

May 15, 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, May 15, 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  
Nancy Leaton, Autism Ontario Peel Chapter  
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:

Lynne Cramer, Community Living Mississauga  
Deanna Henderson, Easter Seals Ontario  
Meredith Johnson, Trustee  
Wes McDonald, VIEWS for Blind and Visually Impaired Children  
Sandy Milakovic, Canadian Mental Health Association, Peel Branch

### Also present:

Marg Fishbein, Educational Resource Facilitators of Peel  
Marilyn Matis, Association for Bright Children (Alternate)  
Janet McDougald, Trustee  
Suzanne Nurse, Trustee  
Linda Standish, Educational Resource Facilitators of Peel  
Jeff White, Trustee

### Administration:

Louise Sirisko, Superintendent, Special Education Support Services (Executive Member)  
Christine Beal, Controller, Finance Support Services  
Carol Speers, Superintendent of Education  
Pam Tomasevic, Associate Director, Instructional Support Services

Marina Amin, Board Reporter

**1. Approval of Agenda**

Chair Byers acknowledged the presence of York University teaching students who were present in the audience, and she welcomed Nancy Leaton from the Peel Chapter of Autism Ontario to the meeting.

The following amendment was made to the agenda.

Item 9.1            Gifted Education in Peel: Elementary Identification and Placement  
(report for receipt, not approval)

SE-48, moved by Ann Smith, that the agenda be approved, as amended.

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**2. Capacity Building and Consultation: Budget Development and Grants for 2012 - 2013**

Superintendent of Special Education Support Services, Louise Sirisko welcomed Christine Beal, Controller, Finance Support Services, to speak about budget development and grants from the Ministry. A draft summary report of enrolment and grants for student needs was circulated.

Controller Beal provided an overview of the budget in terms of funding for the school year 2012 – 2013. She spoke about declining enrolment in elementary and secondary schools in Peel noting that this situation impacts the funding which is predominantly driven by enrolment numbers. A decline in enrolment will affect the per pupil grant and the subsequent loss in infrastructure funding. Controller Beal spoke about the total operating grants and a decrease of approximately \$ 2.8 million. She commented that certain areas of funding which the Ministry had committed to, have remained status quo, including: elementary teacher preparation time; reduced grade 4 class size; literacy and numeracy teachers. Controller Beal advised that there will be a freeze on the increment grid, and no salary increase for the year. She also noted that the short-term sick leave policy will be implemented as of September 1, 2012, as will the freeze on retirement gratuity to employees. Regarding budget cuts, she reported a reduction in funding for classroom computers, professional development for teachers, and transportation. Controller Beal noted that, for the first time, the Ministry has reduced funding for curriculum and teaching specialists by approximately 15% which amounts to a decrease of about \$2.9 million in the total operating grants. She spoke briefly about the Ministry's reprieve on adjustment in school operation benchmarks and the redefinition of a school campus identification for one year only. Highlighting information on the Special Education grants, Controller Beal reported an overall increase in funding of \$616,000. Providing details of the Special Education Per-Pupil Amount (SEPPA) and High Needs Amount (HNA), she noted that these two categories account for almost 92% of the total special education grants.

**2. Capacity Building and Consultation: Budget Development and Grants for 2012 - 2013 (Continued)**

A trustee commented on the Board's contribution to the special education envelope in addition to the 2012 – 2013 Ministry funding of \$163 million. Controller Beal explained the necessity for Board support due to the total expenditures for special education being in excess of the funding received from the government. Speaking about plans for additional teachers and teaching assistants, she noted that about 47% of the special education budget is spent on salaries and benefits for teachers, 39% goes towards the salaries and benefits of teaching assistants, 8% is allocated to professional help and care services, and the balance takes care of coordinators, consultants, supply teachers and other costs.

Superintendent Sirisko referred to SEAC budget consultation information distributed earlier to committee members. She highlighted system goals, and provided details of budgeted action items undertaken and planned to align with Ministry and Board standards, to effect an overall improvement of support and achievement for students with special needs.

