

## MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Date: February 24, 2020  
Time: 7:00 pm  
Location: Catholic Education Centre - Board Room  
802 Drury Lane  
Burlington, Ontario

Members Present	B. Agnew (Chair)	A. Louca-Ricci
	M. Arteaga	M. Lourenco
	R. Barreiro	M. Murphy
	T. Beattie (Vice Chair)	D. Rabenda
	M. Duarte	T. Veale
	D. Hotopoleanu	

Staff Present

C. Cipriano, Superintendent of Special Education Services  
P. Codner, Chief Social Worker  
P. Daly, Director of Education  
A. Jones, Manager, Educational Assistants  
D. Kollee, Chief of Speech Language Pathologist  
S. Teremy, Manager, Educational Assistants

Members Excused

D. Bardon  
N. Guzzo  
H. Karabela  
J. Lim  
P. Moran  
R. Quesnal  
Y. Taylor

Members Absent

C. Parreira

Recording Secretary

A. Hughes

### 1. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order.

#### 1.1 Opening

The meeting opened at 7:01 p.m. with a prayer led by the Chair.

The Chair welcomed SEAC's new Autism Ontario representative, M. Murphy.

#### 1.2 Approval of Agenda

**Moved by:** D. Rabenda

**Seconded by:** R. Barreiro

**RESOLVED**, that the agenda be accepted as received.

**CARRIED**

## 2. Presentations

### 2.1 Educational Success for Students with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) (T. Veale)

B. Agnew introduced T. Veale and D. Veale who presented information on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD), an explanation on the supports the FAS World association provides and some personal background information. The presentation is attached.

### 2.2 Educational Assistants Survey Results (A. Jones and S. Teremy)

B. Agnew introduced A. Jones and S. Teremy, Managers, Educational Assistants and Z. Walters, Researcher who presented the Educational Assistants survey results summary. The presentation is attached.

## 3. Actions to be taken

### 3.1 Minutes of the January 27, 2020 SEAC Meeting

*Moved by:* M. Duarte

*Seconded by:* T. Beattie

**RESOLVED**, that the minutes of the January 27, 2020 SEAC Meeting be approved as presented.

The Chair called for a vote and the motion

**CARRIED.**

## 4. Declarations of Conflict of Interest

No conflicts of interest were declared.

## 5. Business Arising from Previous Meetings

B. Agnew will draft a letter of support around the concerns other school boards SEAC's have regarding the Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education (MACSE). Once the letter is drafted it will be sent to members for feedback.

## 6. Special Education Board Policy Review

## 7. Action and Information Items

### 7.1 SEAC Goals/Budget Priorities

B. Agnew asked members to think about goals and budget priorities that SEAC would like to strive for. Some past examples were provided, and topics were discussed. Members were invited to submit ideas and suggestions to discuss at the next meeting.

### 7.2 Summary of Exceptionalities

C. Cipriano distributed data on exceptionalities and placements for the school year 2019-2020. Questions were welcomed. Clarification on the no exceptionality data will be provided.

## 8. Communications to SEAC

### 8.1 Superintendent's Report

C. Cipriano provided updates on:

C. Cipriano read a poem from a Secondary student that brings awareness to mental health.

Kindergarten Parent Information Evening: Was held on February 11<sup>th</sup> at St. Benedict in Milton for parents of students with special needs new to Kindergarten.

FASD: Two full days of professional development were provided to Educational Assistants by members of the Halton FASD Resource Team and the other with Donna Debolt. Professional development has been provided by our Social Workers on Trauma as well as Duty to Report on job action days.

Job Fair Mohawk College: The Educational Assistants Managers attended a job fair at Mohawk College with Human Resources with a focus on the graduating class from the EA Program.

Trauma Professional Development: All social workers will be providing PD on Trauma for all the Early Childhood Educators on February. 21<sup>st</sup>.

Staff are attending collaboration sessions with Erinoak Kids to support the new model for School Based Rehabilitation Services.

Speech Language Pathologists and Communicative Disorders Assistants: The SLP's and CDA's created Social Smarts Kits to support the Social Thinking Program sessions being delivered in our schools from some of the funds generated from the Stay, Play, Talk Conference last year. As well, we have purchased switch activated cause and effect toys and additional Alternative Augmented Communication trial devices to support our complex communicators.

