



**HAMILTON-WENTWORTH DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD  
AGENDA  
SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
Wednesday, February 27, 2013**

**Location: Helen Detwiler School - Library**

**7:00 p.m.**

**1. Call to Order**

J. Colantino

(a) Message from the Chair

**2. Approval of Agenda**

J. Colantino

**3. Approval of the Minutes – January 30, 2013**

**4. Business Arising from the Minutes**

**5. Correspondence**

- a) Renfrew County District School Board re Special Education Funding Model
- b) Wellington Catholic District School Board re Special Education Funding Model
- c) Wellington Catholic District School Board re Cut to Special Services at Home Funding (SSAH)
- d) Upper Canada District School Board re Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder and Special Education Preparatory Courses
- e) Durham District School Board re Development Services of Ontario Agency (DSO)
- f) Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board: Ministry of Community and Social Services' "Transformation Agenda"
- g) Upper Grand District School Board re Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder and Special Education Preparatory Courses
- h) Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board re Special Education Preparatory Courses

**6. Department Update**

V. Corcoran

**7. Members' Update**

Members

**8. Other Business**

**Future Meetings of Special Education Advisory Committee (venue: Helen Detwiler School – Library)**

Wednesday, March 27, 2013

Wednesday, May 29, 2013

Wednesday, April 24, 2013

Wednesday, June 12, 2013

Joint SEAC (HWCD SB) – to be confirmed

**[IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO ATTEND, PLEASE ADVISE CHIT REVILLA AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE – 905-527-5092, EXT. 2273 or e-mail: [chit.revilla@hwdsb.on.ca](mailto:chit.revilla@hwdsb.on.ca)]**

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
**Wednesday, January 30, 2013 (Helen Detwiler School - Library)**

**Those present:**

Judy Colantino, Down Syndrome Association of Hamilton and SEAC Chair  
Judith Bishop, Trustee  
Alex Johnstone, Trustee  
Doug Foster, CHOICES - Supporting People with Developmental Disabilities  
Adrian Mackey, The Children's Aid Society of Hamilton  
Jenny McEwen-Hill, McMaster Children's Hospital Developmental Pediatrics and Rehabilitation Portfolio  
Barbara Reeves, Autism Ontario (Hamilton-Wentworth Chapter)  
Pat Senft, Community Living Hamilton  
Sandra Starr, Association for Bright Children of Ontario  
Lisa Tyrrell, Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB)  
Lynn Vanderbrug, Lynwood Charlton Centre

**In attendance:**

Vicki Corcoran, Superintendent of Education - Leadership and Learning  
Elizabeth Rutherford, Principal of Special Education Services

**Also in attendance:**

Jeremy Abrahams, Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation, District 21  
Linda Lauppe, Hamilton-Wentworth Principals' Council - Elementary  
Heather Moffat, Hamilton-Wentworth Principals' Council - Secondary  
Wilma Minaker, Canadian Office and Professional Employees Union, Local 527

**Regrets:**

Lita Barrie, VOICE for Hearing Impaired Children  
Maria Carbone, Hamilton-Wentworth Principals' Council - Elementary  
Bernadine Nabuurs, Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant Community Care Access Centre (CCAC) – Hamilton Branch  
Tracy Sherriff, P.A.L.S. – Parent Advocacy Learning Support Group

**1. Call to Order/Welcome**

J. Colantino called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m., welcoming everyone.

**2. Elections – Chair and Vice-Chair**

V. Corcoran noted the need to elect the new Chair and Vice-Chair of SEAC for the 2012-2013 school year and then called for nominations for Chair of SEAC.

**It was moved by D. Foster, seconded by L. Tyrrell: That Judy Colantino be nominated to the position of Chair of SEAC.**

J. Colantino accepted the nomination.

There were no other nominations.

To the motion, **CARRIED.**

V. Corcoran called for nominations for Vice-Chair of SEAC.

**It was moved by J. McEwen-Hill, seconded by L. Vanderbrug: That Lita Barrie be nominated to the position of Vice-Chair of SEAC.**

There were no other nominations.

To the motion, **CARRIED.**

(a) Message from the Chair

None.

