

OUR MISSION

*The Toronto Catholic District School Board is an inclusive learning community uniting home, parish and school and rooted in the love of Christ.
We educate students to grow in grace and knowledge to lead lives of faith, hope and charity.*

OUR VISION

*At Toronto Catholic we transform the world
through witness, faith, innovation and action.*



MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE PUBLIC SESSION

HELD WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2021

PRESENT:

Trustees:

N. Crawford
D. Di Giorgio - Virtual
A. Kennedy - Virtual

External Members:

George Wedge, Chair
Michelle Da Costa - Virtual
Geoffrey Feldman - Virtual
Lori Mastrogiuseppe – Virtual
Lisa McMahon - Virtual
Tyler Munro
Deborah Nightingale - Virtual
Wendy Layton – Virtual
Mary Pugh - Virtual

Staff:

V. Cocco
A. Coke
A. Della Mora
C. Fernandes
M. Gendron
R. Macchia
M. Meehan
J. Mirabella
D. Reid
P. Stachiw

S. Pellegrini, Acting Recording Secretary

External Guest: A. Robertson, Parliamentarian

3. Roll Call and Apologies

Melanie Battaglia sent her regrets.

4. Approval of the Agenda

MOVED by Tyler Munro, seconded by Lori Mastrogiuseppe, that the Agenda be approved.

MOVED in AMENDMENT by Deborah Nightingale, seconded by Trustee Crawford, that Item 19a) Inquiry From Deborah Nightingale regarding the Otis-Lennon School Ability Test (OLSAT) testing of Grade 4 Students in 2021-2022 and Item 19b) Inquiry From Deborah Nightingale regarding the Status of the Grade 5 Gifted Withdrawal Program in 2021-2022 be added to the Agenda.

MOVED in AMENDMENT by Geoffrey Feldman, seconded by Trustee Crawford, that Item 17a) Email of recognition from Geoffrey Feldman to Principal Erica Wilson of Loretto College School, Ward 6 for funding photographs of ME Summer Camp Students be added to the Agenda.

On the Vote being taken, the AMENDMENT was declared

CARRIED

On the Vote being taken, the AMENDMENT was declared

CARRIED

MOVED in AMENDMENT by Deborah Nightingale, seconded by Mary Pugh, that Item 13a) Special Education Superintendent Update - October 2021 be reordered before Item 8a) Parliamentary Presentation - Alasdair Robertson.

On the Vote being taken, the AMENDMENT was declared

CARRIED

Trustee Crawford, Lori Mastrogiuseppe, Tyler Munro and George Wedge wished to be recorded as voted in opposition.

MOVED in AMENDMENT by George Wedge, seconded by Lori Mastrogiuseppe, that Item 17b) Letter from the Trillium Lakelands District School Board's Special Education Advisory Committee to Minister Lecce in Support of Bill 172 an Act in Relation to Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) be added to the Agenda.

On the Vote being taken, the AMENDMENT was declared

CARRIED

On the Vote being taken, the Motion, as amended, was declared

CARRIED

5. Declarations of Interest

There were none.

6. Approval and Signing of the Minutes

MOVED by Deborah Nightingale, seconded by Trustee Crawford, that the Minutes of the Meeting held September 15, 2021 be approved.

On the Vote being taken, the Motion was declared

CARRIED

Trustee Kennedy joined the virtual meeting at 7:35 pm.

13) Reports of Officials for Information by the Board/Other Committees

MOVED by Tyler Munro, seconded by Wendy Layton, that Item 13a) be adopted as follows:

13a) Special Education Superintendent Update – October 2021 received.

On the Vote being taken, the Motion was declared

CARRIED

8) **Presentations**

MOVED by Tyler Munro, seconded by Deborah Nightingale, that Item 8a) be adopted as follows: **Parliamentarian Presentation – Alasdair Robertson** received and that the slide deck presentation be included in the Minutes of the October 20, 2021 meeting.