## 8.2 Trustee Reports

M. Duarte reported on:

- At the February 18, 2020 Board meeting, there was a presentation by staff on Alternative Education Programs and Student Success. Staff from Bishop Reding presented a success story.
- The results of the French Programming Consultation were presented to the Board at the February 18, 2020 Board Meeting which showed both support and opposition to the expansion of the French program. The Board of Trustees unanimously voted to expand the Early French Immersion program by adding classes in each municipality if required for the 2020-2021 school year only.

## 9. SEAC Discussion

O. Foese clarified that FASD data is categorized on the ONSIS report under Physical Disability.

C. Cipriano informed members that the guest speaker can not speak at the SEAC parent night on May 11<sup>th</sup> but can on May 20<sup>th</sup>. It was suggested that the SEAC night will be on May 20<sup>th</sup> in order to have the keynote speaker attend. Options and suggestions for the night were discussed.

## 10. Next Agenda: Meeting Monday, March 30, 2020

The agenda will include Spirit of Inclusion Awards, Psychological Assessments 101 Presentation and Special Education Plan review.

## 11. Adjournment

### 11.1 Resolution re Absentees (Chair)

*Moved by:* M. Lourenco

*Seconded by:* D. Rabenda

**RESOLVED**, that D. Bardon, N. Guzzo, H. Karabela, J. Lim, P. Moran, R. Quesnal, Y. Taylor be excused.

**CARRIED**

### 11.2 Adjournment and Closing Prayer (Chair)

*Moved by:* D. Hotopeleanu

*Seconded by:* R. Barreiro

**RESOLVED**, that the meeting adjourn.

**CARRIED**

The meeting adjourned at 9:06 p.m. with a prayer led by the Chair.



# Educational Success for Students with FASD

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PRESENTED BY:

TRACY VEALE  
DALLAS VEALE

FEB 25, 2020



# Mission Statement



## FASworld is committed to:

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- Provide support and information to parents, caregivers, and professionals dealing with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD), as well as individuals living with FASD.
- Encourage the development of new programs for individuals with FASD and their families, women of childbearing age and their partners, and individuals struggling with alcohol and substance issues.
- Work locally, nationally and internationally, with other support groups, individuals and organizations, who indicate a common interest in some or all of these approaches to dealing with FASD.
- Communicate the message that there is no established safe threshold of alcohol.
- Build public awareness of FASD, its secondary disabilities, the size and scope of this preventable disorder, and the personal and economic costs of FASD to our society.

For more information visit: <https://www.fasworld.com/>

# What is Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder?

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- FASD is the range of effects that occur in a person whose mother drank alcohol during the pregnancy.
- Alcohol in utero is both a teratogen (causes birth defects) and the most potent common neurotoxin on the planet.
- FASD damage can occur in all areas of the brain
- The physical brain damage caused by alcohol is the worst effect of FASD and is almost always more serious than any common birth defect associated with FASD, but...
- We now know that FASD is a “whole body condition”