Item	Discussion/Decision
<p><b>3. Approval of Agenda</b></p>	<p><u>Revisions:</u>  <u>Added Items under Correspondence</u>            Durham DSB: Development Services of Ontario Agency (DSO), item 8(f)            Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic DSB: Ministry of Community and Social Services' "Transformation Agenda", item 8(g)</p> <p><b>It was moved by A. Mackey, seconded by D. Foster: That the agenda be approved as amended. CARRIED.</b></p>
<p><b>4. Approval of the Minutes</b></p>	<p><b>It was moved by D. Foster, seconded by L. Tyrrell: That the minutes of the November 28, 2012 meeting be approved. CARRIED.</b></p>
<p><b>5. Business Arising from the Minutes</b></p>	<p><u>Positive School Climate: Summary from December</u>            V. Corcoran advised of considerable feedback received, including from students. Principals also discussed Positive School Climate at their Principal's Conference. V. Corcoran will share the feedback information.</p>
<p><b>6. Department Updates/Reports</b>            PowerPoint Presentations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Learning Foundations Program</li> <li>▪ Gifted Centres</li> <li>▪ Character Networks Foundations - Special Education Program</li> <li>▪ Foundations Program - System Alternative Education</li> </ul>	<p><u>Learning Foundations Program</u>            Presenters: Dolores Chapin (Special Education Consultant - Cluster South) and Cynthia Johnson (Special Education Elementary Teacher - Cluster South).</p> <p>The presenters discussed the following key areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Program overview – this provides support for students with complex needs.</li> <li>➤ Goals of the program</li> <li>➤ Staff component</li> <li>➤ Student eligibility</li> <li>➤ Student selection process</li> <li>➤ Intake process</li> <li>➤ Transition to the program</li> <li>➤ Continuous program monitoring</li> <li>➤ Program demission criteria</li> </ul> <p>In response to questions, the following clarifications were provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A key goal is for the student to be engaged; this program is focused on primary students.</li> <li>▪ The Inter-disciplinary team is very important, particularly in how assessments come together.</li> <li>▪ The team members are able to look at participating</li> </ul>

	<p>students closely in terms of their learning needs in a supportive learning atmosphere.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ There is no wait list at this time.</li> </ul> <p><u>Gifted Centres</u> Presenters: Beth Carey (Itinerant Gifted Teacher) and Ben Nywening (Psychological Consultant).</p> <p>The following points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Four centres are currently running. Each session starts with brain challenge and students acquire higher order thinking skills.</li> <li>➤ Gifted student participants presently call themselves "da Vinci kids".</li> <li>➤ The team started a site in the HWDSB Commons which is accessible by students and enables them to converse among themselves.</li> <li>➤ Teachers are invited to two "coffee house" meetings running for sharing of ideas and information.</li> <li>➤ The information gathering goes back to the students' home schools and the gifted team will work with their teachers to help with programming.</li> </ul> <p><u>Character Networks Foundations – Special Education Program</u> Presenters: Todd Graves (Special Education Consultant - Cluster North) and Piero Evfremidis (Special Education Elementary Teacher - Cluster North)</p> <p>The presenters discussed the following key areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Purpose</li> <li>➤ Goals – action piece is key</li> <li>➤ Student profile – assessment</li> <li>➤ Collaborative planning</li> <li>➤ Program description</li> <li>➤ Lisgar School, K-8 (location)</li> <li>➤ Staffing: One Special Education Teacher, two Educational Assistants, One Special Education Consultant (Cluster North)</li> <li>➤ Transportation is provided</li> <li>➤ Daily activity schedule/routine</li> <li>➤ Case conference model (reflections)</li> <li>➤ Transition-out meeting</li> </ul> <p>In response to questions, the following clarifications are provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The team is working towards the best fit/option for the students.</li> <li>▪ Partnership possibilities are expanding beyond the system, including working closely with the parents.</li> <li>▪ There are other programs available at Lisgar School to support these students.</li> </ul>
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	<p><u>Foundations Program – System Alternative Education</u> (Information hand-outs were distributed.) Presenters: Steve Oulahen (System Principal - Care, Treatment and Correctional Programs, Secondary Alternative Education and Supervised Alternative Learning), Randy Shiga (Social Worker), John Elston (Secondary Teacher) and Julie Lofthouse (Educational Assistant).</p> <p>The presenters noted the following key points.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ This program involves transition and intervention.</li> <li>▪ The student should want to be in the program to benefit from it and be successful.</li> <li>▪ There are many pathways within the system Alternative Education which is located on King William Street.</li> <li>▪ The team's key role is stabilizing the students then introduce to them pathways and other relevant programs available.</li> <li>▪ In terms of technology, computers, iPads and cell phones are the common communication tools used by the students. Peer mentorship and shared experiences are also helpful in reaching out to these students.</li> <li>▪ There are many volunteers in the different areas of the program, including community people. More community partnerships are being explored, particularly for paid Co-op placements.</li> </ul> <p>E. Rutherford recognized the dedication and considerable efforts of staff working on the Foundations programs.</p> <p>The Chair thanked all the presenters for their time and hard work.</p>
<p><b>7. Members' Updates</b></p>	<p>None.</p>
<p><b>8. Correspondence</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Renfrew County DSB: Special Education Funding Model</li> <li>b) Wellington Catholic DSB: Special Education Funding Model</li> <li>c) Wellington Catholic DSB: Cut to Special Services at Home Funding (SSAH)</li> <li>d) Upper Canada DSB: Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder and Special Education Preparatory Courses</li> <li>e) CNIB: Representation on HWDSB SEAC (for SEAC approval)</li> <li>f) Durham DSB: Development Services of Ontario Agency (DSO)</li> <li>g) Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic DSB: Ministry of Community and Services' "Transformation Agenda"</li> </ol>	<p>The Chair drew attention to the letters received for SEAC's consideration.</p> <p><u>CNIB: Representation on HWDSB SEAC</u> <b>It was moved by J. McEwen-Hill, seconded S. Starr: That April Benner and Susi Owen be appointed the new main and alternate representatives, respectively, of CNIB on SEAC during the 2010-2014 membership term. CARRIED.</b></p>
<p><b>8. Other Business</b></p>	<p>None.</p>

