

February 21, 2012
Special Education Advisory Committee:ma

PEEL DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Minutes of a meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee of the Peel District School Board, held in the Brampton Room, the H. J. A. Brown Education Centre, 5650 Hurontario Street, Mississauga, Ontario on Tuesday, February 21, 2012 at 19:00 hours.

Members present:

Barbara Byers, Fragile X Research Foundation of Canada, Chair
Brad MacDonald, Trustee, Vice-Chair
Stan Cameron, Trustee
Lynne Cramer, Community Living Mississauga
Barbara Cyr, Association for Bright Children
Shelley Foster, VOICE for Hearing Impaired Children
Deanna Henderson, Easter Seals Ontario
Joyce Lang, Autism Ontario Peel Chapter
Wes McDonald, VIEWS for Blind and Visually Impaired Children (19:30)
Carol Ogilvie, Learning Disabilities Association of North Peel

Absent: (apologies received)

Meredith Johnson, Trustee
Sandy Milakovic, Canadian Mental Health Association, Peel Branch
Carol Oitment, Tourette Syndrome Association of Ontario
Ann Smith, Brampton-Caledon Community Living
Lorraine Yuill, Learning Disabilities Association of Mississauga

Also present:

Marg Fishbein, Educational Resource Facilitators of Peel
Sue Lawton, Trustee
Marilyn Matis, Association for Bright Children (Alternate)
Linda Standish, Educational Resource Facilitators of Peel
Jeff White, Trustee

Administration:

Louise Sirisko, Superintendent, Special Education Support Services (Executive Member)
Shawn Moynihan, Superintendent, Curriculum and Instruction Support Services
Carol Speers, Superintendent of Education
Pam Tomasevic, Associate Director, Instructional Support Services

Marina Amin, Board Reporter

1. **Approval of Agenda**

SE-24, moved by Shelley Foster, that the agenda be approved.

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2. Special Presentation re Learning for All

The Learning for All 2011 draft, as well as a six-page summary of the document, was handed out, and Superintendent of Special Education Support Services, Louise Sirisko, advised that Donna Zuccato, Special Education Co-ordinator and Don Wale, Senior Psychology Associate, will speak to the assessment and instructional approaches to learning described in the document.

Donna Zuccato provided background details on the development of the document since its inception in 2005 as an Education for All resource for K – Grade 6, and spoke about implementation through projects supported by the Council of Ontario Directors of Education and Ontario Psychological Association. The positive results, along with ongoing work and consultation with educators, led to the development of Learning for All, K – 12, a draft version of which was released by the Ministry of Education in June 2009. Ministry funding was provided to school boards to support the strategies outlined in the document. Peel was identified as one of the ‘lead’ boards, along with Halton and Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Boards, and additional funding was provided to implement these strategies in selected elementary and secondary schools. Feedback obtained from the lead boards and Learning for All, K – 12 Provincial Network Team, as well as other stakeholder groups, guided the revisions that produced the 2011 draft version of the document.

Describing the vision and purpose of the document, Donna Zuccato spoke of an emphasis on professional learning, and the personalization of student needs using the principles associated with Universal Design for Learning, differentiated instruction, and the tiered approach to prevention and intervention described in the report. The document provides sample practices which highlight the benefits of profile development, including student and class profiles, and learning style inventories. Donna Zuccato noted that the Ministry of Education has provided some funding to encourage teachers develop resources and assessment tools that will maximize support to students.

Don Wale reported on the work being done around the development of comprehensive student profiles and future plans to support diverse learning needs. He described testing as a means to measure current levels of achievement and student need to provide teachers with data for developing specialized teaching strategies. Members participated in an activity entitled, School Achievement and Well Being, a questionnaire designed to develop a detailed student profile, where the focus is on student achievement and well being. Don Wale commented on the shift in approach to delivering education in Ontario, where the focus is on “knowing” the student, which knowledge will inform classroom teaching strategies and lesson plans.

Donna Zuccato introduced the two teachers involved in the Learning Interdisciplinary Field Education (LIFE) Skills 4-Credit Program at Glenforest Secondary School, Jennifer Trinh, Head of Alternative Programs, and Heather Howald, LIFE Program Teacher.

2. Special Presentation re Learning for All (Continued)

Using PowerPoint slides, Jennifer Trinh spoke about the value and success of the program which commenced at Glenforest Secondary School two years ago as a pilot project to re-engage students in active learning within the classroom and outside in the greater community. Tailored to the diverse needs of students who may be within the workplace or college level stream, the class comprised of 10 – 12 students who were taught a mix of different subjects, including Mathematics, English, Workplace and Life Skills. Ministry funding was provided to support the use of technology and special equipment in the classroom.

Heather Howald spoke about team building and collaboration, improved academic success, and the development of business and customer service skills of students enrolled in the program, which leads to an overall sense of self-worth and self-esteem. She noted that work placements are provided at the end of the program, and she commented that most students who went through the program last year, now have part-time jobs. Statistical information demonstrated a decline in absenteeism and late arrivals from year one to year two of the program, and confirmed the success of the differentiated instruction model.