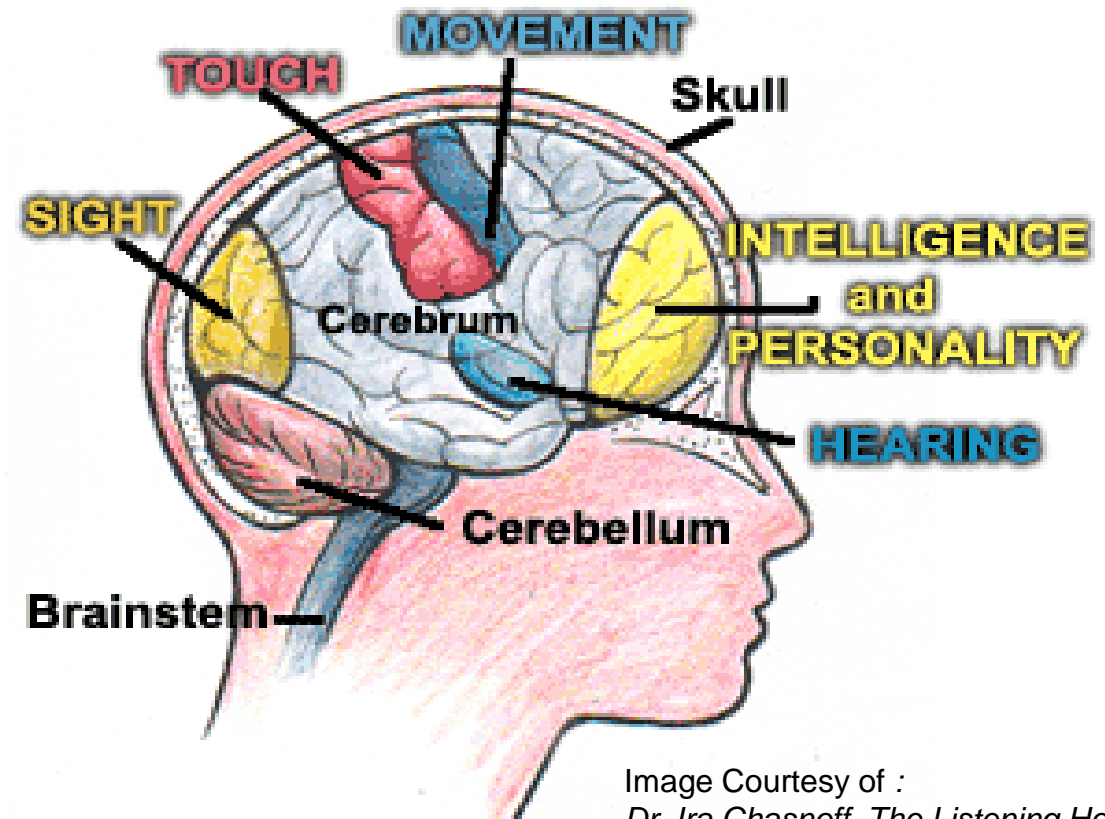


Image Courtesy of :  
Dr. Ira Chasnoff, The Listening Heart

# How is FASD Diagnosed:

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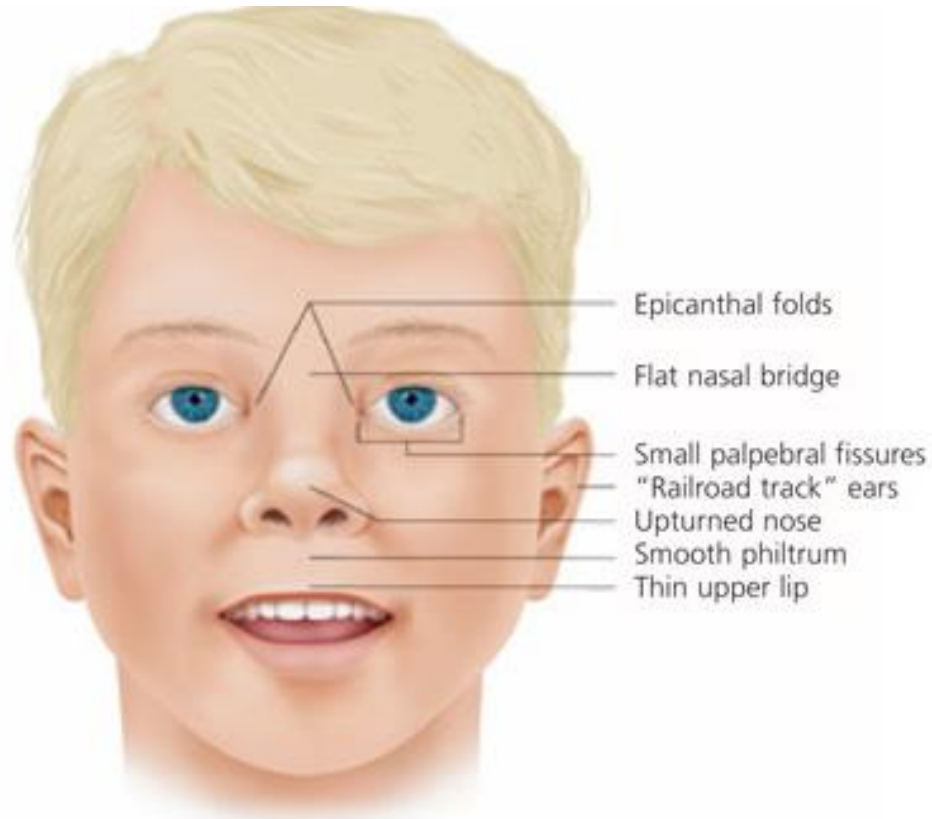