**Adjournment:**

It was moved by A. Mackey, seconded by D. Foster: That the meeting be adjourned, this being done at 9:08 p.m.

**CARRIED.**

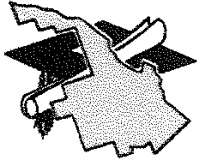
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DRAFT

## SEAC CORRESPONDENCE - 5a to 5h

HWDSB SEAC FEBRUARY 27, 2013

<u>ISSUE</u>	<u>MINISTRY</u>	<u>BOARD</u>
<p>1. Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder</p> <p>Requesting a review of the Health curriculum and modify by adding information about FASD before grade 11</p>	Education	Renfrew County Near North
<p>2. Special Education courses for Teacher's College</p> <p>Requesting that comprehensive preparatory courses in special education become mandatory in all teacher's colleges in the province</p>	Education	Renfrew County Near North Kawartha Pine Ridge
<p>3. Special Education Funding Model</p> <p>Requesting a revision to SEPPA –needs to be based on needs of exceptional students, not enrolment Revision of HNA (high needs allocation) to more accurately reflect high needs of exceptional students Develop a fair and equitable funding model for spec ed students across the province</p>	Education	Renfrew County Wellington District Catholic
<p>4. SSAH and Passport Funding</p> <p>Stop the planned termination of SSAH funds Resolve barriers in applying to DSO (wait lists, Psych testing) Address the issue of wait lists for after school activities and services and lack of continuity of programming from school to adult life Recognize that ODSP funding cannot make up for loss of SSAH or Passport funds Max ODSP \$12,768 Poverty line \$18,582</p>	Community and Social Services	Huron Superior Durham District Wellington Catholic Renfrew County Near North Hamilton Catholic (HWCD SB)
<p>5. Inadequate funding for those with SEVERE Disabilities</p> <p>Address: the reduction of funding from \$35,000 to \$25,000 for families with extreme needs Daytime support funds are totally inadequate Housing/accommodation options are not available for families, only agencies</p>		HWCD SB



## RENFREW COUNTY DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

1270 Pembroke Street West, Pembroke, Ontario K8A 4G4 – Tel: (613) 735-0151 – Fax: (613) 735-6315

November 7, 2012

The Honourable Laurel Broten  
Minister of Education  
900 Bay Street, Mowat Block  
Toronto, ON M7A 1N3

Dear Minister Broten,

The Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) of the Renfrew County District School Board acknowledges receipt of your letter dated June 7, 2012, in response to our letter of December 12, 2011. As you will recall, our SEAC wrote to you to request that the funding model for special education reflect the actual cost of provision of special education service and that it provide fair allocation for all students, wherever they live in Ontario.

