



Special Education Advisory Committee

Thursday, March 10, 2022

MS Teams Virtual Meeting

AGENDA

Land Acknowledgement

The Grand Erie District School Board recognizes the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe people, as the traditional peoples of this territory. We acknowledge and give gratitude to the Indigenous peoples for sharing these lands in order for us to continue our work here today.

AGENDA

Item	Info.	Dia.	Res.	Responsibility
LEAD				
A-1 Opening 6:00-6:05				
(a) Welcome/ Land Acknowledgement Statement			√	W. Rose
(b) Roll Call			√	W. Rose
(c) Agenda Additions/ Deletions/ Approvals		√	√	W. Rose
LEARN				
B-1 Timed Items 6:05 – 7:00				
(a) Learning with Michael Jacques – Here's My Book!	√	√		W. Rose
(b) A Day in the Life of the Social Worker	√	√		D. Smith-Rayoff/P. Bagchee
(c)				

Learn Lead Inspire



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Item	Info.	Dia.	Res.	Responsibility
LEAD				
C-1 Business Arising from Minutes and/or Previous Meetings – 7:00-7:30				
(a) Ratification of Minutes February 17, 2022*			√	W. Rose
(b) PPM167 Online Learning Graduation Requirement*	√	√		K. Graham
(c) Entry to School for Students on the Autism Spectrum	√	√		L. Sheppard
(d)				
LEARN				
D-1 New Business				
(a)				
(b)				
(c)				
LEAD				
E-1 Other Business				
(a)				



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Item	Info.	Dia.	Res.	Responsibility
INSPIRE				
F-1 Standing Items – 7:30 – 7:40				
(a) Policy/Procedures Out for Comment* The following policies and procedures are up for review as part of the ongoing review cycle. Any comments can be sent to policiesandprocedures@granderie.ca by April 6, 2022 . Please see links below: Assessment Evaluation and Reporting (SO-20) Assessment Evaluation and Reporting (SO-XXX) Employee Injury Reporting and Investigation (HR-121) Environmental Education Stewardship (SO-18) Environmental Education Stewardship (SO-XXX) Home Instruction (P-106) Maintaining Employee Safety while Working with Students (HR-107)	√			W. Rose
(b) Trustee Updates	√			R. Collver/T. Waldschmidt
(c)				
(d)				
(e)				
(f)				



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Item	Info.	Dia.	Res.	Responsibility
LEARN LEAD INSPIRE				
G-1 Information Items				
(a)				
LEARN LEAD INSPIRE				
H-1 Community Updates				
(a)				
(b)				
LEARN LEAD INSPIRE				
I-1 Correspondence – 7:40 – 7:50				
(a) Ltr – Dufferin Peel CDSB re Changes to COVID Protocols Feb 18 2022	√			W. Rose
(b) Ltr – Durham DSB re Change Definition Feb 22 2022	√			W. Rose
(c) Ltr – Durham DSB re PPM81 Feb 25 2022	√			W. Rose
(d) Ltr – Halton DSB re Opposition to PPM81 Change Feb 10 2022	√			W. Rose
(e) Ltr – Thunder Bay CDSB re Bill 172 Feb 15 2022	√			W. Rose
(f)				

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Special Education Advisory Committee

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Item	Info.	Dia.	Res.	Responsibility
INSPIRE				
J-1 Future Agenda Items and SEAC Committee Planning – 7:50-8:00				
(a) Modified day				
(b) Summer programs for students with special education needs				
K-1 Next Meeting				
Thursday, April 21, 2022 MS Teams	√			W. Rose
L-1 Adjournment				
Meeting adjourned at p.m.			√	W. Rose

Note: Column Abbreviations

* Attachments to the agenda

Info. Item for information only

Dia. Item for dialogue

Res. Item for resolution or recommendation

SEMT Special Education Management Team

AGENDA ITEM(S)

Standing:

- LDAO SEAC Circular September, November, February, April and June (as available).

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AGENDA



Special Education Advisory Committee

Thursday, February 17, 2022

6:00 PM

MS Teams Virtual Meeting

MINUTES

Present: Chair W. Rose, P. Bagchee, L. Boswell, C. Brady, T. Buchanan, R. Collver, L. DeJong, A. Detmar, M. Gatopoulos, J. Gemmill, K. Jones, L. Nydam, T. Sault, L. Thompson, J. Trovato, T. Waldschmidt, J. White, T. Wilson. R. Wyszynski.

Regrets: A, Csoff, F. Lainson, L. Scott, L. Sheppard

Recorder: P. Curran

A - 1 **Opening**

(a) **Welcome**

W. Rose called the meeting to order and read the Land Acknowledgment Statement.

(b) **Agenda Additions/Deletions/Approval**

Add D-1 (c) Resignation of P. Boutis.

Moved by: C. Brady

Seconded by: A. Detmar

THAT the SEAC 21-06 Agenda for Thursday, February 17, 2022 be approved as amended.

Carried

B - 1 **Timed Items**

(a) **Financial Update 2021-22**

Special Education funding, grants, expenditures and reserves for the current school year were reviewed.

(b) **2022-23 Budget Process**

A review of the 2022-23 budget process occurred, with the presentation of a balanced budget to trustees being the main objective.

Senior staff members are exploring areas of investment where new initiatives may be available.

SEAC members were encouraged to attend budget meetings and/or to provide suggestions to the Superintendent of Business in advance of the scheduled meetings.

1. Tuesday April 19, 2022 at 5:30 p.m.

2. Monday May 16, 2022 at 5:30 p.m.

3. Thursday May 26, 2022 at 5:30 p.m.

4. Tuesday, June 7, 2022 at 5:30 p.m.



Special Education Advisory Committee

Thursday, February 17, 2022

6:00 PM

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C - 1 **Business Arising from Minutes and/or Previous Meetings**

(a) **Ratification of Minutes from Thursday, January 20, 2022**

Moved by: L. Boswell

Seconded by: M. Gatopoulos

THAT the SEAC 21-05 minutes for Thursday, January 20, 2022 be approved as circulated.

