

To: Special Education Advisory Committee

From: Jennifer Di Francesco

Subject: Motion to Reform Disciplinary Practices for Students with Learning Differences (Disabilities) and Special Education Needs

MOVED BY: Jennifer Di Francesco

WHEREAS: students with learning disabilities and special education needs, including ADHD, autism, and other neurodivergent conditions, often face disciplinary actions that do not align with their educational and developmental needs

WHEREAS: punitive measures such as withholding recess, detentions, and exclusion from classroom activities disproportionately impact these students and do not address the root causes of behavioral challenges

WHEREAS: Research from the American Academy of Pediatrics and educational psychologists highlights that recess and movement are essential for self-regulation, focus, and emotional well-being, particularly for students with ADHD and other learning differences.

WHEREAS: Traditional punitive approaches often exacerbate behavioral challenges rather than support students in developing self-management skills. A shift toward positive, inclusive discipline aligns with human rights laws, Ontario's Education Act, and best practices in special education.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT: SEAC recommends to the Board of Trustees that the policy prohibits the removal of recess and other physical activity as a form of punishment for students with learning disabilities or special education needs

BE IT RESOLVED THAT: SEAC recommends to the Board of Trustees that staff are training on trauma-informed and neurodiversity-affirming disciplinary approaches.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT: SEAC recommends to the Board of Trustees that the policy encourages restorative practices, including conflict resolution and behavioral support strategies tailored to individual student needs.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT: SEAC recommends to the Board of Trustees that the policy Implements a review system to track and assess disciplinary actions taken against students with special education needs to ensure compliance with equitable practices.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT: SEAC recommends to the Board of Trustees that a Positive Discipline Policy is adopted and ensures all schools within its jurisdiction implement the outlined practices by September 2025 for the new school year.

Jennifer Di Francesco
Centre for ADHD Awareness, Canada