In your letter, you write, “Although the ministry is responsible for policy that directs the allocation of funding to boards, it is a board responsibility to allocate funding for each school or program, according to its policy and priorities. Flexibility in resource allocation remains with the boards because they are in the best position to determine local needs when setting budget priorities.” The fact remains that the most problematic funding envelope is Special Education and is so overspent, that our school board has no flexibility in its delivery of a bare-bones special education program.

The Special Education funding system continues to be based on proxy calculations rather than actual student needs. Special Education funding is composed primarily of two major amounts:

- The Special Education per Pupil Amount (SEPPA) of \$5.9 million which is based entirely on total enrolment and has no correlation to the number of students who need special program services; therefore, while our overall student enrolment is declining, the number of students requiring additional supports of special education services continues to grow each year.
- The High Needs Allocation (HNA) is \$4.1 million, a reduction of \$50,000 over last year. This is the area where we suffer the most as the needs of our students require more than \$6 million. The significant shortfall in HNA results in our Special Education budget being in a **\$1.4 million dollar deficit**.

We continue to struggle to fund the services exceptional students require. Our staff has contributed to provincial consultation for several years, and yet another school year is well under way and still there is no change to the funding model. Coterminous boards in Ontario continue to be funded at vastly different rates, despite serving the same numbers of students with special needs.

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It is imperative that the Ministry announces a fair and equitable Special Education model that provides ample funding to serve the needs of exceptional students. The announcement needs to allow for ample time to make program modifications to adjust to the new funding model. How much longer do parents and students have to wait until inequities in financial support for special needs are addressed?

Yours sincerely,



David Marcus  
Special Education Advisory Committee Chair

cc: Roger Clarke, Director of Education, RCDSB  
RCDSB Board of Trustees  
John Wilhelm, Chair, Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education  
Ontario Public School Boards Association  
Annie Kidder, People for Education  
SEAC Chairs, Ontario Public School Boards  
SEAC Chairs, Ontario Catholic School Boards



Wellington Catholic  
District School Board  
*We Have Faith in Education*

75 Woolwich Street  
P.O. Box 1298  
Guelph ON N1H 6N6

Tel. 519-821-4600  
Fax 519-824-3088

December 12, 2012

The Honourable Laurel Broten  
Minister of Education  
900 Bay Street, Mowat Block  
Toronto, ON M7A 1N3

Dear Minister Broten,

On behalf of Wellington Catholic District School Board Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC), I am writing to you to request that the funding model for special education be revised to provide a fair allocation for all students, wherever they live in Ontario.

The Special Education funding system continues to be based on proxy calculations rather than actual student needs. Special Education funding is composed primarily of two major amounts: the Special Education Per Pupil Amount (SEPPA) and the High Needs Amount (HNA). SEPPA is based entirely on total enrollment and has no correlation to the number of students who need special program services. Although our overall student enrollment is declining, the number of students requiring additional supports of special education services continues to grow. Since the SEPPA allocation is based on enrollment though, we are left with a significant deficit. The HNA allocation addresses the cost of providing intensive staff support required by many of our students with high needs but this allocation continues to be significantly less than what is required.

Community Living Ontario recently published a document entitled "The Delivery of Education Service for Students Who Have an Intellectual Disability in the Province of Ontario", which identifies the need to provide an inclusive education for all students who have an intellectual disability. An electronic version can be downloaded at [www.communitylivingontario.ca/inclusive](http://www.communitylivingontario.ca/inclusive). We have a strong and successful tradition of providing a fully inclusive program in our system but unfortunately we are unable to sustain this model of inclusion with the funding provided. Coterminous boards in Ontario continue to be funded at vastly different rates, despite serving the same numbers of students with special needs.