On the Vote being taken, the Motion was declared

CARRIED

10. **Consent and Review**

The Chair reviewed the Order Page and the following Items were held:

- 11b) Special Education Plan Review – Update from Informal Working Group (Verbal) – Trustee Crawford;
- 11c) Parent Engagement Special Services Series (Verbal) – Maria Meehan, Superintendent of Special Services – Tyler Munro;
- 12a) Letter of Interest from Jennifer Di Francesco to Serve as a Community Member Representative on the Special Education Advisory Committee – Trustee Crawford;
- 12b) Safe Schools Committee - Special Education Advisory Committee Representative for the New Academic Year (Verbal) - Tyler Munro, Inclusion for Action In Ontario Representative – Tyler Munro;
- 14a) From Melanie Battaglia, representative of Autism Ontario regarding Exclusion Tracking and Reporting – Trustee Crawford;

- 14b) From Tyler Munro, representative of Inclusion Action in Ontario (IAO) regarding Promotion of Inclusive Practices in the Multi-Year Strategic Plan – Tyler Munro;
- 14c) From Geoffrey Feldman, representative of Ontario Disability Coalition regarding Recommendation that Multiple Exceptionalities (ME) Staff use Clear Mouth Shields – Geoffrey Feldman;
- 17a) Email of recognition from Geoffrey Feldman to Principal Erica Wilson of Loretto College School, Ward 6 for funding photographs of ME Summer Camp Students – Geoffrey Feldman;
- 19a) Inquiry from Deborah Nightingale regarding the Otis-Lennon School Ability Test (OLSAT) testing of Grade 4 Students in 2021-2022; and
- 19b) Inquiry from Deborah Nightingale regarding the Status of the Grade 5 Gifted Withdrawal Program in 2021-2022

MOVED by Trustee Crawford, seconded by Tyler Munro, that the Items not held be received.

On the Vote being taken, the Motion was declared

CARRIED

ITEMS NOT HELD AS CAPTURED IN ABOVE MOTION

- 11a) Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) Annual Calendar (Draft) as of October 20, 2021
- 17b) Letter from the Trillium Lakelands District School Board's Special Education Advisory Committee to Minister Lecce in Support of Bill 172 an Act in Relation to Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS)

20a) Pending List as at October 20, 2021

The Chair declared a 10-minute recess.

The meeting resumed with George Wedge in the Chair. The attendance list remained unchanged.

11. Annual Calendar

MOVED by Trustee Crawford, seconded by Tyler Munro, that Item 11b) be adopted as follows:

11b) Special Education Plan Review – Update from Informal Working Group (Verbal) received.

Mary Pugh left the virtual meeting at 9:05 pm.

On the Vote being taken, the Motion was declared

CARRIED

Trustee Kennedy did not vote/respond.

MOVED by Trustee Crawford, seconded by Geoffrey Feldman, that Item 11c) be adopted as follows:

11c) Parent Engagement Special Services Series (Verbal) – Maria Meehan, Superintendent of Special Services received.

On the Vote being taken, the Motion was declared

CARRIED

Trustee Kennedy did not vote/respond.

12) Nominations

MOVED by Trustee Kennedy, seconded by Tyler Munro, that Item 12a) be adopted as follows:

- 12a) Letter of Interest from Jennifer Di Francesco to Serve as a Community Member Representative on the Special Education Advisory Committee** received and that SEAC recommend to Board that the letter of interest from Jennifer Di Francesco to serve as a Community Member Representative on the Special Education Advisory Committee be accepted.

On the Vote being taken, the Motion was declared

CARRIED

MOVED by Tyler Munro, seconded by Trustee Kennedy, that Item 12b) be adopted as follows:

- 12b) Safe Schools Committee - Special Education Advisory Committee Representative for the New Academic Year (Verbal) - Tyler Munro, Inclusion for Action In Ontario Representative** that Tyler Munro continue to be the SEAC Representative on the Safe Schools Advisory Committee.

On the Vote being taken, the Motion was declared

CARRIED

14) Consideration of Motions for Which Previous Notice has been Given

MOVED by Trustee Crawford, seconded by Lori Mastrogiuseppe, that Item 14a) be adopted as follows:

- 14a) From Melanie Battaglia, representative of Autism Ontario regarding Exclusion Tracking and Reporting** that this item be deferred to the November 17, 2021 Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting.

On the Vote being taken, the Motion was declared

CARRIED

Wendy Layton left the virtual meeting room at 9:50 pm and returned at 9:52 pm.