Image source: <https://www.aafp.org/>

## 2015 Canadian Guidelines for FASD Diagnosis

1. FASD with Sentinel Facial Features
  - 1-3 common facial signs of FASD
2. FASD without Sentinel Features
  - no facial clues, with neurodevelopmental disorders
  - often overlooked
3. At Risk for Neurodevelopmental Disorders Associated with Pre-natal Alcohol Exposure
  - Child is too young to complete a full diagnosis: This designation allows service providers to start neurobehavioral supports early while waiting for a diagnosis

# How common is FASD?

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- CANFASD Research - FASD occurs in up to 4% of all live births
- FASD is the most common birth defect and the largest cause of intellectual difficulties in N. America,
- Thousands of Canadians are living with FASD and most do not know they have it and are unrecognized for a variety of reasons
- Most people with FASD have another diagnosis – commonly ASD, ADHD/ADD, mental health disorders and many more disorders with less stigma
- Getting a diagnosis for FASD is an uphill battle right now – we are working hard to fix this problem



# Co-occurring Mental Illnesses (ABCs)

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- ADD/ADHD is often diagnosed
- (Reactive) Attachment Disorder (R-AD)
- Bi-Polar Disorder/Depression
- Conduct Disorder (CD)
- Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD)
- Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD)
- Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD)

(Kathryn Page – 2002- Ctr. For Families, Children & Courts)



Image source: <https://www.thephuketnews.com/alphabet-soup-for-english-teachers-learners-45578.php>

# Chronological vs. Developmental Age

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Graphic created from information on the National Organization on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome website. Adapted from Diane Malbin from FASCETS and the research of Stressuth, Clarren, and others. Image source: [www.oursacredbreath.com](http://www.oursacredbreath.com)



Image source: <https://www.enviros.org/fasd-2/>

“Although FASD is not curable, it is highly supportable if supports start early in life and are not removed.

People with significant FASD brain damage will need to be interdependent with supporters for the rest of their lives” – Mary Cunningham, KWC FASD Consulting

# Children at Risk

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## Primary FASD behaviours ...

...are those that are caused by underlying damage to brain structure and function

## Secondary FASD behaviours...

...are defensive and develop over time in response to a non-supportive environment, where the individual suffers from a chronic inability to “fit in”

**\*Secondary Behaviours are now often referred to “Adverse Effects”**

Work to prevent, manage or prevent adverse effects.