Carried

(b) **Expulsions and Exclusions for Students with Special Education Needs**

Expulsion is considered a punitive action which occurs for substantial issues at a school. Expulsion can be from just the school or can be from all schools within a board.

Exclusion is a different process and is not considered punitive. It is enacted when a student's presence poses a significant safety risk. There must be a re-entry plan which includes remediating measures be put in place.

The number of students with special needs that were expelled and excluded in 2020-21 was shared.

(c) **Wait Lists for Psychological Services**

Many Ontario school boards are experiencing significant wait lists as the need for services is greater than the qualified personnel available. There is also a waitlist for local private practitioners.

Grand Erie is taking several steps to address waitlists. These steps include ongoing consultation on tiered interventions; developing the Academic Readiness Screener to assess and remediate baseline skills; and conducting additional psychoeducational assessments during March Break and the summer months. There is also strategic planning and monitoring related to the waitlists for Psychoeducational Assessments.

SEAC will send a letter of advocacy to the appropriate body regarding the concerns with wait lists for psychoeducational assessments.



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6:00 PM

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(d) **Self-Contained Classroom Planning Update**

The process for determining location and types of self-contained classrooms was explained. A discussion ensued with input from SEAC members.

D - 1 **New Business**

(a) **Regional Special Education Council (RSEC) Updates**

One of the guest presenters spoke about human rights cases and recommendations that have come from them, and further connected recommendations with concerns and challenges that could arise with respect to the draft PPM 81 provided by the Ministry of Education currently out for consultation.

The second guest presenter spoke about the Toronto DSB's movement toward de-streaming using a Kindergarten to G12 approach.

(b) **PPM81 (Policy/Program Memorandum) Consultation Update**

Members received an overview of the draft PPM 81 which was received by Grand Erie in mid-January.

The PPM covers school health support services, school-based rehabilitation services and/or community based clinical services. Responsibilities of these services are shared across education, health and community sectors.

The general consensus is to slow down the review process to ensure the new PPM is completed with attention to detail. February 25 is the new deadline for submission for comments on PPM81.

https://forms.office.com/pages/responsepage.aspx?id=KRLczSgsl0u3ig5crLWGXCVev_jkIERDlpv9KNwwy5hUMENXQINWRjJIRFIFTzOzTUdSWIdaNzdOTC4u

(c) **Resignation of SEAC Member**

Members were informed that P. Boutis resigned from the committee.

P. Curran will create a letter of thanks for the Chair's signature.

E - 1 **Other Business**

(a) **Appendix H - Special Education Plan**

This document is not a required standard or appendix but has been included in the Special Education Plan to help SEAC members and the public.

Updating the document is onerous and as all acronyms are spelled out in the minutes, this appendix will be removed from the current Special Education Plan Review.

Members asked for hyperlink definitions for any acronyms.

F - 1 **Standing Items**



Special Education Advisory Committee

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6:00 PM

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- (a) Policies/Procedures Out for Comment
Comments on currently reviewed policies or procedures may be submitted to policiesandprocedures@granderie.ca according to the timeline listed.
- (b) **Trustee Updates**
- i. T. Waldschmidt
- Wished P. Boutis well in her future endeavours and thanked her for all her work on the Committee.
 - Apologized for his absence from the last meeting and is grateful to all the members who reached out to him and his family during their recent bereavement.
- ii. R. Collver
- Extracurricular activities are able to resume, and we are appreciative to the staff and volunteers who give up their time to supervise these students.
 - Reviewing the mandate for math at the Junior and Senior Kindergarten level, at the March 7, 2022 meeting.
 - Presentation from Superintendent of Business included information that the GSN (Grants for Student Needs) was received early which facilitates planning.
 - February is Black History Month and Grand Erie students have focused on identifying and recognizing the many accomplishments of successful black persons.
 - Thanked everyone for attending tonight's meeting.
- G - 1 **Information Items**
- (a) Nil
- H - 1 **Community Updates**
- (b) Nil
- I - 1 **Correspondence**
- (a) LDAO SEAC Circular: February 2022
- i. Included information on PPM 81
- ii. Article on Access to Individual Education Plans and how some schools may discourage.
- iii. MACSE (Minister's Advisory Counsel on Special Education) Update
- (b) Lakehead DB re: Support Service Personnel Jan 17 2022
- Shortage of Personal Support Workers (PSW); this is not a concern to Grand Erie as we do not employ PSWs
- (c) Algoma DSB re: Bill 172 Jan 11 2021
- Grand Erie has already acted on this issue.
- (d) Renfrew County CDSB Re: Online Learning/Universal Design Jan 13 2022
- (e) Durham DSB re: SIP Funding Feb 3 2022
- The Ministry funds are based on previous enrollment and as we have fewer students, so Grand Erie's salaries were covered with current funding.
- J - 1 **Future Agenda Items and SEAC Committee Planning**
- (a) PPM167 (Policy/Program Memorandum) Online Learning Graduation Requirement



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6:00 PM

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MINUTES

(b) Special Incidence Portion (SIP) Funding

K - 1 **Next Meeting**

Thursday, March 10, 2022 | 6:00 PM | MS Teams Virtual Meeting.

L - 1 **Adjournment**

W. Rose called for adjournment.

Moved by: M. Gatopoulos

Seconded by: L. Boswell

THAT the SEAC 21-06 meeting held February 17, 2022 be adjourned at 8:45 PM.