Addressing the inequities in financial support for students with special needs is long overdue. It is imperative that the Ministry announces a fair and equitable special education funding model that provides ample funding to serve the needs of exceptional students.

Yours truly,

Gill Lavalley, Chair  
Wellington Catholic District School Board Special Education Advisory Committee

c.c. SEAC Chairs of Catholic and Public School Boards  
Barry Finlay, Director Special Education Policy and Programs Branch  
Liz Sandals, MPP  
Frank Valeriotte, MP

*Guelph Quality Award Winner*



Wellington Catholic  
District School Board

*We Have Faith in Education*

75 Woolwich Street  
P.O. Box 1298  
Guelph ON N1H 6N6

Tel. 519-821-4600  
Fax 519-824-3088

November 21, 2012

Honorable John Milloy, Minister  
Community and Social Services  
Hepburn Block, 6<sup>th</sup> floor  
80 Grosvenor Street  
Toronto, ON M7A 1E9

Dear Minister,

It has recently come to the attention of the Wellington Catholic District School Board Special Education Advisory Committee that your ministry intends to cut Special Services at Home Funding (SSAH) to individuals who have an intellectual disability and their families, when they reach the age of 18. As of April 2013, individuals of the SSAH program will lose their funding and will be directed to the waiting list for Passport funding.

These individuals and/or their families will be required to reapply for services under the Passport program. Their needs will be reassessed and prioritized with no assurance of continued funding. Under the SSAH funding, needs are reassessed every 3 years and funding is continued. Currently 4,000 people and their families are waiting for Passport funding that isn't available. Without a continuation of SSAH funding for individuals with special needs that reach age 18, many will not be able to participate in their communities.

The Wellington Catholic District School Board works in partnership with many agencies to ensure a good transition for our special needs students from school to community. This is a time of increased anxiety for not only our students but also their families. Many of our special needs students need support to fully engage in their communities but without any funding this will not be possible. A number of individuals who have already left secondary school have been reduced to remaining at home for years while they are on the Passport waiting list for funding. Some parents have had to leave their employment to look after these individuals. By withdrawing SSAH funding at this crucial point in their lives, this places even more needless anxiety on individuals and their families.

A recent suggestion by MCSS that the individuals can use ODSP for personal disability supports needed to ensure one's participation in his/her community is not reasonable. It is true that the Ontario Disability Support Program starts at age 18 but this income support is intended to pay for housing, food and basic personal expenses. The level of ODSP is below the poverty line. The maximum an individual on ODSP can receive yearly is \$12,768.00 but the poverty line as reported on May 2011 by Social Policy Ontario for an individual adult is \$18,582.00. To expect an individual with a disability to pay for his/her housing, food and basic personal expenses out of ODSP as well as paying for personal support workers in the community puts even more hardship and greater impoverishment on special needs individuals.

*Guelph Quality Award Winner*

The Wellington Catholic District School Board's Special Education Advisory Committee asks that your Ministry ensure a continuation of SSAH funding beyond the age of 18, until such time as the Ministry's transformation initiative is fully implemented and an adequate level of Passport funding is provided for all people who have special needs.

"Every society is judged by how it treats the least fortunate amongst them."

Yours truly,



Gil Lavalley, Chair

Wellington Catholic District School Board Special Education Advisory Committee

c.c. SEAC Chairs of Public and Catholic School Boards  
Minister of Education  
Minister of Child and Youth Services  
Frank Valeriotte, MP  
Liz Sandals, MPP

November 21, 2012

The Honourable Laurel Broten  
Minister of Education  
Mowat Block, 18<sup>th</sup> Floor  
900 Bay Street  
Toronto, ON M7Z 1L2

Dear Madam Minister:

We - the Special Education Advisory Committee of the Upper Canada District School Board would like to add our support to the following two issues recently brought to your attention.

First, we agree with the Near North District School Board Special Education Advisory Committee's concern regarding Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder. The NNDSB has recently suggested that the Ministry of Education examine the Health Curriculum and modify it so that Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder can be discussed with students earlier than Grade 11. Additionally, it has been suggested that modules of information regarding this disorder be made available to students of appropriate age so that the dangers and risks of this fully preventable disorder become known. We fully support this suggestion and acknowledge the importance of educating today's youth about the dangers of consuming alcohol during pregnancy.