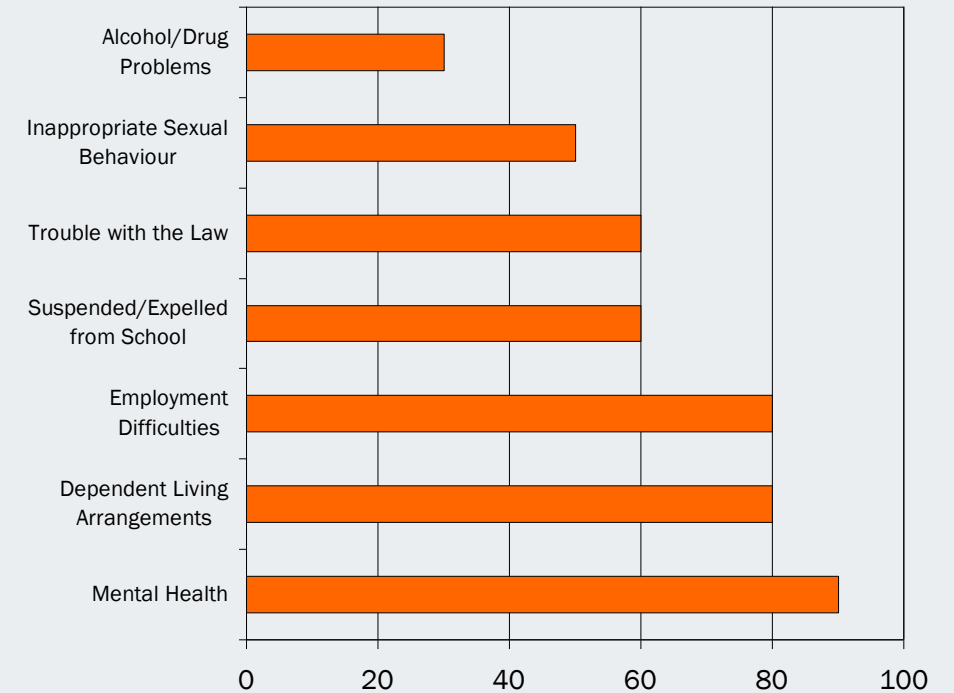


Source: Donna Debolt, FASD Consultant, Alberta

# Adverse Effects

- Inappropriate humour
- Class clown
- Isolated, few friends
- Pseudo-sophisticated-trying to pass as “OK”
- Irritability, resistance, fatigue, arguments
- Anxious, fearful
- Overwhelmed
- Poor self esteem
- Unrealistic goals
- Bullied, teased, picked on
- Fighting, outbursts
- School failure, expulsion
- Running away, avoidance
- Sexually ‘inappropriate’
- Addictions-alcohol, drugs
- Trouble with the law
- Depressed, suicidal
- Other mental health issues
- Co-occurring diagnoses

% of Adults with FASD  
with Secondary Effects



Source: 1996 – Washington State-Streissguth

# **ALARMS** - Behaviors Frequently Seen in Students with FASD

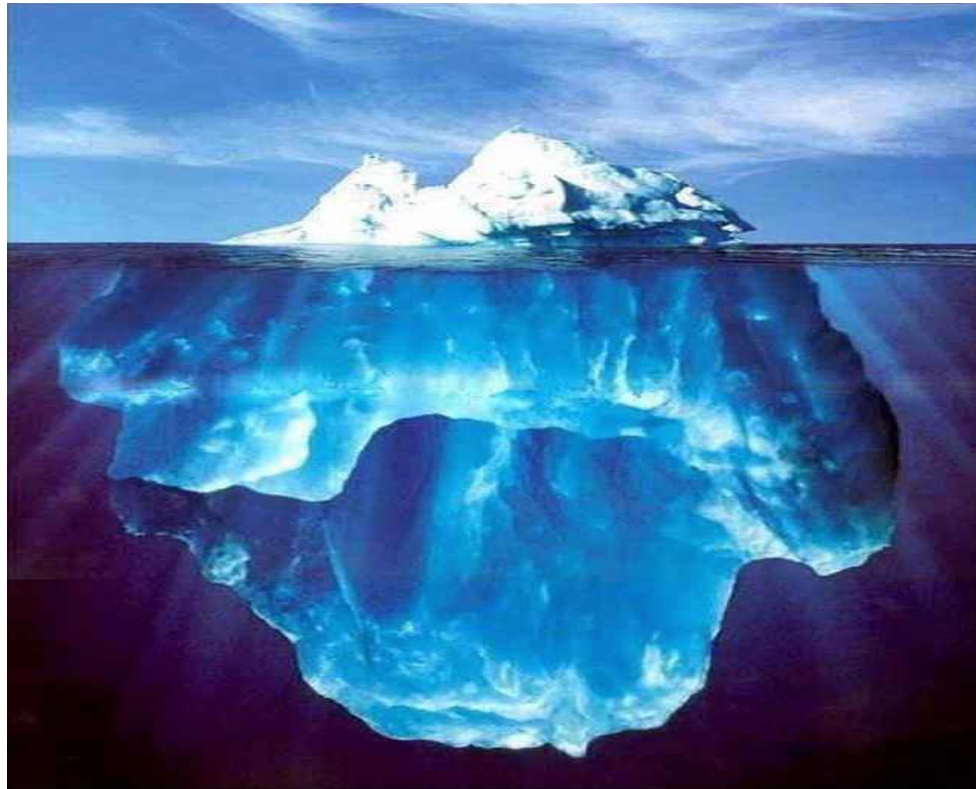
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<b>A</b>	<b>Adaptation:</b>	trouble getting stopped or started
<b>L</b>	<b>Language:</b>	great expressively, poor receptively
<b>A</b>	<b>Attention:</b>	ADD/ADHD is frequently diagnosed
<b>R</b>	<b>Reasoning:</b>	abstract concepts out of reach
<b>M</b>	<b>Memory:</b>	'sketchy, has gaps, don't learn from experience
<b>S</b>	<b>Sensory:</b>	Sensory Processing Disabilities (SPDs)