Carried

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Policy/Program Memorandum 167

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Date of Issue: February 1, 2022

Effective: February 1, 2022

Subject: Online learning graduation requirement

Application:
Directors of Education
Chairs of District School Boards
Supervisory Officers and Secretary-Treasurers of School Authorities
Principals of Elementary Schools
Principals of Secondary Schools
Principals of Continuing Education
Principals of Inspected Private Schools
Principals of Inspected International Schools
Principals of Inspected First Nation / Federally-operated Schools
Executive Director, Provincial and Demonstration Schools
Director of Education, Centre Jules-Léger Consortium
Principal of the Independent Learning Centre

Purpose

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide direction to Ontario schools [footnote 1 \[1\]](#) on the implementation of the online learning graduation requirement and opt-out process.

This requirement is designed to support students [footnote 2 \[2\]](#) to enroll in online learning courses as part of their secondary school program, in order to support the development of digital literacy and other important transferable skills that will help prepare them for success after graduation and in all aspects of their lives. It is guided by a vision of an Ontario where every student has equitable access to high-quality online learning within a modernized education system that prepares them to succeed in a digital and ever-changing world. Refer to the “Eligible credits” section for a detailed definition of “online learning”.

Where any direction of the Policy/Program Memorandum (PPM) conflicts with applicable laws or collective agreement provisions, the applicable laws or collective agreement provisions prevail over the **PPM**.

The Ministry of Education recognizes the importance of respecting French minority-language rights holders and denominational rights holders.

Ontario students have been using online learning to earn high school credits towards their diploma since 2004. Expanding access to high-quality, Ontario teacher-led online learning will enable students to:

- access a wider variety of courses no matter where they live or go to school, allowing them to shape their education based on their individual needs and goals
- learn in engaging, new ways, such as through hands-on, interactive features, simulations and collaboration with peers across the province
- increase their digital fluency and gain transferable skills to support lifelong learning and employment opportunities

We live in an increasingly digital world and students require the skills necessary to operate in both the physical and digital space. By expanding and modernizing online learning, students will have greater flexibility, more choice, and will graduate with skills needed in all aspects of their lives, including to enter the workforce. Employers are looking for people who understand the importance of technology and can use it in ways that will help their businesses thrive in a competitive, globally connected economy. Online learning is one important way that students can develop these skills and become lifelong learners.

Online learning graduation requirement

Beginning with the cohort of students who entered Grade 9 in the 2020-21 school year, all students must earn a minimum of two online learning credits as part of the [requirements for an Ontario Secondary School Diploma](#) unless they have been opted out or exempted in accordance with the processes described in this memorandum. Adult learners entering the Ontario secondary school system in 2023-24 or later will also be required to meet this graduation requirement unless they opt themselves out of the requirement in accordance with the processes described in this memorandum.

Students working towards other certificates (for example, the certificate of accomplishment or an Ontario Secondary School certificate) are not required to complete the online learning graduation requirement, yet may be encouraged to enroll in online learning courses to support the development of digital literacy and other important transferable skills that help prepare them for success after graduation and in all aspects of their lives.

Eligible credits

For the purposes of this Policy/Program Memorandum, *online learning courses* or *online learning credits*, also known as “e-learning” courses or credits, are Grades 9 to 12 credit courses that are delivered entirely using the internet and do not require students to be physically present with one another or with their educator in the school, except where they may be needed for:

- examinations and other final evaluations
- access to internet connectivity, learning devices, or other school-based supports (for example, academic, guidance, special education, mental health and well-being supports, and required initial assessment and in-person learning for English language learners and students of Actualisation linguistique en français (ALF) or Programme d'appui aux nouveaux arrivants (PANA) at their early stages of language acquisition)

Students must successfully complete the equivalent of at least two full online credits to fulfil the graduation requirement. Online learning credits towards the graduation requirement may be earned at any time during the student’s secondary school program or, under exceptional circumstances, an individual student in Grade 8, with parental consent, may be given permission by the principal of a secondary school to “reach ahead” to take secondary school courses, either during the school year or in the summer prior to entering Grade 9 (please refer to *Ontario Schools, Kindergarten to Grade 12: Policy and Program Requirements* for more information on these credits).

All online learning credits earned at a school authorized to offer credits towards an Ontario Secondary School Diploma may count towards the graduation requirement.

In online learning courses delivered by Ontario’s publicly funded secondary schools, coursework is teacher-led. The content is offered through a secure learning management system, allowing students and educators to communicate and share learning and coursework online. School boards may, for example, use the ministry’s Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) for this purpose, which is available for publicly funded school boards to use at no cost.

Students from the same online class may follow different timetables and be from different schools or school boards. In publicly funded secondary schools, students complete their online coursework with the support of a certified Ontario educator [footnote 3 \[3\]](#) who provides instruction, ongoing feedback, assessment, evaluation, and reporting including implementing any accommodations and/or modifications identified in the student’s Individual Education Plan.

Ineligible credits

Credits that shall not count towards the online learning graduation requirement include those earned through:

- **in-person learning**, in which students are physically present with other students in the same course and their educator in the school environment
- **blended learning**, in which digital learning resources are used in an in-person learning setting, or in which students are taught part of the time in person in the school environment and part of the time online
- **flipped classrooms**, a type of blended learning in which students are introduced to content online and practice working through it in person with their educator in the school environment
- **remote learning**, characterized by minimum synchronous learning requirements, among other requirements as defined in [Policy/Program Memorandum 164](#)

Exception: remote learning credit earned in 2020-21

The ministry recognizes the extraordinary circumstances of the COVID-19/covid 19 pandemic. As a result, this Policy/Program Memorandum recognizes up to one secondary school credit completed by Grade 9 students in the 2020-21 school year during the province-wide school closures (from April 2021 to June 2021) may be counted towards the graduation requirement. Schools should select one of these credits and record it in the system they use locally for tracking the requirement and reflect the completion of the selected credit when reporting through the Ontario School Information System (OnSIS) towards the student’s online learning graduation requirement. The course itself does not need to be flagged as an “online course”. It will be counted under the “Diploma Requirements” “Online Learning Graduation Requirement” section of the provincial report card template.

