

March 20, 2012
Special Education Advisory Committee:lf

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, March 20, 2012 at 19:00 hours.

Members present:

Barbara Byers, Fragile X Research Foundation of Canada, Chair
Brad MacDonald, Trustee, Vice-Chair
Stan Cameron, Trustee
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
Sandy Milakovic, Canadian Mental Health Association, Peel Branch
Carol Ogilvie, Learning Disabilities Association of North Peel
Carol Oitment, Tourette Syndrome Association of Ontario
Ann Smith, Brampton-Caledon Community Living
Lorraine Yuill, Learning Disabilities Association of Mississauga

Absent: (apologies received)

Lynne Cramer, Community Living Mississauga
Meredith Johnson, Trustee

Also present:

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

Administration:

Louise Sirisko, Superintendent, Special Education Support Services (Executive Member)
Lorelei Fernandes, Board Reporter

1. **Approval of Agenda**

Superintendent of Special Education Support Services, Louise Sirisko, welcomed the students of York University and Special Education staff of Palgrave Public School.

SE-31, moved by Deanna Henderson, that the agenda be approved.

..... carried

2. Implementation and Outcome of Evaluation Results for the Contained Behaviour Program and the Mobile Behaviour Support Program

The report "Implementation and Outcome Evaluation Results for the Contained Behaviour Program and the Mobile Behaviour Support Program" was circulated. Louise Sirisko invited Marie Fawcett-Carter, Coordinator – Behavioural, and Elana Gray, Research Officer, to speak on the report. Marie Fawcett-Carter acknowledged the work of Paul Favaro and Aimee Wolanski of the Assessment and Accountability department, who have worked on the project for a number of years. The report evaluates information on students with behavior exceptionalities, and was published during the 2011-2012 school year. Showing a diagram of the tiered model of support, she referred to a Table on Continuum of Behaviour Support Services in Peel DSB and explained Universal Supports, Targeted Supports and Intensive Supports.

Elana Gray used a PowerPoint slide presentation to explain the details and findings of the report. She reviewed the evaluation questions regarding the Kindergarten Support Program, Interval and Contact classes, and elementary and secondary Mobile Behaviour Support Teams. This evaluation included Student Information System / Student Success Planning (SIS/SSP) data, gender, grade, family profile, student mobility, diagnosis, services, absenteeism, suspensions, interviews, student progress, staff training, and resources. Data sources included surveys, interviews, focus groups, assessments, social competence performance checklists and report card percentage grades.

Key findings for the Contained Behaviour Program showed that three quarters of the group was satisfied with the overall program. Students understood the goals, and parents / guardians thought that they understood the IEP and IPRC goals; however, teachers did not think that parents understood the goals well. It was noted that 80–90% of the parents/guardians felt that opportunities to share information and communicate between home and school are available, however only 74% of the staff agreed. Elana Gray pointed out that only 53% of parents/guardians agree that students participate in extra-curricular activities in school.

Focus group findings were reviewed for staff, students, families and schools. Supports for staff included: collaboration, consultation and planning, additional staff training, and supplementary training. Supports for students included: support from social workers, and additional support during transition into and out of programs. Support for schools included: consistent replacement of equipment and resources, placement of the Contained Behaviour Program in large schools for a maximum of 5 years, and support during transition stages. With regard to policies and procedures, a need for effective communication of program entrance criteria for staff, students, and parents/guardians, along with a revision of current suspension procedures, was identified.

Regarding student improvement in behavior as a result of participation in the Contained Behavior Program, results showed that a fair amount of students, parents and teachers noticed improvement. For self-regulation, less improvement is noticed. Results for improvement in academic achievement in reading, writing, mathematics and learning skills, showed that students responded positively about their improvement, but parents and staff had a lower response rate. Percentage grades for students during 2009-2010, also showed improvement between terms. Teacher ratings on the social competence checklist over a 6-month period indicated that self-control and distractibility improved. A significant difference was seen in Student Absenteeism and Suspensions between Junior and Intermediates students.

2. Implementation and Outcome of Evaluation Results for the Contained Behaviour Program and the Mobile Behaviour Support Program (Continued)

Elana Gray then reviewed the key findings for the Mobile Behaviour Support Program (MBSP). With respect to satisfaction with the MBSP, a majority of the parents and intermediate students were satisfied with the overall program. Half the students understand their IEP or Behaviour Plan, all parents/guardians understand the program goals, and a majority understand the IEP and IPRC process. However, staff think that parents understand the goals, but not the IEP and IPRC process. Only 5% of students are home schooled and parents believe that there is good communication between home and school. Elana Gray pointed out that the number of students participating in extra-curricular or special activities in school was low. Suggestions were made by the focus group to expand mobile teams, clarify roles of MBST members and program services, improve communication and collaboration between MBST and school staff, decrease response time for program delivery, review service delivery model, and revise policies and procedures with regard to suspension.