# Recognizing FASD

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Like an iceberg,  
most of FASD is hidden

Recognizing FASD is critical  
because students we miss will  
“fall through the cracks”

# Paradigm Shifts for Educators

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From seeing the child as...	To understanding the child as...
Won't	Can't
Bad, annoying	Frustrated, challenged
Lazy, unmotivated	Trying hard, tired of failing
Fussy	Oversensitive
Acting young, babied	Being younger
Trying to get attention	Needing contact, support
Inappropriate	Displaying behaviours of young child
Doesn't try	Exhausted or can't get started
Mean	Defensive, hurt
Doesn't care	Can't show feeling
Refuse to sit still	Overstimulated
Resisting	Doesn't "get it"
Trying to annoy me	Can't remember
Showing off	Needing contact, support

From personal feelings of...	To feeling of...
Hopelessness	Hope
Fear	Understanding
Chaos, confusion	Organization, comprehension
Power struggles	Working with
Isolation	Networking, collaboration

Professional shifts from...	To...
Stopping behaviors	Preventing problems
Behavior modification	Modelling, using visual cues
Changing people	Changing environments

Source: Diane V. Malbin <http://education.alberta.ca/media/414088/fasd2.pdf>





# Life with FASD

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HOW TO SUPPORT PEOPLE LIKE ME!



# Decrease Your Expectations



We are 10 Second Kids in a 1 Second World



# Change the Environment not the Behaviour





# We Need an Executive Assistant



Meet Me at My Stage, Not My Age

# FASD and the Education System

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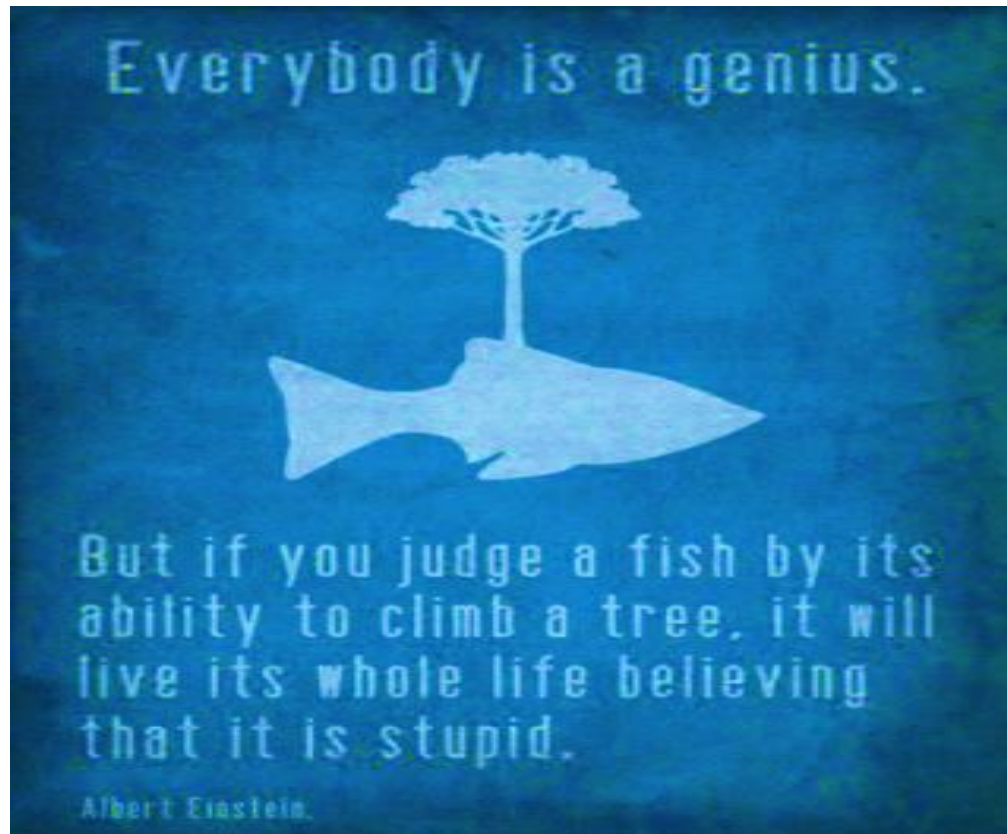