Opt-out process

School boards must develop and implement a protocol or procedure [footnote 4 \[4\]](#) that allows for students to be opted out of the online learning graduation requirement:

- at the request of their parent(s)/guardian(s)
- at the student’s request, if they are 18 years of age or older (or if they are 16 or 17 years of age and have withdrawn from parental control)

Minimum requirements

The school board must make available a digital and/or paper-based “opt-out form” that a parent/guardian, a student who is 18 years of age or older, or a student who is 16 or 17 years of age and has withdrawn from parental control, may use to record their decision to opt out of the graduation requirement. The school board may use the sample form provided in the Appendix to this memorandum or create their own form if it contains, at a minimum, the information in the sample form.

A parent/guardian, a student who is 18 years of age or older, or a student who is 16 or 17 years of age and has withdrawn from parental control, may opt out of the graduation requirement for any reason during the student’s secondary school program by submitting the form to the school that holds the student’s Ontario Student Record. The school must acknowledge the receipt of the form once submitted and include it in the Ontario Student Record of the student. Once the form has been included in the student’s Ontario Student Record, the graduation requirement will not apply to the student. School boards may establish an annual cut-off date by which the completed opt-out form must be submitted to the school for it to take effect before the end of the school year.

Where necessary, school staff may contact a parent/guardian to discuss the student’s individual needs and the appropriateness of online learning for the student. They may also contact the student if they are 18 years of age or older or are 16 or 17 years of age and have withdrawn from parental control. During these discussions, school staff may or may not recommend that a student be opted out of the graduation requirement. However, it must be made clear that the choice is ultimately that of the parent/guardian, student who is 18 years of age or older, or who is 16 or 17 years of age and has withdrawn from parental control.

Responsibilities for reporting

Reporting requirements

The principal of the school holding the student’s Ontario Student Record will ensure that a determination has been made whether the student has met the online learning graduation requirement and if so, will ensure this is indicated on the Ontario Student Transcript and the student’s report card. If the graduation requirement does not apply, for example due to an opt-out, this will also be indicated on both the Ontario Student Transcript and report card. This will be recorded on the transcript as “Online Learning Graduation Requirement - Non-Applicable”.

Each student’s progress towards the graduation requirement will be tracked by the school, including which credits were completed through online learning. Progress towards the completion will be communicated to parents/guardians, or the student if they are 18 years of age or older or 16 or 17 years of age and have withdrawn from parental control. This may be communicated, for example, through the student’s report card.

Any required reporting on the graduation requirement and opt-outs must be completed through OnSIS. School boards currently report online learning data through OnSIS using specific course delivery types intended for online learning or e-learning courses. It is expected that school boards will continue to report online learning data in this way through OnSIS.

Recording of grades

All reporting and recording of student information for online courses remains the same as for courses delivered through classroom instruction, per [Growing success: assessment, evaluation and reporting in Ontario schools \(2010\)](#). The marks reporting schedule of an online learning course will be that of the school delivering the online learning course in accordance with the reporting schedules outlined in Growing Success. The same criteria for full disclosure that apply to in-person courses will also apply to online learning courses as outlined in the [Ontario student transcript manual](#).

The school delivering the online learning course(s) will ensure mid-term and final grades are sent both to the school holding the student’s Ontario Student Record and the parent/guardian or student if they are 18 years of age or older or 16 or 17 years of age and have withdrawn from parental control. This may be communicated, for example, through the provincial report card. The school holding the student’s Ontario Student Record is responsible for including the report in the student’s Ontario Student Record and the credit information on the Ontario Student Transcript.

Description of requirement in course calendar

School boards will ensure that a description of the online learning graduation requirement and the opt-out protocol or procedure are included in course calendars.

A sample description is included as an Appendix to this memorandum. The course calendar must include at least the information in the sample description.

Student transfers

If a student transfers to the school from outside of a publicly funded school board, the principal will ensure a determination is made regarding how many online learning credits towards the graduation requirement may be considered completed based on their evaluation of the student’s learning. As with all determinations of credit equivalency, the principal will ensure that a record of this determination and the rationale is kept in the student’s Ontario Student Record.

If a student transfers from outside of a publicly funded school board where they were previously exempted from the online learning graduation requirement, a new opt-out form will need to be completed.

Principal’s discretion

The principal of the school holding the student’s Ontario Student Record will have the discretion to exempt students under 18 years old and still under parental control from the online learning graduation requirement without parental consent if they determine the need is pressing and in the best interests of the student and the parent cannot be reached. However, this authority shall not be used to circumvent parent/guardian choice.

Where principals make a determination to exempt a student, if possible the parent/guardian shall be electronically or physically mailed a notification by the principal in writing with a rationale outlining why the exemption was made, and a copy of the notification must be included in the student’s Ontario Student Record. Once the notification is included in the student’s Ontario Student Record, the graduation requirement shall not apply to the student.

Availability of school supports

Supports that are available to students in publicly funded schools (e.g., guidance, nutrition programs, extra-curricular activities, services for English-language learners) will continue to be made available to the students at their school while they are enrolled in online learning. A point of contact in each school will be available to serve as a conduit between the online learning educator and additional supports that may be required by the student. If a student in a publicly funded school has an Individual Education Plan, the plan should be shared, when appropriate, with an educator instructing an online course delivered by another publicly funded school board, with the necessary consent.

Appendix: Sample forms

Sample A: information for course calendar

Online learning graduation requirement

Students are required to earn two online learning credits to graduate from secondary school, beginning with every student who entered Grade 9 in the 2020-21 school year. The graduation requirement is intended to support students in developing familiarity and comfort with learning and working in a fully online environment, as well as developing digital literacy and other important transferable skills that they will need for success after secondary school, including in post-secondary education and the workplace.