Graphs showing student improvement in behaviour and improvement in academic achievement, as a result of program participation were explained. Primary and junior students improved in reading, writing and mathematics, and 82% of the staff indicate that students are improving in learning skills. Report Card percentage grades for students showed a slight decrease in grades, but this was not statistically significant. While reviewing student absenteeism and suspension results, it was noted that absenteeism for elementary students is significantly lower than secondary students. The data on suspension also revealed that elementary student suspension rate is lower than secondary.

Elana Gray reviewed in detail the recommendations in the report for the MBS Program, which included: inclusion/integration of students, strategies to increase collaboration, revised transition plan for students, improved communication between staff and parents/guardians, professional learning and teacher training, early identification and intervention, review and revision of program design, and access to resources and support to address the needs of students and parents/guardians. She presented a comparison of the differences in the Contained and Mobile Behaviour programs, and she suggested a multi-disciplinary program based on the evaluations.

Comments and questions from the members included: significant differences in elementary and secondary panels; inclusion of formal suspensions in the data; need for more training; frequency of disruptions in the classroom; follow up for response to teacher surveys; how do children identify self esteem; parents' perception of teachers' knowledge of IPRC process and its effects on the data. In response to a member's query as to whether any new data was identified in the report, some members noted that there was new information on inclusion of technology and types of medication for students.

Some members expressed concern with regard to the differences in the reporting of parents' understanding and staff perception of parents' understanding of the IPRC process, indicating a significant difference in the results and implications of perceptions in the report. Elana Gray stated that the data is perceptual, explaining that if teachers feel that they are satisfied, they indicate so. A member suggested that staff and parents work through a list of questions to ensure that parents understand.

2. Implementation and Outcome of Evaluation Results for the Contained Behaviour Program and the Mobile Behaviour Support Program (Continued)

In response to Vice Chair MacDonald's question on mental health support, and social work allocation to the Behavior Program, Superintendent Sirisko clarified that two new positions have been assigned recently for Peel DSB. Bob Cambria, has been appointed as Coordinator - Integrated Services and supports students on Tier 3 level. Maureen MacKay, has been appointed as Coordinator - Student Well-Being. She is creating a board-wide positive intervention strategy and working towards students achieving self-esteem from targeted programs. In addition, Pat Rossall, Superintendent Alternative Programs, and Sharon Stevens-Lay, Coordinating Principal, will be reviewing students' needs for engagement in case of challenges, and to provide best supports for them. Superintendent Sirisko confirmed that these staff and supports are incorporated in the budget for this year. She spoke about the action plan for the next five years, use of technology, and SEA claim candidates, and she suggested using supports that benefit all students in the classroom.

Responding to a member's inquiry about the number of students in Mobile and Contained programs, Marie Fawcett-Carter advised that the actual number of students in these programs were not reflected. Due to a high turnover rate for MBSP students, a restricted number was used. The member asked about data reflecting students who started in the program but did not need the services in future grades, and commented that need for the same level of support is not required as students move on in years. Marie Fawcett-Carter stated that the complexity of some programs posed difficulty, for example a few programs are offered at elementary level only. She indicated that there are limitations to the data that was collected over a 6-month period.

In response to a member's query about distribution of SEAC agenda package, Superintendent Sirisko clarified that the normal distribution procedure was followed. However, if possible in future, large reports may be dispatched earlier.

Marie Fawcett-Carter requested that the members share with Peel DSB, information about supports that their associations are providing to parents, to assist staff in reviewing gaps in the process, and enable a collaborative review. Superintendent Sirisko thanked the presenters and advised that a smaller group has been formed to draft an action plan by June 2012.

SE-32, moved by Deanna Henderson, that the report on Implementation and Outcome of Evaluation Results for the Contained Behaviour Program and the Mobile Behaviour Support Program, be received.

..... carried

3. Conflict of Interest

There were no declarations of conflict of interest.

4. Minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting, February 21, 2012

SE-33, moved by Shelley Foster, that the Minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting, held February 21, 2012, be approved.

..... carried

5. Region of Peel: Summary of Presentation to Regional Council re Early Learning and Child Care System

Superintendent Sirisko mentioned that she was pleased to see that the Region of Peel noted the need to refocus to support students with special needs and low income families, and after care centres. She highlighted the Regional Council's decision which included a possibility of phased-in closures.

