

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, NOVEMBER 13, 2024

PRESENT:

Trustees: F. D'Amico – Virtual
A. Kennedy
M. Rizzo – Virtual

Non-Voting Trustee: N. Crawford

External Members: G. Wedge, Chair
G. Feldman, Vice Chair
R. De Belchior – Virtual
J. Di Francesco
L. Mason – Virtual
L. Mastrogiuseppe – Virtual
D. Nightingale - Virtual
I. Novak - Virtual
M. Seymour - Virtual

Staff: A. Della Mora
C. Fernandes
M. Meehan
V. Cocco
A. Coke
D. Comacchio
O. De Figueiredo
M. Gendron

S. Adaikpoh, Acting Recording Secretary
S. Hinds-Barnett, Assistant Recording Secretary

External Guests: Daniel Debicki, Assistive Technology Team (For Item 12a)

David Fonseca, Assistive Technology Team (For Item 12a)

3. Roll Call and Apologies

Apologies were extended on behalf of Tyler Munro. Ashley Pabon was absent.

Trustee Crawford rose on a point of personal privilege to recognize the work done by Staff, members of the Committee and Trustees, as well as to thank the Committee for its hard work and dedication.

4. Approval of the Agenda

MOVED by Jennifer Di Francesco, seconded by Geoffrey Feldman, that the Agenda, be approved.

On the Vote being taken, the Motion was declared

CARRIED

5. Declarations of Interest

There were none.

6. Approval and Signing of the Minutes

MOVED by Jennifer Di Francesco, seconded by Geoffrey Feldman, that the Minutes of the Meeting held October 09, 2024 be approved with the following amendment.

Page 6, Item 20 - replace ...George Feldman ... with ... Geoffrey Feldman ...

On the Vote being taken, the Motion was declared

CARRIED

9. Notices of Motion

MOVED by Tyler Munro, seconded by Trustee Rizzo, that Item 9a) be adopted as follows:

- 9a) **From Tyler Munro, representative of Inclusion Action in Ontario, regarding Modified School Days, Denial of Education** that this be considered at the December 04, 2024 Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) Meeting:

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: Modifying a special need student's school day denies them the ability participate in their school community, interact with their peers and bond the school community with their home and parish;

WHEREAS: Educating all students is the primary purpose of this school board and the publicly funded education system in Ontario;

WHEREAS: Time spent out of class for any student creates a gap in their education that needs to be closed so they may keep up with their peers. The more time out of class the bigger the gap and the more difficult it is to close. Closing this gap is even more difficult for a student that has a disability that affects their ability to learn. Should the gap become sufficiently large the student will not be able to close this gap regardless of supports provided at school or home and they will fail to graduate, be required to repeat a grade, be moved to a segregated ISP program where their education gap will continue to grow, thus breaking the link with their peers and school community;

WHEREAS: The Education Act provides Principals the ability to arbitrarily shorten a special needs student school day if the resources provided by the board are not adequate to educate the student full time. See:

R.R.O. 1990, Reg. 298: OPERATION OF SCHOOLS – GENERAL

Under daily "Daily Sessions" which states:

“3. (1) The length of the instructional program of each school day for pupils of compulsory school age and pupils in full day junior kindergarten or kindergarten shall be not less than five hours a day excluding recesses or scheduled intervals between classes. R.R.O. 1990, Reg. 298, s. 3 (1); O. Reg. 78/14, s. 1 (1)....

(3) Despite subsection (1), a board may reduce the length of the instructional program on each school day to less than five hours a day for an exceptional pupil in a special education program. R.R.O. 1990, Reg. 298, s. 3 (3).”;

WHEREAS: Boards and Principals have interpreted this section of the Education Act to allow them to modify a special needs student’s school day up to and including having the student remain at home for an extended period of time and allow routine late drop offs and early pick-ups by the transportation department;

WHEREAS: The Education Act does not require tracking of the frequency of this decision, documentation of the reason, steps being taken to return the student to a regular classroom to resume their education. and;

WHEREAS: Given the multitude of challenges a Principal encounters every day in the performance of their duties it is easy for them to not prioritize the resumption of the education and return to school full time for a student on modified days.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT: SEAC recommends to the board a policy be created to track special needs students and those suspected of having special needs who are on modified days, be it one day or for an extended period;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT: At the time of determining a modified days schedule will be implemented a report be prepared with key student information, school, date and involved staff and positions listed along with the reason for the decision and the plan to return the student to school full time. This report must be updated every 2 weeks throughout the school year with progress reports, changes in plans, the student returned to school full time and/or other developments;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT: A copy of the report and updated reports will be added to the student’s OSR, provided to parents, the Area Superintendent and Superintendent of Special Services. The Superintendents are to review the reports, delegate and follow up with their staff and others as appropriate with the goal of returning the student to school full time;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT: A summary report of the numbers of student on “modified school days” be provided to SEAC and the Board of Trustees on a bi-annual basis, January and June of the school year. Showing monthly totals and year over year changes; and

BE IT RESOLVED THAT: Policy and staff be ready to implement this process by the start of the next school year.

10. Consent and Review

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

11a) Draft Special Education Advisory Committee Annual Calendar 2024 - 2025 – Geoffrey Feldman;

11b) Special Education Plan November 2024 – Jennifer Di Francesco

Sections for Discussion:

4. Individual Education Plan;

4A. Individual Education Plan – Elementary – Template;

4B. Individual Education Plan – Secondary – Template;

12a) Special Services Superintendent Update - November 2024 –Trustee Kennedy.

11. Annual Calendar Items

MOVED by Jennifer Di Francesco, seconded by Trustee Kennedy, that Item 11a) be adopted as follows:

11a) **Draft Special Education Advisory Committee Annual Calendar 2024 - 2025** received.

On the vote being taken, the Motion was declared

CARRIED

Trustee D’Amico joined the virtual room at 7:33 pm.

Deborah Nightingale joined the virtual room at 7:47 pm.

MOVED by Jennifer Di Francesco, seconded by Geoffrey Feldman, that Item 11b) be adopted as follows:

11b) Special Education Plan November 2024 received.

Sections for Discussion:

4. Individual Education Plan;

4A. Individual Education Plan – Elementary – Template; and

4B. Individual Education Plan – Secondary – Template

Time for business expired.

The Chair put the question, “Is it the will of the meeting to extend debate by 15 minutes?”

MOVED by Jennifer Di Francesco, seconded by Geoffrey Feldman, that time for business be extended by 15 minutes to continue debate on the Item, as per Article 12.6 of the TCDSB’s By-law.

On the Vote being taken, the Motion was declared

CARRIED

On the Vote being taken, the Motion of Receipt was declared

CARRIED

12. Reports of Officials for Information by the Board/Other Committees

MOVED by Geoffrey Feldman, seconded by Jennifer Di Francesco, that Item 12a) be adopted as follows:

12a) Special Services Superintendent Update - November 2024 received.

Trustee D'Amico left the virtual room at 8:17 pm.

On the Vote being taken, the Motion was declared

CARRIED

20. Adjournment

MOVED by Jennifer Di Francesco, seconded by Geoffrey Feldman, that the meeting be adjourned.

On the Vote being taken, the Motion was declared

CARRIED

SECRETARY

CHAIR