Definition of “online learning” for this graduation requirement

- Online learning credits that count towards the requirement are earned through courses that rely primarily on communication between students and educators through the internet or another digital platform.
- Online learning credits that count do not generally require students to be physically present with one another or with their educator in the school, except where required for:
 - examinations and other final evaluations
 - occasional meetings with educators and other school staff, and
 - access to internet connectivity, learning devices, or other supports (for example, guidance, special education and mental health and well-being supports, and required initial assessment and in-person learning for English language learners and students of Actualisation linguistique en français (ALF) or Programme d’appui aux nouveaux arrivants (PANA) at their early stages of language acquisition)
- In online learning courses delivered by schools in the publicly funded education system, coursework is teacher-led.
- Students from the same online class may follow different timetables and be from different schools or school boards.
- Students in publicly funded schools complete their online coursework with the support of a certified Ontario educator with whom they communicate, and who provides instruction, ongoing feedback, assessment, evaluation and reporting as needed, including implementing any accommodations and/or modifications identified in the student’s Individual Education Plan.

In-person courses that use digital learning tools in a physical classroom do not count towards the online graduation requirement, nor do remote learning courses that rely on a minimum requirement for synchronous learning.

There is one exception: **Up to one** secondary school credit that was completed by students who were in Grade 9 during the province-wide school closures (from April 2021 to June 2021) may be counted towards the graduation requirement, in recognition of the extraordinary circumstances of the COVID-19/covid 19 pandemic.

Selection of courses should consider future pathways, the ability and interests of the student to learn in a fully online environment and any potential supports that may be needed. Meeting the online learning graduation requirement should not pose a barrier to graduation for students. As with all learning, students taking online courses will have access to the supports they need through their school, (e.g., guidance, nutrition programs, extra-curricular activities and services for English-language learners). If a student in a publicly funded school has an Individual Education Plan, the plan should be shared, when appropriate, with an educator instructing an online course delivered by another publicly funded school board, with the necessary consent.

Check with your local school if you have questions regarding the registration process.

Parents/guardians may choose to opt their children out of the mandatory online learning credits required for graduation. To opt out, a parent/guardian must submit an opt-out form to the school. Students 18 years of age or older, or who are 16 or 17 years of age and have withdrawn from parental control, can also opt out of the graduation requirement by submitting an opt-out form to the school. School boards must also allow for students and parents/guardians to opt back into the online learning graduation requirement should their decision change. Please contact the school for further information on this process.

Sample B: Opt-out form

About the online learning graduation requirement

Students are required to earn two online learning credits to graduate from secondary school, beginning with every student who entered Grade 9 in the 2020-21 school year. Adult learners entering the Ontario secondary school system in 2023-24 or later will be required to meet this graduation requirement and may opt themselves out of the requirement. The graduation requirement is intended to support students in developing familiarity and comfort with working and learning in a fully online environment, as well as developing digital literacy and other important transferable skills that will help prepare them for success after graduation and in all aspects of their lives.

Meeting the online learning graduation requirement should not pose a barrier to graduation for students. As with all learning, students taking online courses will have access to the supports they need through their school, (e.g., guidance, nutrition programs, extra-curricular activities and services for English-language learners). If a student in a publicly funded school has an Individual Education Plan, the plan should be shared, when appropriate, with an educator instructing an online course delivered by another publicly funded school board, with the necessary consent.

Parents/guardians may choose to opt their child out of the mandatory online courses required for graduation. Students age 18 years of age or older or students who are 16 or 17 years of age and have withdrawn from parental control can also opt out of the graduation requirement. School boards must also allow for students and parents/guardians to opt back into the online learning graduation requirement should their decision change.

I agree with the following statements:

- Having reviewed the online learning graduation requirement and the availability of supports for online learning through my child’s/my school, I would like to opt my child/myself out of this requirement.
- The benefits of online learning have been shared with me by the school, including how the development of digital literacy and other important transferable skills are intended to help prepare students for success after graduation and in all aspects of their lives.

I understand the following statements:

- Upon receipt of this form by my child’s school/my school, my child/I will not be required to earn two online learning credits to earn an Ontario Secondary School Diploma.
- My child/I will face no academic penalties for opting out of this graduation requirement.
- My child/I will continue to complete all other applicable graduation requirements.
- This will be recorded on my child’s/my transcript as “Online Learning Graduation Requirement - Non-Applicable”.

Student’s First Name

Parent/Guardian First Name
(if applicable)

Signature of Parent/Guardian or Student Age 18 or Older, or

Student who is 16 or 17 and has Withdrawn from Parental Control

Student's Last Name

Parent/Guardian Last Name
(if applicable)

Date

Please note:

Upon receipt, this form will be included in your child's/your Ontario Student Record.

You will receive an acknowledgement from the school by _____ [letter/email/text] by _____ [insert date].

If you do not receive an acknowledgement, please contact: _____ [contact name here].

Please return this signed form no later than: _____ [insert date].

Updated: February 1, 2022

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Footnotes

- footnote [1] [Back to paragraph ^](#) In this memorandum, *school(s)* refers to any institution that offers secondary school credits towards an Ontario Secondary School Diploma, including schools operated by district school boards, school authorities, and Provincial and Demonstration Schools (including the schools operated by the Centre Jules-Léger Consortium), as well as Education and Community Partnership Program, inspected private schools, inspected international schools, inspected First Nation/federally operated schools and the Independent Learning Centre.
- footnote [2] [Back to paragraph ^](#) In this memorandum, unless otherwise stated, student(s) means students in Grades 9 to 12 who are enrolled in a school as defined above and includes adult learners as outlined in the Online Learning Graduation Requirement section.
- footnote [3] [Back to paragraph ^](#) The Ministry of Education expects that school boards ensure that staffing for online learning is conducted in accordance with the relevant collective agreements and policies. School boards are responsible for ensuring that educators delivering online learning courses have the appropriate hardware, software and training, as outlined in collective agreements and policies.
- footnote [4] [Back to paragraph ^](#) School boards must allow for students and parents/guardians to opt back into the online learning graduation requirement should their decision change and document this in the student's Ontario Student Record. School boards may establish an annual cut-off date for this option.

