

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Date: August 17, 2020
 Time: 6:00 pm
 Location: Microsoft Teams

Members Present	B. Agnew (Chair) T. Beattie (Vice Chair) M. Arteaga M. Duarte N. Guzzo D. Hotopeleanu H. Karabela	A. Louca-Ricci M. Murphy M. Lourenco P. Moran C. Parreira R. Quesnal D. Rabenda
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Staff Present	S. Balogh, Superintendent of Education, School Services G. Brown, Chief of Mental Health Programming C. Cipriano, Superintendent of Special Education Services P. Codner, Chief Social Worker P. Daly, Director of Education O. Foese, Chief Psychologist K. George, Health and Safety Officer A. Jones, Manager, Educational Assistants D. Kollee, Chief of Speech Language Pathologist J. O'Reilly, Special Education Consultant S. Teremy, Manager, Educational Assistants J. Thompson, Special Education Consultant
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Members Excused	D. Bardon R. Barreiro J. Lim Y. Taylor T. Veale
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Members Absent

Recording Secretary	A. Hughes
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1. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order.

1.1 Opening

The meeting opened at 6:00 p.m. with a prayer led by the Chair.

2. Presentations

2.1 Special Education Considerations for Return to School (Special Education Staff)

C. Cipriano introduced the new incoming Superintendent, Special Education Services, Stephany Balogh and thanked staff for attending. Special Education Staff presented on considerations for special education students returning to school in September either in person or through distance learning. Staff presented on health and safety protocols, mental health supports, and supports for students with special education needs. Staff concluded by answering questions. The presentation is attached.

3. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:41 p.m. with a prayer led by the Chair.

Our Guiding Principles

- Prioritizing the **health, safety and well-being** of our students, staff and families.
- Developing and promoting enhanced **mental health supports and resources** for students, staff and families.
- Providing a **quality Catholic education** that is **flexible** and **engaging**.
- Creating and maintaining a **sense of community** and **welcoming spaces** in our schools and in our virtual classrooms.
- Ensuring students and staff have the **supports** needed to create teaching and learning environments that are **accessible to all**.



Our Goals As We Transition Back to School

- Ensuring **protocols are in place** so that students and staff are **healthy and safe**.
- Providing an **enhanced online/distance learning** experience for students who continue to learn from home.
- **Assess student learning gaps** and develop plans to provide appropriate intervention, where needed.
- Maintaining a focus on **mental health supports for students and staff** returning to school and those who will continue to learn and work from home.



Following Guidance & Direction of the Ministry of Education and Public Health

We continue to take guidance and direction from the **Ministry of Education** and **Halton Region Public Health** in all of our planning and decision-making as we prepare for the 2020-2021 school year.



Ministry of Education



Supports for Student's Mental Health and Well Being

Student Mental Health and Well-Being

- HCDSB staff will implement a tiered approach for mental health supports to address all student needs and target intensive help to students who are most affected.
- HCDSB mental health staff will collaborate with community agencies to effective access resources and supports for students.
- We have revised our process to accommodate the COVID-19 service delivery model/virtual tele-practice.



Supports and Resources for Families

- *A Summer 2020 Transition Resource Toolkit* developed with a list of resources/links to support student and family well-being as we transition into the 2020-2021 school year.
- *School Mental Health Ontario* will be providing school boards with a professional learning framework and toolkit with specific resources to support the mental health of students.
- Schools will create structured social opportunities for families to come together in community.
- Developing a Video Series (for parents and students) on a wide range of topics including: Mental Health, Anti-Black Racism, Equity and Diversity Awareness, Anti-bullying, Healthy Eating/Living, Social Media Awareness, Drug/Alcohol Use.



Supports for Students with Special Needs

Supporting Students with Special Needs

- All students with special education needs will continue to be supported by homeroom and special education resource teachers (SERTs), as well as support staff, as per their IEPs.
- Students in congregated classes will attend school daily
- Remote learning will be available where return to school is not possible.



Supporting Students with Special Needs

- We will support attendance options including offering daily attendance to students with special education needs for whom adapted timetables or remote learning may be challenging based on student needs.
- We will ensure technology/equipment are accessible to students with special education needs, and we will provide supports to students, families and staff, as necessary.
- Programming will reflect differentiated learning needs for all students with special needs to ensure access to effective learning.



Supporting Students with Special Needs

- Empower will continue in the 2020-2021 school year. We continue to work with Sick Kids to create a delivery model that maintains the effectiveness of the intervention.
- Student placement options as per their IEP will be honoured.
- Integration options, including virtually on-line, for Life Skills and Placement 4 students in congregated classes, will be developed individually, with a focus on maintaining cohorts.



