

Greater Essex County District School Board

451 Park St. W., P.O. Box 210, Windsor, ON N9A 6K1 · 519-255-3200



July 5, 2019

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



Dear Minister Thompson,

The Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) of the Greater Essex County 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. We ask that you strongly and actively support this Bill to ensure its passage to a third reading as soon as possible.

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 unnecessary burdens. We ask that you support the implementation of Bill 64 to improve their transition to adult services.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "M. Fuduric".

Mary-Ann Fuduric, Chair
Special Education Advisory Committee
Greater Essex County District School Board

CC: Chairs of Ontario Special Education Advisory Committees
CC: GECDSB Board of Trustees

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Hon. Lisa M. Thompson, Minister of Education
Ministry of Education
Mowat Block 22nd Floor
900 Bay Street
Toronto, Ontario M7A 1L2

Dear Minister Thompson,

I am writing to you today on behalf of the members of the Greater Essex County District School Board's (GECD SB) Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC). Our SEAC includes 8 Parent Associations, who represent thousands of the families in the Essex County Region.

In the fall of 2018, the members of our SEAC were made aware of the changes to funding that were announced by the Deputy Minister of Education in August of 2018. As a group whose responsibility includes advocating for the rights of all children with special needs in our region, we were disheartened and deeply disappointed by the Ministry of Education's decision to reduce the increase to the Special Incidence Portion that was previously announced for the 2018-2019 school year. Schools have a legal obligation to accommodate every child with a disability. When a student requires full time 2:1 staffing, how to pay for it should never have to be the board's primary concern. It should be the safety and dignity of that child, and the safety of staff and other students. The claw back of the additional funding for the boards who mostly already operate in a negative special education budget is unconscionable. And the lack of flexibility around the rules of the SIP grants often prevents them from being sought.

The GECD SB already has to use more funding than provided by the Ministry of Education through Special Education Grants to offset the costs associated with Special Education Services. The claw back of the SIP increase announced for the 2018-2019 school year only serves to increase the Special Education deficit. With this deficit, more children will be affected. As a SEAC, we are deeply concerned by the direction that this government is taking regarding funding for our most vulnerable students. As the Auditor General's Report highlights, the Ministry of Education's "funding formula uses out-of-date benchmarks and is due for an external review."

We urge the Minister to reconsider this decision to reduce funding for these grants, and consider fully funding this necessary accommodation for our most vulnerable, complex and challenging students.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "M. Fuduric".

Mary-Ann Fuduric, Chair
Special Education Advisory Committee
Greater Essex County District School Board

CC: GECD SB Board of Trustees

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Dear Minister Thompson,

I am writing to you today on behalf of the members of the Greater Essex County District School Board's (GECDSB) Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC). Our SEAC includes eight Parent Associations, who represent thousands of the families in the Essex County Region.

We are very concerned about the recent changes to the provincial funding model for class size averages and with the announcement of mandatory e-learning courses. The impact that these changes will have on students with special education needs will be devastating. Students with special education needs require significant in-class support to have meaningful and equitable access to education. Mandatory e-learning courses removes the critical component to success, a physical teacher who provides support and allows for meaningful connections, which are important to student well-being and resiliency. Furthermore, placing the burden of access to technology and the internet for these courses is inequitable. Students who live in remote areas of Windsor-Essex County or those without access to the necessary technology will be disadvantaged.

The drastic increase to class-size average will provide less support to students with special education needs and those identified as at-risk for learning difficulties. The increase to class sizes is likely to reduce course options, sections, and specialized courses that support students with learning needs. More students will equate to less time that teachers have to assist students identified as at-risk or those with Individual Education Plans.

We urge the Minister to reconsider this decision to reduce funding for these grants, and consider fully funding this necessary accommodation for our most vulnerable, complex and challenging students.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "M. Fuduric".

Mary-Ann Fuduric, Chair
Special Education Advisory Committee
Greater Essex County District School Board

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Honourable Lisa M. Thompson
Minister of Education
22nd Floor, Mowat Block
900 Bay Street
Toronto, ON M7A 1L2

Dear Minister Lisa Thompson:

The Greater Essex County District School Board's (GECDSB) Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) would like to acknowledge and support Bill 44 to amend the Education Act to provide for board activities to promote awareness and understanding of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD), including best practices to support pupils who may have FASD. Currently, the GECDSB provides an annual professional development session each fall for teachers who have students in their classrooms identified with FASD. However, any additional professional development supports or awareness initiatives from the Ontario Ministry of Education would be beneficial to our educators who work diligently to support all students on a daily basis.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "M. Fuduric".

Mary-Ann Fuduric, Chair
Special Education Advisory Committee
Greater Essex County District School Board

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