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The Ministry of Education is responsible for child care and for administering the system of publicly funded elementary and secondary school education in Ontario.

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February 18, 2022

The Honourable Stephen Lecce
Minister of Education
5th floor, 438 University Ave
Toronto, Ontario
M7A 2A5

Dear Minister Lecce,

On January 12, 2022, you announced the changes to the provincial protocols for COVID-19 within Ontario schools. With the full re-opening of schools mid-January, the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board's Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) is concerned about the impact of these changes on the students we represent.

Children belong in inclusive schools and classrooms. These schools must always be safe. Most children with a disability experience a cluster of health and developmental problems. Research indicates that children with 'learning disabilities' are more vulnerable to illness from COVID-19 (Williamson EJ et al., 2021). Down's syndrome individuals are at higher risk of severe outcomes from COVID-19 (Emes D., 2021).

Parents and guardians are often the main caregiver, and many do not have the support systems available if they were to become ill. Resources are severely impacted during waves, but in particular during the current one due to Omicron's transmissibility.

Consultation and Transparency

- There was no consultation prior to changing established reporting protocols. Parents and guardians relied on these to make informed decisions for COVID-19.
- Reporting when absenteeism at a school is 30% or more does not provide a reliable indicator for COVID-19 cases in a school. The newly available online information from the Ministry of Education for percentage of absenteeism in Ontario schools also does not provide reliable information. There are many reasons for absenteeism, and what constitutes absenteeism among school Boards may vary. For example, a child will not be marked absent so long as they switch to online, even if they have symptoms of COVID-19.

Parents and guardians need timely and accurate information to make informed decisions for the safety of their vulnerable children. We believe it is imperative to re-establish COVID-19 case and contact management systems, as well as previous protocols in accordance with applicable privacy laws that allowed for sharing of positive cases in schools.

Health and Safety Measures and Transparency

Keeping schools open and safe has been identified as a priority by your government. We do applaud you for implementing infection control prevention measures to try to address the airborne component COVID-19. We remain concerned to hear some measures are not yet fully implemented. All the while some measures are being reduced or eliminated. It is unclear what data is being used by your Ministry to substantiate this (e.g.):

- Eliminating the reporting of COVID-19 cases as mentioned and eliminating the closure of classrooms and schools based on COVID-19 spread. These fail to recognize the high-risk issues that impact students with special needs - children who do not or cannot wear masks, contact time and being within 2 metres of a COVID positive case within a class distancing rules cannot

consistently be met due to class sizes and space restrictions), and student limitations with using hand sanitizer or washing hands.

- Not all classrooms have stand-alone HEPA filter units (or equivalent) to reduce COVID-19 in the air (Lindsley WG et al., 2021) leading to an inequitable situation. Further, there is no continuous quality monitoring of ventilation in place such as the practice of using CO2 detectors for proxy of COVID-19 and allow for real time response (Prather, Poppendieck and Rosenthal, 2021).
- N-95 supply to staff should not be limited to require their re-use when supply almost 2 years later into this pandemic is no longer an issue. Re-use does not consider infection control practice standards such as prevention of cross-contamination during donning and doffing.
- Respirators are preferred and older students should have access to N95 masks. 3-ply masks provided to schools are optional, but this is a minimum standard (Government of Canada, 2022). Further research identifies that N95 followed by medical masks are superior for risk reduction (Andrejko et al., 2022). Medical masks are being provided by some School Boards to children as it is cost prohibitive to the most vulnerable families and the Ministry needs to reconsider what they are providing to schools.
- Antigen tests and PCR self-collection test kits are provided by schools to students but only once symptomatic. There is a significant segment of our community that is disadvantaged and cannot purchase such tests. It is unclear why these are not offered before a student attends school or why priority testing is not offered at testing centres in an effort to keep schools open and safe.

All this makes it unclear to parents just how safe schools are when there are no transparent, adequate measures provided to gauge the level of COVID-19 spread in schools. Parents and guardians of vulnerable children require meaningful measures to make informed decisions whether to send their child to school. The risk-benefits must be determined by the family unit.

Proactive, continuous quality improvements must continue to be utilized to keep schools and our children safe particularly in light of Ontarians being told to learn to live with COVID-19. This duty of care for safety requires implementing practices based on research and the tracking of transparent and appropriate indicators in order to make adjustments and re-adjustments to enhance safety during this ongoing pandemic and future waves. Parents require this for informed decisions. Appropriate data collection and reporting is an expected standard of our schools and education researchers. We expect the Ministry and elected officials to uphold the same standard.

The safety and well-being of all students is paramount while preserving inclusion. Vulnerable students are simply at greater risk and families need to be better informed. We thank you in advance for your immediate consideration and look forward to a prompt response.

Sincerely,



Bruno Iannicca,
SEAC Chair, Dufferin-Peel Catholic District
School Board (DPCDSB)
Trustee Mississauga Ward 7



Dely Farrace,
SEAC Vice Chair, DPCDSB
SEAC Association Representative for
Brampton Caledon Community Living

cc: DPCDSB Trustees
MPPs of Dufferin-Peel
Chairs of Special Education Advisory Committees

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February 22, 2022

Hon. Stephen Lecce, Minister of Education
Ministry of Education
15th Floor, 438 University Ave.
Toronto, Ontario M5G 2K8

Dear Minister Lecce,

Re: Change to definition of "Disability" and supporting Bill 172

I am writing to you on behalf of the members of Durham District School Board's (DDSB) Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC). Our SEAC includes eight parent associations, who represent thousands of families in Durham Region.