Secondly, we would like to add our agreement and support to the Wellington Catholic District School Board SEAC's request to have Special Education preparatory courses become mandatory for all Teachers Colleges in Ontario. Graduating teachers have ever increasing challenges in the classroom. Thus, pre-service orientation regarding special needs is becoming a vital key to the success of students and recent teacher graduates. Knowledge of key elements such as the IPRC process, IEP's, exceptionalities, accommodations and modifications is critical for all -especially beginning teachers. We ask that the Ministry consider that increasing knowledge about Special Needs can only increase the level of service provided to our most vulnerable students.

Thank you for your consideration on these two very important issues.

Yours truly,



Amy Booth  
Special Education Advisory Committee Chair  
Upper Canada District School Board

c.c. Greg Pietersma, Chair, UCDSB  
David K. Thomas, Director of Education, UCDSB  
SEAC Chairs, Ontario Public School Boards  
SEAC Chairs, Ontario Catholic School Boards



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for Tomorrow*

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Wednesday, January 16, 2013

Honorable John Milloy  
Minister of Community and Social Services  
Hepburn Block, 6th Floor  
80 Grosvenor Street  
Toronto, ON M7A 1E9

Honorable Laurel Broten  
Minister of Education  
22<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Mowat Block  
900 Bay Street  
Toronto, ON M7A 1L2

Dear Ministers:

We are writing this letter to make you aware of serious workflow issues with the newly established Development Services of Ontario Agency (DSO) and funding of services for people with developmental disabilities.

DSO was established in 2008 to help coordinate services and improve access to services for people with developmental disabilities, as it was identified that there were variable access points to services, and the process was tedious and cumbersome. The introduction of DSO has instead worsened the situation by creating a waiting list to get on other Service Agencies' waiting lists. Currently, there is a six month wait just to receive a letter from DSO that a young adult qualifies for developmental services. The applicant is then put on a waiting list to undergo the Ministry mandated assessment for services conducted by DSO case workers. As there are only two case workers to undertake assessments in York and Durham Regions, there is an eight month waiting list to complete the service assessment before a person can even be referred to a service agency who can provide the required services (such as Lakeridge Community Support Services in Durham Region). These service agencies providing the service to people with developmental disabilities have their own wait lists; some with wait lists of two years. In total, a person waits over 14 months just to get onto a service agency's waiting list, never mind the time it then takes to actually start receiving services.

The following details some of the impacts the DSO imposed delays have on individuals with disabilities who seek assistance.

It is a requirement to have an updated psychological assessment with both cognitive and adaptive assessments to apply for developmental services through DSO, thus parents of children with developmental disabilities are asking their school boards to conduct those psycho/educational assessments, even though school boards are not mandated or funded to conduct assessments for Adult Services. Virtually all school boards have lengthy waiting lists for conducting assessments to initiate programming for students. With the addition of requests for assessments for Adult Services, waiting lists for school board psychological assessments are increasing exponentially.

**Mission Statement:**

*Success in learning to meet the  
challenges of the future.*

Many parents of children with developmental disabilities access Special Services at Home (SSAH) funding. As of April, 2013, children that are 18 years of age, no longer receive SSAH funding. The parents therefore have to apply for Passport funding services through DSO. The result is that they lose funding and have services cut off between the time SSAH funding ends and Passport funding begins due to the aforementioned long waiting lists at DSO.

Many of the people with developmental disabilities receive the Ontario Disabilities Services Pension (ODSP). The Ministry of Community and Social Services stated that people with development disabilities can pay for support services with ODSP funds. ODSP is intended to pay for housing, food and basic personal expenses, the level of ODSP support is below the poverty line. The maximum an individual on ODSP can receive yearly is \$12,768 but the poverty line is \$18,582 as of May, 2011 (reported by Social Policy Ontario). To expect an individual with disabilities to pay for housing, food, basic personal expenses and support services with funds received through ODSP puts an extreme hardship on an already impoverished group of individuals. This already dire situation is exacerbated by the lengthy application process required by DSO and the resultant long waiting list to services.