MOVED by Tyler Munro, seconded by Trustee Crawford, that Item 14b) be adopted as follows:

- 14b) From Tyler Munro, representative of Inclusion Action in Ontario (IAO) regarding Promotion of Inclusive Practices in the Multi-Year Strategic Plan:**

WHEREAS: The mission of the Toronto Catholic District School board (TCDSB) is to be an Inclusive learning community uniting home, parish and school and rooted in the love of Christ;

WHEREAS: An “Inclusive” school board is one that focuses educating all students in regular classrooms and delivering necessary services and accommodations to special needs students in a regular classroom at their student’s local school and in their local community. Those boards operate few or no special segregated classrooms (ISP classes);

WHEREAS: Pope Francis and Catholic Social Teachings strongly supports the establishment and operations of Catholic Schools following the “Inclusive” model:

- ‘An inclusive education finds a place for all and does not select in an elitist way the beneficiaries of its efforts.’ – Pope Francis
- “An education in the fullness of humanity should be the defining feature of Catholic schools” – Pope Francis
- “Putting the entire person at the centre of education” - Pope Francis
- “Orienting educational work towards the margins, social margins and existential margins through service, encounter and welcome.” – Pope Francis
- "Education is an inclusive movement. An inclusion that goes towards all the excluded: those for poverty, for vulnerability due to wars, famines and natural disasters, for social selectivity, for family and existential difficulties," – Pope Francis
- Vatican City, Feb 20, 2020 / 10:08 am (CNA)- Pope Francis called for an educational revolution Thursday, telling the Congregation for Catholic Education that more effort needs to be made to accelerate the inclusiveness of education.
- FRATELLI TUTTI Encyclical Letter Pope Francis writes: ^[98]I would like to mention some of those “hidden exiles” who are treated as foreign bodies in society. Many persons with disabilities “feel that they exist without belonging and without participating”. Much still prevents them from being fully enfranchised. Our concern should be not only to care for them but to ensure their “active participation in the civil and ecclesial community. That is a demanding and even tiring process, yet one that will gradually contribute to the formation of consciences capable of acknowledging each individual as a unique and unrepeatable person”. I think, too, of “the elderly who, also due to their disability, are sometimes considered a burden”. Yet each of them is able to offer “a unique contribution to the common good through their remarkable life stories”. Let me repeat: we need to have “the courage to give a voice to those who are discriminated against due to their disability, because sadly, in some countries even today, people find it hard to acknowledge them as persons of equal dignity”.
- “Defense of the right to life implies the defense of all other rights that enable the individual with the disability to achieve the fullest measure of personal development of which he or she is capable. These include the right to equal opportunity in education, in employment, in housing, and in health care, as

well as the right to free access to public accommodations, facilities, and services.” US Catholic Bishops Statement on Disability (2016);

WHEREAS: 30 years of extensive research supporting accommodating special needs student within regular classrooms has shown, with an Inclusive approach:

- The special needs student does the same or better academically in an Inclusive classroom
- Academically all students do better in Inclusive classrooms.
- Teachers become more effective educators by broadening their teaching skills which benefit all students in Inclusive settings.
- Students learn to interact socially and accept those who are not like them, those who are different.
- Special needs students learn to interact with their peers in a typical accommodated, class setting and this eases the transition into adult life, making them more productive members of society. An artificial segregated setting can never achieve this and discourage accommodation in accordance with the Ontario Human Rights Code.
- Monies can be diverted from expensive segregated programs, bussing and underutilized assets to training staff, hiring frontline staff supporting students in regular classrooms and hiring support staff;

WHEREAS: 19 of the 60 English language school boards (32%) in Ontario promote the use Inclusive classrooms and operate no or only a few ISP classes for a limited number of Identifications;

WHEREAS: 12 of the 29 English Language Catholic School Boards (41%) in Ontario promote the Inclusive classroom and operate no or only a few ISP classes for a limited number of Identifications;

WHEREAS: New Brunswick, which has similar student enrollment levels as TCDSB, prohibits by law the segregation of any student due to a disability. New Brunswick has been a global leader in Inclusive education for 35 years;

WHEREAS: Most school boards that promote Inclusive classrooms achieve similar or superior results on standardized testing when compared to geographically overlapping boards that segregate special needs students, some by significant

amounts. Renfrew Catholic DSB EQAO scores are 19% higher than Renfrew DSB. Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic DSB EQAO scores are 16% higher than Hamilton-Wentworth DSB. Of note Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic DSB has been operating without ISP classes as we know them for over 50 years;

WHEREAS: There is a presumption by TCDSB staff at all levels that the current ineffective and expensive parallel model of special education is best suited for a special needs student. This presumption is made without benefit of reviewing research or having experience in Inclusive school boards. Parents and advocates who request an Inclusive placement for a student are dismissed without serious consideration of the request and they are often subject to significant pressure from staff to consent to a segregated placement recommendation;

WHEREAS: There are few if any accommodations provided to students in ISP classes that could not be provided in a regular class if staff were trained and supported to provide those accommodations; and

