelle Seconded: Kim Murphy</p>	
<p>12. Action Items Place Holder N/A</p>	



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

March 7, 2024

The Honourable Stephen Lecce
Ministry of Education
5th Floor
438 University Ave.
Toronto, ON M7A 2A5

Dear Minister Stephen Lecce:

Please accept this letter as indication of the Special Education Advisory Council's (SEAC) of the Durham Catholic District School Board (DCDSB) support for resolutions made by the Towns of Ajax and Whitby that request that "the Government of Ontario provide core funding for organizations providing programs, care, and services for adults with ASD, including Autism Home Base, as part of the 2024 Provincial Budget".

As a SEAC, we are deeply concerned about the crisis many families experience as their children diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) transition to adulthood. Below we have highlighted some key struggles we are aware of for individuals with ASD after they transition out of the DCDSB.

Ontario Autism Program (OAP) funding supports many of our students on the spectrum with skill-building programs, respite, therapy, recreational and clinical interventions. This funding ends at 18 years old, leaving many of our families with high financial costs to continue and maintain services. Although Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) and Passport funding assist with some resources, the program offerings are limited, and parents are asked to select and co-ordinate services for their children. Without adequate knowledge and training this is challenging for some parents to navigate.

Limited qualified support workers impact the opportunities for people with ASD to access programs outside the home and school, which puts the parents in a position to keep their children at home. Many of the skills that are built at school and in clinical settings are lost when they are no longer generalized or utilized, as a result of home-based placement, which often results in low task demands and highly preferred/self-directed activities. A solution to this would be Community Integration through Co-operative Education (CICE) programs offered at select post-secondary institutions, however intake is very limited.

Social skills and tolerance/exposure to various environments is an important factor for people with ASD. Without maintaining routines that expose people to other stimuli outside of the home, people on the spectrum can become rigid and lose the ability to engage with others outside of their home circle. DCDSB staff hear these concerns from families after transition periods (i.e. in September, after Christmas break and following a return from longer holidays) as many students spend increased time at home during these breaks and have difficulty transitioning back into a demand-based routine. These needs do not cease when a person reaches the age of 21; routines and programs remain essential to the well-being of individuals with ASD.



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Continued community involvement for adults with ASD is crucial to enable the formation of pro-social behaviours and make adults with ASD more likely to obtain meaningful work within the labour market. Individuals with ASD who are transitioning into adulthood do not have the same employment opportunities, especially those who are high functioning. Employment rates for adults with autism over the age of 15 is 14.3% compared to 73.6%. Preparing ASD adults for employment would be significantly improved if program supports were in place. The path autistic adolescents take, and the resources available like parent interaction, social supports, and government programs will impact their quality of life, employability, and their contribution to society as a whole.

Having further programming available and increased availability of residential programs may decrease the need for respite funding, supporting adults with ASD in the development of skills with peers in group home environments. Unfortunately, enrolment opportunities in these programs are also very limited.

In summary, the DCDSB SEAC is asking you, Minister Lecce, to consider the request of the Towns of Ajax and Whitby, and to stand in solidarity with adults with ASD and their families by increasing funding to support essential programs for them. An increase in funding will enable adults with ASD to live more fulsome lives and participate in more meaningful ways in Canadian society. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Valerie Adamo

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