Supporting Students with Special Needs – IPRCs and IEPs

- Schools will follow the requirements to provide students with their Individual Education Plans (IEPs) in collaboration with the IEP Team and parents/guardians.
- Changes in the school environments and/or remote learning needs will be considered when creating and updating the IEPs.
- Team meetings, IPRC meetings etc... will continue either face-to-face and/or remotely. Professional Support Services and other members of the team will be included as usual (e.g. social worker, psychologist, special education consultant, etc.) to be in attendance.



Supporting Students with Special Needs

- All Special Education Itinerant staff are asked to consider which of their services can be provided virtually and limit their visits to one school site per day where possible.
- For parents who chose the learn at home option, virtual student sessions will be scheduled.
- Students will continue to access SEA equipment/assistive technology and staff will continue to be supported with SEA equipment training to enhance student access to learning.



Supporting Students with Special Needs - Transitions

- In order to ensure that students with special education needs are supported as schools reopen, considerations will be made for additional planning and transition time for students to support a smooth transition.
- In many cases a virtual transition prior to school entry in September may be appropriate.
- In cases where an in-school transition visit is deemed essential staff and students will follow school procedures, and parents will follow the appropriate procedure for “essential visitors”, which will be made available to them.
- For students who decide to continue with at-home learning a virtual transition visit will be arranged as appropriate.



Supporting Students who are DHH

- **Staff Masks:** Clear masks, approved by Health Canada, on our procurement list of PPEs for staff that will be working with DHH students. Availability is dependent on vendors being able to meet demands.
- **Student Masks:** There may be opportunities for students in the class to wear, with parent consent, a clear mask if they are doing a task with a classmate who is DHH.
- **FM systems:** Tips sheets for sanitizing transmitters have been created and will be distributed with the systems. Systems will be delivered to schools the first week.
- **Close captioning:** IEPs can be updated to include captioning as an accommodation; we have successfully used Microsoft Stream to caption videos and Microsoft Teams has live close captioning for synchronous learning.
- **ISERT DHH:** The team will follow the directive “All Special Education Itinerant staff are asked to consider which of their services can be provided virtually and limit their visits to one school site per day where possible.”



Supporting Students with Special Needs – Third Party Service Providers

- Extensive measures will be taken to ensure all existing third-party services will continue to be provided to students with special needs wherever possible.
- All outside agencies will consider what services can be provided virtually prior to requesting access to HCDSB locations.
- All visitors will be limited to essential services and must have approval from site Administrators prior to scheduled visits.
- All third-party providers will wear masks at all times while at HCDSB sites and adhere to visitor protocol outlined earlier in this document. Where possible students will be taken out of the classroom for essential services.
- Student services personnel will always wear masks when it is essential, and they do attend in the classroom.



Supporting Medically Fragile Students

- We will support the safe return of our medically fragile students by consulting with local public health authorities on options for personal protective equipment, staff training, and potential continued remote learning where return is not possible.
- Where needed enhanced PPE's will be provided to staff to ensure access to programming and supports.
- Parents and guardians will be encouraged to consult with their health care providers.
- We will work with HSTS to support accommodations for immunocompromised and medically vulnerable students.



Exemptions for Mask Wearing

*The original 'DRAFT' slide has been replaced below with current language

- Reasonable exceptions to mask wearing will be considered.
- An exemption may be requested for a student in Grades K-12 for the following reasons:
 - A pre-existing medical condition,
 - A diagnosis or profile that inhibits a student's ability to tolerate or safely wear a mask/face covering, including whereby a mask would affect essential communication for a person who is hearing impaired.
 - Other, as detailed by a healthcare practitioner



Considerations for Professional Assessment Administration for Students

Considerations for Professional Assessment Administration for Students

Planning is ongoing depending on the learning option in which the student is engaged and the stage of pandemic response directed by the Province.

Process has included:

- Reviewing the literature on virtual assessment
- Reviewing guidance from regulatory colleges
- Attending webinars on virtual assessment
- Consolidating information for staff regarding interpretation of results and validity of assessments across changes to testing protocols

Both departments are positioned for assessments due to previous investment in digital assessment tools



	Full Remote Administration	Alternate Testing Site	In School Administration
	To be considered in region if moved back to pre-Stage 1 and Regulated Health Professionals were not permitted to provide non-essential services in person	For students choosing online learning option or if region moved back to Stage 1 and Regulated Health Professionals were permitted to provide non-essential services in person	For students attending school on a regular basis
Strategies to Support Infection Control	Remote Administration	Physical Distancing Masks Enhanced cleaning /quarantining of equipment /materials Plexiglass	Physical Distancing Mask Enhanced cleaning/quarantining of equipment /materials
Test Protocol Enhancement	Speech Recognition Screening at start of assessment	Speech Recognition Screening at start of assessment	Speech Recognition Screening at start of assessment
Caveats	Most limits on interpretation of results	Some limits on interpretation of results	Some limits on interpretation of results



Questions/Comments