SE-34, moved by Barbara Cyr, that the report on the Region of Peel: Summary of Presentation to Regional Council re Early Learning and Child Care System, be received.

..... carried

6. Peel Early Learning Special Needs Advisory (PELSNA) Committee Meeting Minutes, February 13, 2012

Susan Bassili, Chief Speech Language Pathologist, stated that the PELSNA Committee comprised of several services for children aged 0-12 years. The Committee meets once a month and consists of many different groups such as Peel DSB, Community Living, Peel Children's Aid, Kids Pathways Peel, and Infant and Child Development Services. The Committee is involved with planning, coordinating, and delivery of special needs services, encouraging smooth transition from pre-school to school board services. Copies of the PELSNA Committee's revised Terms of Reference were circulated.

SE-35, moved by Barbara Cyr, that report of the Peel Early Learning Special Needs Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes of February 13, 2012, be received.

..... carried

7. Tip Sheets – Principals Want to Know

Superintendent Sirisko advised that 'Principals Want to Know' is a series of Tip Sheets providing clear instructions on IEP and IPRC, to principals and new administrators. Katie Levalds, Coordinator - Special Education Support Services and Patrick McQuade, Coordinator – Science and Technological Education, have been communicating to principals that the information is available on the Ministry of Education website. Louise Sirisko clarified that the documents are targeted to administrators and the intention is to post them on Peel DSB's website. Information for parents on IEP and IPRC is available through brochures.

7. Tip Sheets – Principals Want to Know (Continued)

SE-36, moved by Barbara Cyr, that report on Tip Sheets – Principals Want to Know, be received.

..... carried

8. Ministry of Education Winter 2012 Update

SE-37, moved by Barbara Cyr, that report on Ministry of Education Winter 2012 Update, be received.

..... carried

9. Tangerine Walk-In Counselling – A Free Service for Children, Youth and Families Living in Peel Region

Jim Van Buskirk, Chief Social Worker, was invited to speak about Tangerine Walk-In Counselling, a free service for children, youth and families living in Peel Region. The service is provided, in partnership, by Associated Youth Services of Peel, Peel Children's Centre and Rapport Youth and Family Services. He explained that the service allots 1½ - 2 hours of counselling, provides useful advice emphasizing the strengths and abilities of the families. He stated that this service supports mental health services in Peel and would be expanded, should the need be demonstrated. The Ministry of Health and Long Term Care and Peel Children's Aid have provided 48 additional staff, 16 to serve students in Peel region, 10 for Peel DSB and 6 for Dufferin-Peel CDSB, which will help reduce wait list time significantly. The balance 32 positions will be used to enhance services. Fifteen school boards have been provided funding for a mental health coordinator to develop modules for improving mental health literacy.

Jim Van Buskirk confirmed that the website for mental health was developed by Peel DSB students, prior to the receipt of the funding for this program, in collaboration with Dufferin-Peel CDSB and other community agencies. The website focus is on youth, but there is a section for adults and caregivers of children with mental health. He encouraged members to visit the site, called www.inurhead.ca, and agreed to email other related links to members.

In response to a question regarding sharing this information with schools, Jim Van Buskirk stated that a meeting of Professional Student Services Personnel (PSSP) is scheduled to share information on Tangerine's supports with direct messaging through the system. With regard to the question whether Tangerine service includes students with developmental disabilities, Jim Van Buskirk will bring back more information.

SE-38, moved by Barbara Cyr, that report on Tangerine Walk-In Counselling – A Free Service for Children, Youth and Families Living in Peel Region, be received.

..... carried

10. Question Period

Barbara Cyr advised members that her term on the Parent Involvement Committee has come to an end, and the position will become vacant.

Carol Ogilvie referred to the SEAC minutes of February 21, 2012, regarding Full Year and Semestered Mathematics Program, and inquired whether the program will be evaluated further. Superintendent Sirisko will forward the question to Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction Support Services, Shawn Moynihan, to provide a response.

Shelley Foster reported that she has received a letter regarding the bus strike and inquired as to the number of special education students potentially affected by the strike. Superintendent Sirisko advised that the Communications department is working with administrators who will be coordinating with parents regarding transportation options.

Barbara Cyr circulated copies of the local Caledon newspaper "The Regional", for which Trustee Stan Cameron writes. Trustee Cameron invited the members to get involved in the Caledon community to share the work that they are doing.

11. Adjournment

SE-39, moved by Deanna Henderson, that the meeting adjourn (20:40 hours).

..... carried