Members then broke into groups to discuss focused priorities for the coming year. Suggestions by members included: staff training and development; open minds and healthy minds; student achievement – special children need more, not less; increased assessment capacity.

**3. Conflict of Interest**

There were no declarations of conflict of interest.

**4. Minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting, April 17, 2012**

Carol Ogilvie, Learning Disabilities Association of North Peel, requested that the names of the presenters in Item 3 – Capacity Building: Learning Disabilities Association of North Peel / Mississauga be amended, as follows: "Cristina Pergotski" will be amended to, "Christine Hambly, President," and "Vincenza Matseo" to "Vincenza Mazzeo."

Arising out of the Minutes, Item 13, Question Period, she asked about Board policy and procedure with regard to the use of blocker shields in the bus.

SE-49, moved by Lorraine Yuill, that the Minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting, held April 17, 2012, as amended, be approved.

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**5. Updated Special Education Advisory Committee Member List**

The updated member list was reviewed.

SE-50, moved by Ann Smith, that the updated Special Education Advisory Committee Member List, be received.

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**6. SEAC Meeting Structure**

Superintendent Sirisko referred to the re-structured agenda contained in the report. She indicated that she and Chair Byers had developed a questionnaire, forwarded earlier to members, to assist in streamlining the agenda to include topics relevant to SEAC representatives, as well as topics related to Ministry policy and its translation into Board policy and programs. She invited members for their input and feedback on the re-structured agenda.

SE-51, moved by Ann Smith that the report re SEAC Meeting Structure, be received.

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**7. Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting Schedule for 2012 - 2013**

SE-52, moved by Carol Ogilvie, that Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting Schedule for 2012 - 2013, be received.

..... carried

**8. Gifted Education in Peel: Elementary Identification and Placement**

Superintendent Sirisko indicated that in May 2009, the Board published the Gifted Education Program Review. She noted that members of the Association for Bright Children (ABC) and designated Board staff worked collaboratively to bring recommendations for the revised gifted identification model which is included in this report. She explained that this model will be presented to trustees at the Board Meeting on May 22, 2012, for approval. Thanking Donna Zuccato, Coordinator, Special Education, and Jack Kamrad, Chief Psychologist, for their work in the development of the revised model, she invited them to provide an overview of the revised gifted program.

Donna Zuccato reported that from the gifted review conducted several years ago, a working group comprising of several representatives was formed to review and revise the current model. She noted that the revised criteria provided in the report are a result of the efforts of this working group. Donna Zuccato provided details of the criteria used for student assessment, and guidelines with respect to recommendations being made for a student's educational pathway. Jack Kamrad indicated that while the current practice focuses on identifying intellectual ability, it does not comprehensively measure the student's need for differentiation beyond the regular school program. He provided details of the revised process of assessment using the C-CAT, the Gifted Rating Scale (GRS), analysis of student profile and psycho-educational testing. Jack Kamrad highlighted case studies to explain how students placed in different categories of differentiated learning can achieve better results. He noted that the reasons for modifying the current gifted model were to revise the standards for group and individual assessments, and to define quality and quantity indicators of academic achievement, social and emotional behavior factors, and professional teaching ratings.

(continued overleaf)

**8. Gifted Education in Peel: Elementary Identification and Placement (Continued)**

Donna Zuccato reported on the proposed communication plan for the revised model, involving all stakeholders engaged in its implementation. Psycho-educational consultants will provide direct support around the new criteria to IPRC members, school principals, parents, ISELP teachers and classroom teachers. Information on the revised model will be displayed on Peel's internet site and posted early in Fall 2012. In addition to professional development for all stakeholders across the system, there will be web-based resources for ISELP and ELC teachers.