WHEREAS: Promoting Inclusive Education is consistent with our Catholic values, modern pedagogy research and practices, is consistent the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, The Ontario Human Rights Code, the laws and court rulings of Canada and Ontario. It is more cost effective than a segregated approach and helps all students reach their potential.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: That a senior Academic and Special Education staff (the Senior Team) look into how to promote Inclusive placements for special needs students that are currently or likely to be placed in Intensive Support Program (ISP) and bring back a report to Board and SEAC by January 2022 meetings; and

BE IT RESOLVED: That SEAC recommend to the Board of Trustees that the following be considered by the Senior Team for inclusion in the 2021-2024 Multi Year Strategic plan (MYSP):

- provide a modern definition of Inclusion in an education setting that will be posted prominently on the board's website, on related documents and shared with staff.

- Consult with experts in Inclusive Education, Inclusive school boards, SEAC, review research and review available plans for transitioning a board to an Inclusive model.
- Develop a general strategy for preparing staff, departments and the board to support a transition to an Inclusive model.
- Identify and prioritize policies and procedure documents that need to be updated to reflect a change to an Inclusive model of education, including the Special Education Plan.
- Identify groups of students and/or schools that will be transitioned to the Inclusive model each year, the staff groups that will educate and support them and the training they will need.

On the Vote being taken, the Motion was declared

CARRIED

Trustee Kennedy, Lisa McMahon and Deborah Nightingale wished to be recorded as voted in opposition.

Trustee Di Giorgio did not vote/respond.

Trustee Di Giorgio left the meeting at 10:00 pm.

MOVED by Geoffrey Feldman, seconded by Tyler Munro, that Item 14c) be adopted as follows:

14c) From Geoffrey Feldman, representative of Ontario Disability Coalition regarding Recommendation that Multiple Exceptionalities (ME) Staff use Clear Mouth Shields:

WHEREAS: The mission of the TCDSB is to be an Inclusive learning community uniting home, parish and school and rooted in the love of Christ;

WHEREAS: An “Inclusive” school board is one that focuses on educating Special Needs Students who have difficulty with hearing or communication unless they see the complete face and lips of the Staff Member;

WHEREAS: The TCDSB is expected to deliver the necessary services and accommodations to all students;

WHEREAS: The Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Staff have had approved the use of a Clear Mouth Shield made by ClearMask™ it is a transparent Face Mask used by the hospital teaching staff with multiple exceptionality children and youth who need to view the complete face for full communication and learning;

WHEREAS: Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing or lack communication ability will benefit and become more intently involved when being instructed etc. by Multiple Exceptionalities (ME) Staff who communicate through facial expressions and mouth movement; and

WHEREAS: TCDSB should accommodate all students by using all supports needed to communicate and instruct students.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: That SEAC recommend to the Board that the responsible staff member research the fully transparent, anti-fog masks available to help healthcare providers and essential workers to protect themselves, communicate better, and ease confusion manufactured by ClearMask and make them available to all school staff who wish to use this clear mask shield to fully communicate, instruct, etc. with students who rely upon the full facial expressions that includes lip movement to enable them to provide full and inclusive education.

On the Vote being taken, the Motion was declared

CARRIED

Trustee Crawford and Trustee Kennedy wished to be recorded as voted in opposition.

17) List of Communications

MOVED by Geoffrey Feldman, seconded by Trustee Crawford, that Item 17a) be adopted as follows:

- 17a) Email of Recognition from Geoffrey Feldman to Principal Erica Wilson of Loretto College School, Ward 6 for funding photographs of ME Summer Camp Students** received and that the email of recognition be included in the Minutes of October 20, 2021 meeting.

On the Vote being taken, the Motion was declared

CARRIED

19. Inquiries and Miscellaneous

MOVED by Deborah Nightingale, seconded by Trustee Crawford, that Item 19a) be adopted as follows:

- 19a) From Deborah Nightingale regarding the Otis-Lennon School Ability Test (OLSAT) testing of Grade 4 Students in 2021-2022** received.

On the Vote being taken, the Motion was declared

CARRIED

MOVED by Deborah Nightingale, seconded by Trustee Crawford that Item 19b) be adopted as follows:

- 19b) From Deborah Nightingale regarding the Status of the Grade 5 Gifted Withdrawal Program in 2021-2022 received.**

On the Vote being taken, the Motion was declared

CARRIED

21. Adjournment

MOVED by Tyler Munro, seconded by Geoffrey Feldman, that the meeting be adjourned.

On the Vote being taken, the Motion was declared

CARRIED

SECRETARY

CHAIR