Image source: [www.relatably.com](http://www.relatably.com)

- You can't "fix" students with FASD but you can teach them to succeed in life in their ability areas
- They are ALL good at something
- Today's teachers already have the skills they need to be successful when dealing with brain damage; however, they need support to:
  - make the "paradigm shift"
  - recognize and understand students with FASD

# FASD Education Works when...

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- ALL staff involved in the program in ANY way have an excellent understanding of FASD
- Invisible students with FASD are recognized and acknowledged, even without diagnosis
- Staff “Think FASD First” and put environmental adaptations in place immediately
- Actual FASD diagnoses are made by trained multi-disciplinary teams

Information Courtesy of: © Mary Cunningham, KWC FASD Consulting

Image source: <https://www.teachhub.com/teaching-strategies-encourage-social-success>





# In Conclusion...

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**ALL PEOPLE WITH FASD  
HAVE INNATE STRENGTHS  
AND COMPETENCIES  
...bringing gifts to their world**





*Thank you for your attention and interest to understand, help  
and intervene in the lives of those living with FASD*

*Tracy & Dallas Veale*

# Key Findings from the Educational Assistant (EA) Survey

Prepared for the February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2020 SEAC meeting

Presented by:

Andrea Jones  
Simone Teremy  
Zoe Walters

# Background and Methods

## Background

- The purpose of this survey was to measure EA satisfaction and to gather feedback about their professional needs.



## Methods

- All EAs were invited via email to complete the survey.
- 469 emails were sent out with the survey link.



# Summary of Results

- 404 HCDSB EAs completed the survey (86% response rate).
  - 43% have worked as an EA for more than 10 years.





# Summary of Results

- 1** The majority of EAs were *satisfied* or *very satisfied* with the level of professional support/capacity building they receive from other staff, with the exception of Psychology Staff.



# Summary of Results

**2** EAs wanted more support/professional development in many areas, but here are the top three:

- **Mental wellness and well-being (60%)**
- **Special Needs specific information (58%)**
- **Personal stress management (46%)**

