

SEAC meeting

Thursday, April 17, 2025
North Bay Office or via Teams

Land Acknowledgement (Alison Clarke)

Present:

Kim Gignac, Spec Ed Coordinator North
Lisa Paradis, Spec Ed Coordinator East/West
Carine Corbeil, Temp Spec Ed Coordinator
Louise Sargent, Trustee
Kim Pauli, Assistant Superintendent
Chantal Phillips, Chair
Candy St. Onge, Community Living Almaguin
Tammy Adjouj, Nipissing Down Syndrome Society
Krista Holmes, Executive Assistant

Lana St. Louis, Mental Health Lead – Guest
Seija Van Haesendonck, SBO - Guest

Regrets:

Leigh Armstrong, Community Living Parry Sound
Chris Guillemette, Community Living North Bay
Tim Graves, Executive Superintendent
Ashley St. Pierre, Board Chair
Carol Couillard, Nipissing Secondary
Caroline Labrecque, Nipissing First Nation

Called to Order at 1:02pm

Quorum was not achieved for this meeting. Meeting minutes will be documented as notes.

Budget Presentation by SBO Van Haesendonck

See the attached document with the presentation that SBO Van Haesendonck delivered.

Mental Health and Addictions Strategic Plan Presentation by Lana St. Louis, NNDSB Mental Health Lead.

See the attached document with the presentation that NNDSB Mental Health Lead Lana St. Louis delivered.

Budget Priorities' Discussion for 2025/26 SEAC Special Education Budget Recommendations (Review and Finalize)

SEAC budget recommendations for 25/26 will be reviewed again at the May meeting. Further discussion will take place at May's committee meeting, at which time the committee will confirm or revise the recommendations prior to forwarding them to the Board of Trustees.

School Tour Options/Considerations (forthcoming) – Alison Clarke

Principal Clarke indicated that a presentation on Special Education Classrooms will be shared during the June SEAC meeting in lieu of a school tour.

Special Education Parent/Guardian One-page Guide Update – Chair Chantal Phillips shared the most recent draft of the brochure. Chair Phillips noted that this document was originally intended to provide parents/guardians with a highly visual, quick reference guide highlighting some of the supports and services available. The committee provided feedback for revision, including providing the toll-free number for the Near North DSB. Chair Phillips will share this document and updates at the next meeting and the central special education department will review and provide feedback once SEAC members have provided fulsome input.

Community Partner updates

- No partner updates

Correspondence received:

- o Letter dated January 21, 2025 from Chair of Algoma District School Board SEAC re: concerns related to teacher training in special education facilities at faculties of education across Ontario.

This item was tabled until the May SEAC meeting.

- o LDAO SEAC Circular February 2025 and April 2025, Open Letter to SEACs Across Ontario and Policy Statement on Educational Inclusion for Students with Learning Disabilities.

The committee recognized this correspondence as information for SEAC members. SEAC received this correspondence and notes that no further action is required at this time.

Reports

Board Report (oral) – (Board Trustees)

Trustee Sargent noted that SEAC committee members and members of the public can tune into the NNDSB board meetings to see and hear about what's going on at any time.

Special Education Report- Principal Clarke

Learning Disabilities Workshops Summary:

Description:

Grade 7 & 8 students with learning disabilities attended either in-person or virtual sessions, which averaged 60 minutes in duration. Each session was facilitated by a 4th year School and Counselling Psychology doctoral student at the University of Toronto, who was completing his clinical internship at the NNDSB under the supervision of lead psychologist Louise Maughan. Sessions intended to improve knowledge about learning disabilities. The focus was on student self-advocacy, empowerment and encouragement to understand this learning profile, particularly noting strengths/abilities. Each workshop was interactive and encouraged student participation.

Goals:

The overarching goal of the project was to support successful secondary school transitions for grade 7 & 8 students who have been formally identified as having a learning disability. The students were informed, supported and encouraged to better understand their unique learning profiles and empowered to self-advocate during their transition years. Ultimately, having more knowledge pertaining to their IEP and unique learning profiles may help ensure high levels of achievement, access to transitional support and academic accommodations and potentially increased graduation rates. Further, information related to student learning profiles will benefit those working with students, including both parents and teachers.

Workshop Content:

The workshop covered essential information to help students understand and thrive with learning disabilities, including:

- *Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario* (LDAO) Learning Disability definition
- Common LD profiles: strengths and challenges
- Importance of student's becoming familiar with their IEP
- Compensatory strategies
- Assistive technology
- Executive functioning strategies (e.g., time-management & study skills)
- Self-advocacy
- Thinking long-term: post-secondary planning
- Development of a 'one-page learning profile'

Participant Feedback:

76.8% of respondents (43/56) reported that the workshop was *helpful*, 12.5% of respondents reported that the workshop was *somewhat helpful* (7/56), 8.9% of respondents (5/56) reported that the workshop was *not helpful*, and 1.8% (1/56) reported that they were *not sure* if the workshop was helpful.

77% (43/56) respondents indicated that they understand more about themselves as a learner, 18% (10/56) indicated they did not understand more about themselves as a learner, and 5% (3/56) indicated that they kind of understood more about themselves as a learner.

Approximately 71% of respondents (40/56) would feel more comfortable asking for support in high school, 18% of respondents (10/56) would not feel more comfortable asking for support in high school, and 11% (6/56) didn't know if they would feel more comfortable.

April 4 PA Day:

The Special Education Department alongside community partners, such as EGALE, and our NNDSB Mental Health Team, were able to support and facilitate the April 4 PA Day wherein EAs were provided with various training and professional learning, including an Emotion Coaching training session, Behaviour Management Systems recertification training and well-being workshops.

Special Education Classroom Space: The central Special Education Department continues to monitor special education classroom space within schools. If/when necessary, space options are being explored with school-based administrators in order to help ensure that classroom spaces assigned as learning spaces for students with special education needs are aligned with and supportive of student programming needs.

SEAC Chair Report

Chair Phillips did not share anything further.

New Business

- Next meeting: May 22, 2025.

Meeting adjourned at 2:42 pm