As you can see, the DSO has not met the objectives it was striving to achieve when it was created, largely due to under-funding, under-staffing and following inefficient workflows. Continuing to operate DSO in this manner is untenable and is a serious dis-service to individuals with disabilities and their caregivers.

The Durham District School Board's Special Education Advisory Committee requests that the Ministry of Community and Social Services coordinate funding of psychological assessments with the Ministry of Education and that they continue SSAH funding beyond the age of 18 to ensure uninterrupted service between SSAH funding and Passport funding in the short term. Since we all need to have a permanent resolution to these issues, we are also requesting that the Government take whatever measures are required to immediately reduce the DSO waiting lists.

Sincerely,



John Watkins  
Chair of SEAC  
Durham District School Board

cc:

- ✓ SEAC Chairs, Ontario Public District School Boards
- SEAC Chairs, Ontario Catholic District School Boards
- Joe Dickson, MPP- Ajax/Pickering
- Christine Elliott, MPP- Whitby/Oshawa
- Tracy MacCharles, MPP- Pickering/Scarborough East
- John O'Toole, MPP- Durham
- Jerry Ouellette, MPP- Oshawa
- Laurie Scott, MPP- Haliburton/Victoria/Brock



## Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board

*Believing. Achieving. Serving*

January 14, 2013

Honourable John Milloy, Minister  
Ministry of Community and Social Services,  
6th Floor, Hepburn Block,  
80 Grosvenor St,  
Toronto, Ontario, M7A 1E9

Dear Minister Milloy:

The Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board Special Education Advisory Committee (S.E.A.C.) is deeply concerned about the impact of some decisions in the "Transformation" agenda which will negatively impact our school board, and more importantly, the many families with developmentally disabled children who already receive adult services, or who are close to transition age.

There are four significant areas where regressive new policies are causing hardship to families who are already struggling to cope with the care of a disabled adult child, with inadequate funding supports:

### 1 Termination of Special Services At Home (S.S.A.H.)

We would like to appeal to your Ministry to re-consider the decision to terminate S.S.A.H. for individuals who have an intellectual disability when they reach the age of eighteen. As of April 2013, students who turn 18 will lose their S.S.A.H. dollars. They will have no funding until they have:

- left school at 21,
- applied and been found eligible for the Development Services Ontario (D.S.O.)
- had the Adult Developmental Services and Support (A.D.S.S.)/Supports Intensity Scale (S.I.S.) scales administered and their names placed on the Passport waiting list and
- remained on that list for many years.

With the current numbers of individuals waiting for Passport being in excess of 4,000, it is quite conceivable that young people will go without funding for community participation, - and their families without respite, - until the individual is in their mid to late 20's. This is not acceptable.

### 2 Barriers in Applying to the Developmental Services Ontario (D.S.O.)

Although individuals may have: used Developmental Services through childhood; a medically documented developmental disability; been assessed in the school system and deemed intellectually challenged; been found eligible for "Contact"; met the medical criteria of developmental disability to receive S.S.A.H.; applied to and qualified for Ontario Disability Support Pension (O.D.S.P.); they are required to "prove eligibility" again for adult services through the D.S.O.

The only acceptable documentation for determining eligibility for the D.S.O. is a psychological assessment. It seems to be assumed that psychological assessments are readily available through the school system. This is not the case. School boards assess to determine educational needs not to meet the D.S.O. requirements. The cost of private psychological assessment is prohibitive for most families. We ask your Ministry to review and consider repealing this specific requirement for those who already have extensive medical documentation of developmental disability, or alternately to make funding (of approximately \$2000) available, so that families can afford the costs of private assessments. It is also important to observe that the process of assessment for administrative purposes can be disrespectful to and a burden on the individual.



### 3 Waiting Lists After School

The Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board offers "work experience", volunteering, and community participation for transition age students, to build bridges to the community and to a meaningful adult life. Individuals are accompanied by an educational assistant to make this possible. The purpose is many-fold, including increasing independence and self-reliance, and developing relationships. The schools have the expectation of continuity after school years, with a support worker replacing school staff. Without Passport/S.S.A.H. funding, community participation abruptly ends, unless one parent leaves their job to become their child's support worker.