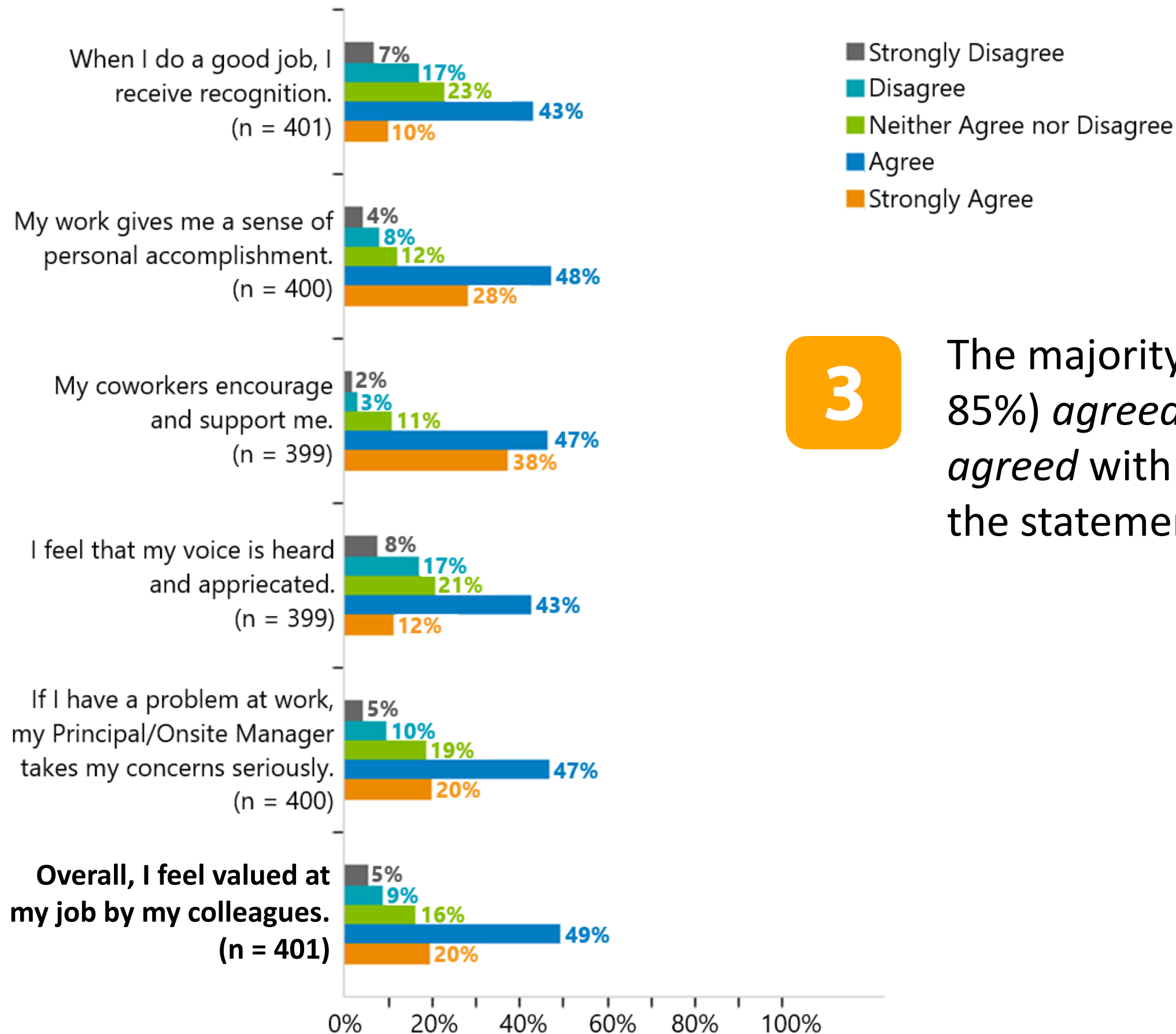


Psychological Services (70%)

Autism/ASD (67%)

Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder (65%)

# Summary of Results



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The majority of EAs (53-85%) *agreed* or *strongly agreed* with all of the statements.



# Summary of Results

- 148 respondents (37%) provided an additional comment. Three main themes emerged:

## Wages/Sick Days

(n = 46; 31% of all comments provided)

*“Being an EA, we work with children and are forever getting coughed, spit and sneezed on. It is out of our control if we end up getting sick and should not be called in if we are over our days.”*

*“I love my job. The only area where I feel undervalued is my wage. I am a professional; I have two university degrees, yet my salary is equivalent to the National poverty line. It is difficult to live on this wage alone...”*

# Summary of Results

**Feeling undervalued, not support, not respected**

(n = 37; n = 25% of all comments provided)

*“More respect needs to be given and people need to understand and appreciate what is required of EA on a daily basis”*

*“Overall I feel that the role of the EA is neither respected nor supported at the school level... What we learn and know about the children and their behaviours is NEVER recognized.”*

# Summary of Results

## Feeling happy in their role

(n = 20; 14% of all comments provided)

*“...I find it very rewarding and fulfilling. Thank you HCDSB for helping to make my dream come true. I love my students and I just love my job.!!!”*

*“Being an EA is very rewarding. Watching our students thrive in the smallest of ways, makes everyday worthwhile!”*

# Implications and Future Plans

## **Implications**

- Most EAs described that they are satisfied and supported in their role.
- EAs have expressed a variety of professional development interests.
- The results are representative of HCDSB EAs.

## **Future Plans**

- Meet with administrators and EA teams to share the results
- Plan for 2020-2021 school year (i.e., PD initiatives, EA team-building)
- Keep all stakeholders informed throughout the process

Thank you for your attention

Questions?