Over the years, SEACs have engaged with the Ministry of Education to support a variety of amendments to the *Education Act* to include various disabilities or disorders. The most recent letters received by our committee are to support Bill 172 the *Education Statute Law Amendment Act* for Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder.

The DDSB SEAC fully supports Bill 172; however, we see this process of proposing piecemeal changes to legislation for each new diagnosis or disorder as a perpetual colonial cycle that does not address student need in a timely matter nor through a Human Rights and equity lens.

For example, there is no common definition of disability between the *Education Act*, *Accessibility for Ontarians's Disability Act* (AODA) and the *Accessible Canada Act*. This difference are reflective of when these various pieces of legislation were enacted/amended. It is also important to note that much of the *Education Act* was written before the adoption of the Human Rights Code and has not had a thorough review through a human rights or equity lens.

The definition of disabilities under the *Education Act* is a narrow, medical one in which disability is viewed as a problem that exists in a person's body that requires treatment or care to fix the disability so a student can approximate "normal" functioning, failing which the student is to adapt and learn to function despite their disability. But we now know that disabilities are caused, not only by physical issues that exist in a person's body, but by environmental factors and barriers.

This is the view of the World Health Organization which states that "a disability results from the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others". The definition of disability under a social model emphasizes environmental factors in creating disability and that "disability" is not an attribute of the person.

In the 2019 legislative review of the AODA, the Honourable David C. Onley made a recommendation to update the definition of disability. He wrote,

From consultations and research, the Review learned that the trend internationally has been to shift from the medical model of disability to a social model that focuses on environmental barriers rather than individual health. The Review also heard that people with non-visible disabilities feel left out of the AODA.

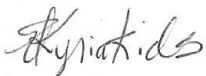
I am confident that the current definition of disability in the AODA is comprehensive and does in fact cover non-visible disabilities, or invisible or non-evident disabilities, as they are sometimes called. However, I also believe that the law should serve as an educational tool and it would be helpful to mention non-visible disabilities explicitly in the definition. I would suggest that Ontario consider adopting the definition in the pending* Accessible Canada Act, which does this. The federal definition also aligns with the international emphasis on the social model of disability. It reads as follows:

“disability means any impairment, including a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication or sensory impairment – or a functional limitation – whether permanent, temporary or episodic in nature, or evident or not, that, in interaction with a barrier, hinders a person’s full and equal participation in society.”

*Note: pending at the time of this report was released. The *Accessible Canada Act* received Royal Assent in June 2019.

DDSB SEAC fully supports the adoption of this recommendation from the Honourable David C. Onley in the context of the Education Act, or at the very least the Ministry adopt the same definition of disability as written in the AODA. We believe the implementation of this recommendation would curtail, if not completely stop, the number of requests to change the legislation as it covers current environmental, visible, non-visible or non-evidence disabilities or disorders. It also creates a more equitable and inclusive focus on our students so they can receive the support and programming necessary to ensure success in and beyond their school careers.

Sincerely,



Eva Kyriakides

SEAC Chair

Durham District School Board

cc: Chairs of Ontario Special Education Advisory Committees
Hon. Marit Stiles, MPP
Hon. Kathleen Wynne, MPP

February 25, 2022

VIA EMAIL: specialeducation@ontario.ca

Hon. Stephen Lecce, Minister of Education
Ministry of Education
15th Floor, 438 University Ave.
Toronto, Ontario M5G 2K8

Dear Minister Lecce,

Re: Comments with respect to PPM No. 81

I am writing to you on behalf of the members of Durham District School Board's (DDSB) Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC). Our SEAC includes eight parent associations, who represent thousands of families in Durham Region.

We would like to first express our support with regards to the goal of providing evidence-based health, rehabilitation and other community-based clinical services in school settings to ensure timely and equitable services that allow students to fully participate in all aspects of school life. However, we want to stress the importance that the appropriate time and care needs to be taken to ensure that any move to school-based health, rehabilitation and other clinical services is done right. For families and students who depend on these services, ensuring that any transition made is made seamlessly, with no break in service provision for their children is of utmost importance.

Timelines and consultation process

We are concerned with the limited timeframe allowed for input in the consultation process. Given the important nature of the services reflected in PPM No. 81 the tight timeframe limits the ability of schools, SEACs, services providers and families' to provide meaningful consultation. We would request that the Ministry extend the timeline for providing input in the consultation process to ensure that stakeholders have an opportunity to provide fulsome submissions to ensure that the implementation of PPM No. 81 meets its objectives and causes no unintentional harm to those it seeks to support.

Timelines for implementation

We are very concerned with the expectation that full implementation would be achieved by September 2022. Time needs to be provided for the proper consultation to occur to allow proper implementation of PPM No. 81. Some of the many examples of concerns would be:

1. Differentiated access that creates inequity in services and supports impacting children, youth and families.

2. Shortages and waitlist of community health supports to provide supports in schools occurring while the board is having difficulty in addressing current support needs within the schools.
3. The impacts related to shift of school-based rehabilitative services to Children's Treatment Centres has not been fully evaluated and shared publicly.
4. Proposed changes would result in significant increase to private and community, both regulated and currently unregulated (e.g., IBI), providers having access inside school spaces.
5. Current and continuing lack of funded space in schools and type of space required by the variety of professional health services to be provided by both district, private and community providers.
6. Delegation of health care acts to school board staff.
7. Time to develop MOUs with the various service providers which detail responsibilities and how services providers will engage students within the schools, etc.
8. Prevalent medical conditions such as diabetes, seizures disorders, anaphylaxis, etc. does not appear to be referenced or captured under the revised PPM 81.
9. Clarity and planning specific to workplace and related liability protections for service professionals and school districts.

There is also concern regarding case management of all providers to meet the goal of seamless services for the student between home and schools. Some of these concerns are, but not limited to, the supervision of students using remote care providers; needs for after-hours services; appropriate access to physical space that is respectful of the student and provider's services; needs in buildings at or need capacity.

