

Members present: S. Binder, S. Lewis, N. Hamilton, A. Card, L. Rashotte, W. Haystead, E. Cotman, S. Ward, J. Parker, L. Solski, E. Reynolds,

Absent: A. Brennan, R. Glenn, D. Vanderkloet, R. Howard, J. Christie, A. James, T. Whittaker, C. Breau

Resource: K. Dostaler, S. Taylor-Harvey

Minutes: J. Kezar

1. Call to order

Vice-chair Rashotte called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. and welcomed everyone to the Special Education Advisory Committee meeting.

2. Acknowledgement of Traditional Lands

Trustee Lewis offered the Land Acknowledgement.

3. Roll Call

Vice-chair Rashotte requested a roll call of members.

4. Approval of the agenda

Mover: Shannon Binder

Seconder: Sandra Ward

That the agenda for the September 26, 2023 Special Education Advisory Committee meeting be approved.

Carried

5. Declaration of Conflict of Interest

There was no conflict of interest declared.

6. Approval of Minutes from Previous Meetings

(a) June 8, 2023

Mover: Wendy Haystead

Seconder: Lisa Solski

That the minutes of the June 8, 2023 meeting be approved.

Carried

7. Delegations/Presentations

a) Individual Education Plan Review update, modifications, and best practices

Superintendent Dostaler proudly shared at the public board meeting last night, that the Student Services department is actively working on mental health and wellbeing initiatives within the Strategic Plan, as well as re-culturing Individual Education Plans (IEPs). He welcomed and introduced Geoff Courneya and Mike Chambers, Learning Support Coordinators, to the meeting to provide an IEP Review update.

Over the last two years, a large amount of data has been gathered about the benefits of modifying a student's curriculum programming during their educational journey. A variety of data sources have been reviewed, which has resulted in the creation of a clear and concise

guide to understanding modifications to programming and aligning students' IEPs with Ministry Guidelines and current research.

A data review process occurred, including what has been learned since the start of the journey. Mike shared the outcomes of the IEP Review, which included the creation of two new documents: Guiding Questions and Best Practices for IEPs, and Modifications Messaging. Geoff shared that conversations now need to occur at the school level, to raise the bar for each student in Reading, Math, De-streaming, and Equity. The creation of an IEP isn't automatically the first step in the process, but rather a discussion on what interventions could support closing of these gaps. They shared how the Intervention Log within the student information system (SIS) is the placeholder for all students and is used for staff/school teams to record information. Modifications should be used cautiously, and only as a last resort after all appropriate Universal Design for Learning strategies, accommodations, and interventions have been tried.

The shift in thinking will take time and will change the way teachers think about evaluation for some students. System Lead Taylor-Harvey noted the importance of creating clear and concise communications for parents/guardians, and the important role that SEAC members play.

8. Committee Reports

There were no committee reports.

9. Staff Reports

a) Welcome and key messages for 2023-2024

Superintendent Dostaler welcomed members to the first meeting of the year and acknowledged the commitment and dedication of members. He referenced the importance of the IEP re-culturing work and noted that updates will continue to be provided. Student Services launched a new internal website this fall. He also referenced Program/Policy Memorandum 169: Student Mental Health from the Ministry, which outlines the requirements to provide culturally responsive, evidence-informed student mental health promotion, prevention and early intervention services. This includes mandated modules for Grade 7 and 8 teachers, with training to occur over the fall, for implementation in January 2024.

b) Governance Directive – 7.2.4(d) Special Education Advisory Committee

Superintendent Dostaler referred members to the Governance Directive in the agenda package and reviewed the Terms of Reference, Membership, Meetings, and Procedure information as mandated by Ontario Regulation 464/97.

c) Student Services personnel update

System Lead Taylor-Harvey provided an update to advise of staffing changes in the Student Services department. She shared the following changes:

- Geoff Courneya and Chris Keane, formerly Assistive Technology Learning Coaches, are now learning support coordinators.
- Each learning support coordinator supports one school group and also has key portfolio responsibilities.
- Reductions to the Speech and Language and Psychological Services teams have occurred.
- Lisa Lynch (board certified behavior analyst) is on a leave this year, and Ellen Spittle is temporarily replacing her role.

- Jennifer Marr is the temporary applied behaviour analysis coordinator, replacing Ellen Spittle.
- d) Program/Policy Memorandum 169: Student Mental Health
Superintendent Dostaler referred members to Program/Policy Memorandum 169: Student Mental Health, effective January 1, 2024. The Ministries of Health and Education are committed to working together to build a continuum of mental health and addictions care that is coordinated, comprehensive and responsive to the needs of every student. School boards will provide responsive, evidence-informed student mental health promotion, prevention, and early intervention services to students. This PPM is a work in progress, with plans for a Planning Table with community partners. Information will be unpacked and discussed at a regional meeting in October, to further discuss good implementation to be ready for January. Further updates will be provided to members, as they become available.
- e) Goal setting 2023-2024/sub-committee breakout sessions
Vice-chair Rashotte recapped the work of sub-committees last year, and invited members to move into breakout sessions, to continue with discussions and planning. Early Years will disband as a sub-committee as it was a duplicate service, so members joined one of the other two sub-committees. If members want to establish a new sub-committee, suggestions can be shared at a future meeting.

Sub-committee updates were shared as follows:

Mental Health

- Data has been received from school staff. Common themes were primarily geographic impacts (less access for some areas to mental health supports), parent engagement, trust building, readiness for therapy, and perceptions outside of school. Anxiety was highly ranked.
- Actioning staff to do small and large groups for in-services, including PPM 169: Student Mental Health.
- Tier 3 and 4 with PPM 169 to come, with the goal of bringing core mental health back to boards and developing steps forward.
- Next steps will include capturing student voice, and determining what supports they need and how to deliver same.
- Next meeting is scheduled for October 10, 2023 at 4:00 p.m.

Individual Education Plans

- System Lead Taylor-Harvey noted that meetings will occur monthly, on the second Thursday at 9:30 a.m. (hybrid model).
- The main goal this year will be to create a draft of a Parent Information Guide for IEPs, in alignment with the documents presented today.
- Possibility of doing a presentation for parents/guardian, possibly through school councils.
- Request for more information on timelines and how consistent we are across schools in terms of parent/guardian consultation.

10. **Correspondence**

Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board letter – July 11, 2023

11. **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 5:33 p.m.