The school boards are doing their part, giving students opportunities to leave school with a readiness to participate in community life. The Ministry needs to find the funding necessary to provide S.S.A.H. from age 18 to school leaving and then Passport dollars, so that there is no break in the continuity. The future of these young people is at stake. Expecting them to languish on waiting lists for years is unfair to them and their families; it devalues their lives, and deprives our communities of their contributions.

The suggestion by your ministry that individuals use their O.D.S.P. to pay for community participation supports is not reasonable. This income support is meant for housing, food, and basic personal expenses. The yearly amount (\$12,768) is well below the poverty level (\$18,582).

### 4 Inadequate Funding For Those With Severe Disabilities

Finally, we would like to know how your Ministry will support those families who have a son or daughter with needs that are greater than those who fit within the "funding bands" of the Passport programme. Before the "Transformation" changes, parents who chose to have their child with high needs live at home and in the community, could receive \$10,000 through S.S.A.H., and up to \$25,000 through Passport. This amount was not close to covering daytime support needs. There was still the expectation that aging parents give many hours per week of caregiving and supervision. Some families have been placed under intolerable physical, emotional, and financial stress, but in spite of that, are committed to their child having a life outside of institutions.


With merging of S.S.A.H. into Passport, the maximum funding has been reduced from \$35,000 to \$25,000 for day supports. This amounts to a little over \$2,000 per month. Individuals who are dependent for all care needs may require 16 hours of daily support. For many families the amount of funding required for them to have a "normal" life, and for the disabled member to have choices, opportunities, and quality of life, would be closer to \$50,000. Parents who will not be able to provide for their child with high needs on \$25,000 per year, need to hear from your Ministry immediately about what provisions will be made for them. Will funding bands be broadened in all 4 categories to allow a maximum of \$50,000 for those with high needs?

Family lives are further stressed by the Ministry of Community and Social Services offering no availability of accommodation support dollars when parents make a choice for their child to live at home and in the community. Housing/accommodation options are not available to families, but only to agencies. Is this an issue the Ministry will address in the near future?

We feel these issues are substantive and urgent and appreciate your response to our concerns.

Respectfully,

  
Dr. W. Mahoney,  
Chair, Special Education Advisory Council (S.E.A.C.)

  
Mr. P.J. Daly,  
Chairperson of the Board, Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board  
cc: Hon. Laurel Broten, Minister of Education  
Andre Marin, Ontario Ombudsman,



**UPPER GRAND  
DISTRICT SCHOOL  
BOARD**

500 Victoria Road North, Guelph, ON N1E 6K2  
Tel: 519-822-4420 or Toll Free: 1-800-321-4025

January 9, 2013

The Honourable Laurel Broten  
Minister of Education  
Mowat Block, 18<sup>th</sup> Floor  
900 Bay Street  
Toronto, ON M7Z 1L2

Dear Madam Minister:

At its meeting on December 12, 2012, the Upper Grand District School Board (UGDSB) Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) adopted the resolution:

THAT the Special Education Advisory Committee send a letter in support of the letter received from the Upper Canada District School Board.

This letter supported the Near North District School Board - Special Education Advisory Committee's concern about Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder and the Wellington Catholic District School Board's SEAC requesting Special Education preparatory courses for all Teachers Colleges in Ontario.

The letter from the Near North District School Board-Special Education Advisory Committee encourages the Ministry of Education to examine the health curriculum and modify it so that Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder can be discussed with students before Grade 11.

The Wellington Catholic District School Board - Special Education Advisory Committee letter requests comprehensive Special Education preparatory courses becoming a mandatory part of the pre-service programs for all Teachers Colleges in Ontario. They strongly believe that this is vital to the success of students and Teacher College graduates.

Therefore, the Upper Grand District School Board – Special Education Advisory Committee requests that the Minister consider reviewing the health curriculum to see where discussion with students about Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders may best fit prior to Grade 11. Secondly, we respectfully request that your ministry consider making comprehensive Special Education preparatory courses a mandatory pre-service program for all Teachers Colleges in Ontario.

Sincerely,

Marty Fairbairn, Chair  
Upper Grand District School Board SEAC

c - SEAC Chairs – Ontario District School Boards

**Upper Grand District School Board**

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• Marty Fairbairn; Vice-Chair

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• Linda Busuttill

• Kathryn Cooper  
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