In response to a member's question about when the Learning for All document will be made available to teachers for implementation, Superintendent Sirisko clarified that it serves as a best practice resource guide. The administration indicated that key elements of the instructional work contained in the document are being integrated into teaching practices, and there is a significant alignment between this document and other Board and Ministry documents.

A trustee noted that residents of the Sunrise Senior Retirement Home expressed appreciation for the gardening work volunteered by the Glenforest Secondary School students in the LIFE Skills Program, and for their commitment and interaction with the seniors.

SE-25, moved by Deanna Henderson, that the Special Presentation re Learning for All, be received.

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3. Special Presentation re Mathematics in Peel

Superintendent Sirisko noted the collaboration between Special Education Support Services and Curriculum and Instruction Support Services with respect to instructional support and assessment practices. She indicated that hubs and learning networks come about when staff from Curriculum and Instruction bring teachers together from schools to discuss planning, year-round student work, student profiles, learning skills, and this year, mathematics.

3. Special Presentation re Mathematics in Peel (Continued)

Mary Fiore, Instructional Coordinator of Mathematical Literacy, explained collaborative inquiry from a critical literacy approach to support the success of all students in mathematics. She provided details of the shared learning and co-planning that takes place at teacher hubs and networks to explore and determine assessment and differentiated instructional approaches to support diverse learning needs. Mary Fiore described classroom instruction through problem-based learning, three part lesson plans, conceptual thinking and understanding, open-ended and guided questions, where the teacher acts as facilitator supporting student reflection, strategic reasoning, connection and communication. Virtual manipulatives and interactive websites are some of the resources used in Peel to promote mathematical comprehension. Mary Fiore spoke about diagnostic assessment which helps to identify conceptual gaps and describes and defines the pathway a student may take to reach the desired level of understanding.

Jill Ott, School Effectiveness Leader, provided details of the job embedded professional learning that occurs in the hubs, where teachers and administrators discuss and share classroom situations. Strategies learned are implemented by teachers in the classroom. Jill Ott also described the instructional model of critical literacy where student knowledge, interest, multiple viewpoints, and cultural and social practices are considered.

Members were given a mathematics activity to work on with a partner, and later shared strategies to solve the problem.

SE-26, moved by Deanna Henderson, that the Special Presentation re Mathematics in Peel, be received.

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4. Conflict of Interest

There were no declarations of conflict of interest.

5. Minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting, January 17, 2012

SE-27, moved by Barbara Cyr, that the Minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting, held January 17, 2012, be approved.

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6. Special Education Advisory Committee Partnership

Superintendent Sirisko explained that the report reflects the suggestions offered by SEAC members on effective ways to connect with parents and the community.

SE-28, moved by Lynne Cramer, that the report re Special Education Advisory Committee Partnership, be received.

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7. Further Business

1. Drummond Report – Chapter Six: Elementary and Secondary Education

Indicating that the Board is awaiting government action based on the Drummond Report, Superintendent Sirisko noted that, to provide SEAC members an opportunity to discuss the recommendations in depth, Chapter Six of the Drummond Report will be brought to a future SEAC meeting.

2. Looking Ahead for SEAC

Superintendent Sirisko reported that this meeting was the last opportunity to bring back presentations on action and evidence of work being done in Peel's schools to support student learning. Henceforth, focus will be on the management and business of supporting students with special needs. She indicated that behavior reviews will be shared in March, and in April the Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario will speak about the work being done around student learning disabilities. Superintendent Sirisko indicated that Ministry representatives will be invited in May to talk about the budget.

3. Staff Retirements

Superintendent Sirisko congratulated Don Wale who will be retiring at the end of the academic year. She announced that Lynda Kee and Heidie Kazman will also be retiring.

8. Communications

SE-29, moved by Joyce Lang, that the following communications, be received:

1. Memorandum to Directors of Education from Barry Finlay, Ministry of Education, re Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) Expertise Professional Learning Day
2. Memorandum to Local Health Integration Networks CEOs from Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, re Mental Health and Addictions Nurses in District School Board Program
3. Memorandum to Elementary Principals / Vice-Principals in Peel from Louise Sirisko, Superintendent of Special Education Support Services, re Inclusion of the Positive Behaviour Intervention Plan within the Individual Education Plan for Elementary Students
4. A publication of the Centre for Addiction and Mental (CAMH)
5. Inclusive Education Month in February
6. Conference: Making Inclusion Work – February 28, 2012
7. Celebrate World Autism Awareness Day on April 2, 2012

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Referring to Items 8.3 and 8.5, Lynne Cramer thanked Superintendent Sirisko for including the information on Inclusive Education. She reported that the webinar on February 22, 2012, will be on the use of technology.

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9. Question Period

Joyce Lang referred to the special presentations and commented that perception may misinterpret the title of “special presentation” as overshadowing the work of SEAC. She suggested referring to such special presentations as “ongoing training” in the agenda and minutes. Superintendent Sirisko noted the comments made. She explained that the presentations are meant to demonstrate and bring an understanding to SEAC members of the evidence of work being done and the excellent practices being implemented in Peel schools to support learning for all students.

10. Public Question Period

There were no public questions.

11. Adjournment

SE-30, moved by Shelley Foster, that the meeting adjourn (20:45 hours).

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