The administration responded to questions by members, including: that teachers will be responding to 72 questions on the GRS, instead of 27 on the current form; the GRS has cross cultural validity and was tested on a broad range of students; a student securing above 89% would possibly be considered for enhancements in the program; private individual assessments are considered. Jack Kamrad explained that in the previous model, unless a student scored at 97%, their learning needs were unnoticed as far as giftedness was concerned. The revised model looks closely at the needs of students who are not necessarily measured by an intellectual need. This allows more students to be integrated in peer groups with other students who are receiving enhancements.

Barbara Cyr, a representative from the Association for Bright Children, asked whether the report will be approved by the Board of Trustees, if received at this meeting. She noted that representatives would like to take the report back to their associations for discussion before it is presented to trustees, and requested its deferral till the SEAC meeting in June. Another member asked if changes could be made even if the report was received and approved. Superintendent Sirisko responded that deferral till June would result in a negative impact to the system. She suggested taking back the report concurrently, as is the case with other reports brought to SEAC. Superintendent Sirisko also clarified that when programs are implemented and do not have the intended impact, revisions are always considered to better suit and support students.

Chair Byers indicated that there is a motion on the floor to defer the report till June 2012.

SE-53 moved by Shelley Foster, that the report re Gifted Education in Peel: Elementary Identification and Placement, be deferred for further discussion at the Special Education Advisory Committee meeting on June 19, 2012.

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**9. Communications**

SE-54, moved by Shelley Foster, that the following communications, be received:

1. Letter re resignation from SEAC of Joyce Lang, Autism Ontario Peel Chapter and the nomination of Nancy Leaton as the representative to SEAC
2. Letter to Joyce Lang from Janet McDougald to confirm Autism Ontario Peel Chapter's resignation to SEAC

(continued overleaf)

**9. Communications (Continued)**

3. Letter to Nancy Leaton from Janet McDougald to confirm Autism Ontario Peel Chapter's appointment to SEAC
4. Letter to Minister Laurel Broten from SEAC Chair, Niagara Catholic District School Board re Special Education Part 1 Course
5. INcare – Region of Peel's Child and Family Services Newsletter
6. Program Design: Mental Health and Addiction Nurses in District School Board Program
7. Videoconference presentation by Jay Rao on May 31, 2012 re Neurobiology of Autism
8. Letter to Minister Laurel Broten from SEAC Chair, District School Board of Niagara re School Health Support Services Program in Ontario

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Highlighting Item 9.6, Program Design: Mental Health and Addiction Nurses in District School Board Program, Superintendent Sirisko invited Jim Van Buskirk, Chief of Social Work, to provide highlights of the initiative.

Jim Van Buskirk presented an overview of the 10-year Mental Health and Addiction Nurses program, initiated to recognize and respond to mental health and addiction issues in children and youth. He indicated that 144 nurses will be recruited to serve 72 district school boards in the province. This will result in two nurses being allocated to each school board. Jim Van Buskirk outlined key objectives of the program, including: to provide support to build capacity to recognize and respond to student mental health and addiction issues; to provide health related advice and support school boards develop comprehensive plans to address a collaborative response to mental health needs of students; to introduce effective ways to cope with stress and to advise staff of the potential side-effects of different medications; to offer medical consultation to school staff regarding medicine management, especially those related to complex medical conditions; to provide students with mild to complex mental illness and substance abuse issues with support and access to services in the community.

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SE-54

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**10. Question Period**

Carol Ogilvie referred to Item 6 of the minutes of the Instructional Programs / Curriculum Committee meeting held on March 21, 2012, re summer program for at-risk youth. She asked whether the program includes at-risk special education students and, if so, the kind of support offered. Carol Ogilvie also asked about the criteria used to determine at-risk students. Superintendent Sirisko will respond with details at a subsequent meeting.

Carol Ogilvie reported that the Learning Disabilities Association of North Peel (LDANP) would like to make a presentation to the Special Education Advisory Committee, and has asked to be included in the agenda. She distributed copies of LDANP's program guide and details of the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Fundraising Event scheduled for June 4, 2012.

**11. Public Question Period**

There were no public questions.

**12. Adjournment**

SE-55 moved by Ann Smith, that the meeting adjourn (21:00 hours).

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