When considering the above and the physical, social and emotional safety of the students who are accessing services needs to be carefully thought out. At all times, consideration must be taken to ensure that the confidentiality and dignity of students is respected during the transition periods where services provided will take them away from peers and then have them return.

These are just a few of the many considerations that must be considered before community-based service providers can be brought into a school.

We would submit that a central consultation working group with key partners and people with lived experience could be put in place by September 2022 to develop a solid and seamless plan for this transition by September of 2023. The ability to have full implementation of PPM No. 81 by September 2022, raises serious concerns that implementation of PPM 81 can be done well and without detrimental effects to students and families.

Inclusion/exclusion of services

On a cursory review of PPM No. 81, we note that DHH Infant hearing program goes from 0-6 years of age, but has not been mentioned in the integration of services. We are concerned that other services may also have been overlooked.

Roles of families

Some services rely on the caregiver/family of the student to be present. How would this be managed within this service provision model? We note that PPM No. 81 mentions consultation but is silent on implementation.

In conclusion, while we commend the goals of PPM No. 81, we are concerned about the timeline for consultation and implementation. The implementation of this PPM should not be done in haste. It requires careful planning and development of an implementation process to ensure any transition happens seamlessly and without any service disruption to students and their families. We strongly suggest that the Ministry of Education reconsider the expectation that School Boards have PPM 81 fully implemented by September 2022, and consult with key partners and persons with lived experience to develop a framework and implementation plan for PPM 81, that is in the best interest and support of students.

Sincerely,



Eva Kyriakides

SEAC Chair

Durham District School Board

cc: Chairs of Ontario Special Education Advisory Committees

February 10, 2022

The Honourable Stephen Lecce
Ministry of Education 5th Floor,
438 University Ave.
Toronto, ON M5G 2K8

RE: Feedback on PPM 81

Dear Minister Lecce,

The Ministry of Education has asked for feedback from interested parties on its proposed changes to PPM 81 (Provision of health support services in school settings). The Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) of the Halton District School Board (HDSB) reviewed this document and, at its committee meeting on February 8th, 2022, carried the following motion:

"That the HDSB SEAC Chair write a letter to the Minister of Education expressing the committees' unanimous opposition to the changes to PPM 81 in its current form."

HDSB SEAC does not feel that the Ministry has provided adequate time for authentic engagement with all relevant stakeholders to provide meaningful feedback on the changes to PPM 81. As this PPM covers vital day-to-day and life-saving services to students, it deserves a fulsome discussion and analysis of the impacts that these changes will have on affected students, families, educators, support staff, and the school community as a whole. This has not been possible within the three-week timeline that we have been given to provide feedback on this PPM. We are extremely concerned that the short time frame will allow PPM 81 to be pushed through to implementation without a full understanding of the implications and will negatively impact the lives of all affected individuals going forward.

As a SEAC, mandated to represent the needs of all students with exceptionalities, and in this case of some of our most medically fragile students, we are highly concerned about the apparent downloading of medical services to educational staff. We believe that this is inappropriate, both ethically for medical professionals to be allowed to delegate their tasks to non-medical staff, and morally for the system to require Educational Assistants to undertake

services which are not in their job descriptions, they have not been medically trained for and which may impact the life of a student. We foresee huge difficulties in reaching an agreement for these changes to PPM81 with our union partners, which could lead to wider implications for an already stretched educational system.


Another major concern that the HDSB SEAC has about these changes is the inequity in service that will be seen in our classrooms going forward. Students with certain exceptionalities will be able to use funding allocated for home services to provide support in the classroom. This will not be the case for students with other exceptionalities who do not receive funding, unless their families are willing to pay for it privately. This is directly in opposition to the aims of HDSB and the Ministry of Education in promoting equitable access to support for all students.

The HDSB SEAC is also extremely concerned about the funding that must be provided to accompany such an extensive change in PPM81. If Educational Assistants will be pulled from the classrooms to provide medical care for students, and administrators will be required to oversee private care providers in a school setting and ensure compliance with all regulations, additional staff will be required to undertake their existing tasks. As a SEAC required to provide informed input on the HDSB special education budget in a few months, we are concerned that, by that time, we will have no information on the presence or lack of funding related to changes to PPM81 and the impact that this will have on special education services throughout our board. This makes it extremely difficult to perform our fiduciary duties in reviewing the budget.

In unanimously approving this motion, the HDSB Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) would urge the Ministry of Education to reconsider the implementation of the proposed changes to PPM 81, until there is meaningful and authentic engagement with relevant stakeholders to

address these concerns. This cannot be undertaken without an extension to the deadline for feedback. Without this opportunity to provide proper feedback, the HDSB SEAC unanimously opposes these changes.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Alison Brindle". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Alison Brindle, Chair - Halton District School Board Special Education Advisory Committee

Cc: Margo Shuttleworth, Chair - Halton District School Board



February 15, 2022

Honourable Stephen Lecce
Minister of Education
315 Front Street West
Toronto, Ontario, M7A 0B8

Dear Minister Lecce,

Members of Thunder Bay Catholic District School Board's Special Education Advisory Committee would like to express our support for Bill 172, the Education Statute Law Amendment Act in Relation to Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD).

It is imperative that all staff directly involved with students, such as principals, teachers, student support persons and early childhood educators, are aware of FASD, are able to recognize the early signs and are trained to provide appropriate accommodations for the success and well-being of our students. Inclusion of FASD in all Board of Education policies and guidelines is a vital step towards achieving equitable education for all of Ontario's students.

The members of the Thunder Bay Catholic District School Board's Special Education Advisory Committee ask that you acknowledge our support for Bill 172 in the pursuit for equitable education for all Ontario students.

Sincerely,

Hanni Vale
Chair, Special Education Advisory Committee
Thunder Bay Catholic District School Board

cc: Chairs of all Ontario Special Education Advisory Committees